

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

Doctors Without Borders/Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is an international medical humanitarian organization determined to bring quality medical care to people in crises around the world, when and where they need regardless of religion, ethnical background, or political view. Our fundamental principles are neutrality, impartiality, independence, medical ethics, bearing witness and accountability.

The Stockholm Evaluation Unit (SEU), based in Sweden, is one of three MSF units tasked to manage and guide evaluations of MSF's operational projects, and works primarily with Operational Centre Brussels. For more information see [evaluation.msf.org](https://evaluation.msf.org).

Promoting a culture of evaluation is a strategic priority to be accountable, seek for continuous improvements and achieve organizational learning. MSF does not evaluate only because of external requirements, for example donors related ones. These Terms of Reference should be seen as a starting point for the evaluation process. The evaluator(s) are welcome to challenge them and suggest for example different or additional perspectives, as they see fit during the inception phase. The evaluation process should rely on solid methodology to achieve credible results and should also ensure to put values and use in the forefront. The evaluation must involve and include different actors and counterparts in an adequate manner during the whole process.

Subject/Mission: Evaluation of the Afghanistan mission set-up	
<b>Starting date:</b>	March or April 2023
<b>Duration:</b>	Final report to be submitted by October 2023 at the latest
<b>Requirements:</b>	Interested applicants should submit: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A proposal describing how to carry out this evaluation (including budget in a separate file),</li> <li>2) CV(s), and</li> <li>3) a written sample from previous work</li> </ol>
<b>Deadline to apply:</b>	March 26 <sup>th</sup> , 2023
<b>Send application to:</b>	<a href="mailto:evaluations.sweden@stockholm.msf.org">evaluations.sweden@stockholm.msf.org</a>
<b>Special considerations:</b>	The evaluation will require field visits. It is not expected that the evaluators will have to visit all project locations. This will be discussed during inception phase with the country and project teams, the consultation group for the evaluation and the SEU. Suggested way forward for data collection in the field to be presented in the inception report.

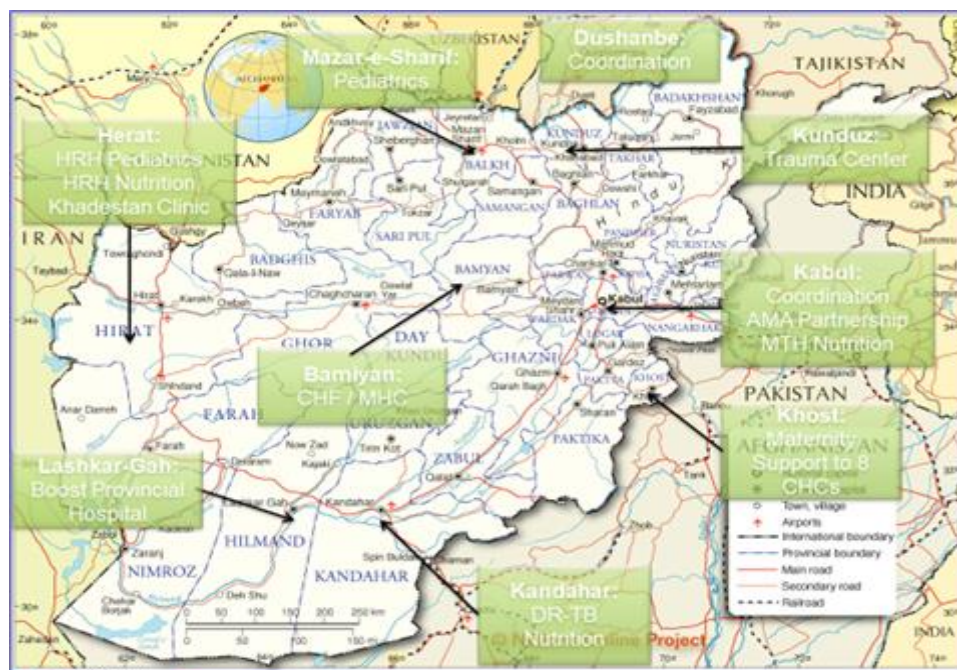
## BACKGROUND

Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) is a private international association which provides medical humanitarian assistance to populations in need, regardless of religion, ethnical background, or political view. It was founded on the principles of neutrality, impartiality, independence, and medical ethics and aims to save lives and alleviate suffering while bearing witness.

