

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Evaluation of the Emergency Response Unit of the MSF's Operational Centre Geneva (Aug 2021 - Dec 2023)

APPLICATION DEADLINE: November 12, 2023

Médecins Sans Frontières / Doctors Without Borders (MSF) is an international medical humanitarian organization providing medical care to people in crises around the world, regardless of religion, ethnic background, or political views. MSF's fundamental principles are neutrality, impartiality, independence, medical ethics, bearing witness, and accountability.

The organization functions as a *Movement* between 26 associations that are field-based movements engaging MSF volunteers and staff from all over the world in a shared commitment to medical humanitarian action. The associations are affiliated to six operational centers, 24 partner sections, and 16 branches that together implement the daily work of the organization. More information about MSF can be accessed [here](#).

The **MSF Vienna Evaluation Unit**, based in MSF-Austria, is one of two MSF units tasked with managing and guiding the evaluation of MSF projects and programs around the world. More information on evaluations in MSF and on the Vienna Evaluation Unit can be accessed [here](#).

Evaluand	Emergency Response Unit of the MSF's Operational Centre Geneva
Expected start of the evaluation process	December 01, 2023
Duration	Final deliverables to be submitted by April 2024
Application requirements	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) CV(s) 2) A cover letter highlighting applicant(s