The international movement is composed primarily of six Operational Centers<sup>1</sup> (OCs) in Paris, Brussels, Barcelona, Amsterdam, Geneva and the latest addition in West and Central Africa (WACA). An OC is partnered with several Partner Sections and has the overall mandate to run operations. The International Office provides a certain amount of oversight and coordination although there is a large degree of operational autonomy for the Operational Centers.

Historically, OCs have run independent operations in any given country and each OC in each country will have a Country Representative as well as a coordination and support structure to support the operational projects. There can be many OCs operating in any one country although in practice this is not common and often two or three OCs will reach an agreement to focus on specific geographic locations or programmatic priorities or adopt an adapted operational 'set-up'.

One such adaptation is the 'set-up' used to run operations in Afghanistan. Today, in Afghanistan, MSF employs approximately 3 000 staff, (including 110 international mobile staff) and provides healthcare across eight project locations (see map below). The projects are supported by a single coordination based in Kabul as well as a support base in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. The combined budget for 2023 is approximately 57 million euros. Four Operational Centers currently run projects in Afghanistan: OC Amsterdam (OCA), OC Brussels (OCB), OC Barcelona and Athens (OCBA) and OC Paris (OCP).



<sup>1</sup> There is a current evolution towards Operational Directorates (OD) vs OCs but as this is in the making, we stick to the most common terminology at the time of writing these ToR.

## MSF 'set-up' in Afghanistan

MSF left Afghanistan in 2004, following a major security incident. In 2008, MSF restarted operations in the country and, primarily for reasons of security, decided to relaunch operations with a more concerted approach. The idea was that “the more [OCs], the less coherent will be the operations, the message and management of contacts.”<sup>2</sup> Since then, and in line with a decision by the RIOD platform (Directors of Operations from all OCs) the set-up of MSF in Afghanistan has been based on single representation.

The single-representation and single-coordination 'set-up' in Afghanistan as it is today, was approved by the RIOD platform in December 2013 and the RIOD is kept informed regularly and arbitrates if needed. Under the current set-up there is one country representative (CR) and one country management team or coordination, comprised of the various operational support departments (human resources, logistics, finance etc.) This single coordination provides shared support services to all projects in the country, no matter which OC there are run by. However, each OC has one Head of Programs (HoP) and a Medical Coordination (Medco), reporting to the country representative. This ensures that the single representation and single coordination/support services are maintained and that each OC has medical operational autonomy or independence.

Since 2009 the lead operational role (country representation and support) has been held by OCB in close collaboration with other OCs. Weekly Interdesk meetings bring together the CR and the four operational cells/desks responsible for Afghanistan in the four OCs.

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## PURPOSE AND INTENDED USE

**Purpose** Although it is not unique, the 'set-up' in Afghanistan represents a significant deviation from MSFs modus operandi, where multiple OCs will run projects in a country with their own country representation, coordination, and support services. As such, it represents an interesting opportunity for MSF to learn about the value of alternative operational ways of working.: The Afghan 'set-up' is often referred to and praised internally within MSF as a positive example of the organization's ability to adapt to the operational context, achieve coherence and contribute to more effective and efficient use of resources (eg human, finances, logistics and supply), an objective understood internally as mutualization. The 'set-up' is also not without its challenges and critics. Not least with regards to staffing key positions, the security context, and the challenge to accommodate different expectations as well as different practices, processes, tools, and systems from across the four OCs.

It is not the first time that the 'set-up' has been evaluated, with the last evaluation/review having been conducted in 2016. While this evaluation has been envisaged for some time, it also responds to a 1) significant growth in operational volume and increased pressure on the country management team, 2) recent changes in the operational context and increased humanitarian needs, and 3) planned turnover in key positions.

This evaluation should generate evidence of what works and for whom and under what circumstances, and help identify the challenges, bottlenecks, and ways forward. It should help develop a shared understanding of the value of the 'set-up' by describing how it works and the extent to which it contributes to the social mission.

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<sup>2</sup> Afghanistan International proposal for return strategies, Médecins Sans Frontières, May 2008

**Intended Use:** The final evaluation report will contribute towards the planning and decision-making for the Annual Review of Operations (AROs) due to be held October-November 2023. It may also be used to inform future RIOD decisions regarding the Afghan 'set-up' and will contribute to MSF learning around ways of working in the future.

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## EVALUATION CRITERIA AND QUESTIONS

Although some normative criteria of value such as effectiveness and efficiency may well be relevant, the SEU would like to make space for emergent and divergent perspectives in terms of what constitutes value for the various stakeholders in the Afghan 'set-up'. We would therefore like to avoid normative or prescriptive frameworks for this evaluation, in favor of an evaluation approach that can help us to identify the different values and move us towards a shared understanding of what constitutes value in this case.

Comparison should be made to the 'modus operandi' or an alternative ideal type while recognizing that the modus operandi is an artificial construct that does not really exist in the complex and adaptive world that MSF works. Although the Afghan 'set-up' was initiated to achieve certain objectives, particularly in relation to the security environment, the value of the 'set-up' may go beyond the original objectives. The evaluation should avoid looking at value only in relation to the organizational objectives as some values may have emerged beyond those defined by the organization.

The evaluation should employ methods of weighting and scoring that allow for synthesis of evaluative judgments across the different criteria, with a view to reaching a single judgement about the merit, worth or significance of the Afghan 'set-up'.

The evaluation seeks to

- 1) Provide a detailed description of the current 'set-up'
- 2) Identify what constitutes value within the context of the Afghan 'set-up' considering the diverse perspectives of stakeholders
- 3) Assess the extent to which these values are upheld by selecting a point of comparison and assigning appropriate standards
- 4) Identify specific strengths and weaknesses in the 'set up'
- 5) Provide an overall assessment of the value of the 'set-up'
- 6) Provide suggestions for achieving more value

Examples of criteria (but not limited to): relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, agility, flexibility, mutualization, rationalization, coherence, diversity, timeliness, coverage, adaptability.

Criteria and questions as well as the overall methodology and approach should be developed as part of the Inception Report and time will be given to this part of the process. Proposals do not need to include questions and criteria although it may be useful for illustrative purposes.

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## EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- Inception Report

The inception report ought to include a detailed evaluation proposal including the methodology and evaluation protocol, developing further what has been proposed in the proposal. MSF attributes great value to the inception stage, particularly when ensuring shared understanding of a complex evaluand is key.

Criteria and questions as well as the overall methodology and approach should be developed as part of the Inception Report and time will be given to this part of the process. Proposals do not need to include questions and criteria although it may be useful for illustrative purposes.

- Real time learning

Debriefing with the team in Afghanistan, in connection to the Kabul and projects visits.

Continuous feedback to the consultation group for the evaluation: the evaluation team will for example be invited to some Interdesks meeting, to share their insights during the evaluation process.

- Draft Evaluation Report

The draft ER ought to answer to the evaluation questions and the evaluation's stated purpose with the intended use in mind, basing this on analysis, findings, and conclusions – and if relevant – lessons learned and/or recommendations.

- Working Session

As part of the report writing process, a working session will be held with the commissioner, consultation group members and SEU evaluation manager. The evaluation team will present the preliminary findings, collect feedback and facilitate a discussion on recommendations (either to co-create recommendations or, if already developed, to discuss their feasibility).

- Final Evaluation Report

The final report will have addressed feedback received during the working session and written input from the feedback loop.

- Short version of the final evaluation report, once finalized.

- Dissemination and use

Presentation and discussion of the Final Evaluation Report

1. to the RIOD
2. to a general MSF audience in the form of a webinar.

*Other sense-making exercises, workshops and dissemination and use activities may be suggested during or at the end of the evaluation process.*

The key deliverables (inception report, draft/final report) will be processed through a feedback loop, collecting input from the consultation group (see below, Practical Implementation of the Evaluation). Each deliverable is reviewed by the SEU and endorsed by the evaluation's commissioner.

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## TOOLS AND METHODOLOGY PROPOSED

While this is at the discretion of the evaluator(s), it is likely that the evaluation will have to explore the best criteria against which to assess the set-up.

In addition to the initial evaluation proposal submitted as a part of the application, a detailed evaluation protocol will be prepared by the evaluators during the inception phase, following access to documentation and initial discussions with the consultation group for the evaluation. The inception report will include a detailed explanation of proposed methods and its justification based on validated theories. It will be reviewed and validated as a part of the inception phase in coordination with the SEU.

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## RECOMMENDED DOCUMENTATION

- Strategic MSF and OCB documents, including the Strategic Orientations, Operational Prospects, Medical Department Strategy, guiding principles (eg La Mancha)
- Afghanistan Program and project documents eg narratives, budgets, organigrams, logframes, presentations, meeting notes, background papers
- Previous evaluations and reviews (eg SEU 2016, OCP 2013)
- External literature and evidence

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## PRACTICAL IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EVALUATION

Number of evaluator(s)	Flexible. The SEU believes a team of evaluators would bring value to the process (rather than an individual)
Timing of the evaluation	Start: March 2023. Inception report: April-May Data collection: end of May-beginning of June or July-August 2023 Finish: Latest October 2023

The SEU involves a consultation group (CG) in this evaluation process, with the objective to increase understanding, buy-in, learning during the process as well as quality of the end result. The CG is led by a commissioner. They have contributed to finalizing this ToR.

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## PROFILE/REQUIREMENTS FOR EVALUATOR(S)

The evaluation requires an individual or team of individuals who can demonstrate competencies in the following areas.

### Requirements

1. Proven and relevant evaluation competencies<sup>3</sup> to carry out an evaluation of a complex, multi-country program.
2. Specific technical competencies
  - a. Humanitarian strategic planning and program management
  - b. Experience of supporting and implementing humanitarian projects
  - c. Organizational assessment and development
3. Fluency in English (spoken and written)

### Valuable

4. Good knowledge of MSF, its structure, ways of operating, and guiding principles, is a strong asset.
5. Knowledge of Afghanistan
6. Additional languages that could serve the evaluation process (eg documentation, interviews) such as Afghan language(s) and French.

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## APPLICATION PROCESS

The application should consist of a technical proposal, a budget proposal, CV, and a previous work sample. The proposal should include a reflection on how adherence to ethical standards for evaluations will be considered throughout the evaluation, as well as how values and perspectives of different stakeholders will be brought into the process. The evaluator(s) will need to demonstrate an understanding of the evaluand and its context and reflect this in the methodology as well as the team set-up.

Offers should include a separate quotation for the complete services, stated in Euros (EUR). The budget should present consultancy fee according to the number of expected working days over the entire period, both in totality and as a daily fee. Travel costs, if any, do not need to be included as the SEU will arrange and cover these. Do note that MSF does *not* pay any per diem.

The level of effort is to be proposed by the evaluator(s). The evaluator(s) will not be hired full-time over the period.

Applications will be evaluated on the basis of whether the submitted proposal captures an understanding of the main deliverables as per this ToR, a methodology relevant to achieving the results foreseen, and the overall capacity of the evaluator(s) to carry out the work (i.e. inclusion of proposed evaluators' CVs, reference to previous work, certification et cetera).

Interested teams or individuals should apply to [evaluations@stockholm.msf.org](mailto:evaluations@stockholm.msf.org) referencing **AFGSU** no later than March 26th, 2023. We would appreciate the necessary documents being submitted as separate attachments (proposal, budget, CV, work sample and such). Please include your contact details in your CV.

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<sup>3</sup> The SEU references SEVAL's professional competencies, available at <https://www.seval.ch/en/standards-competences/competencies/>.

Please indicate in your email application on which platform you saw this vacancy.

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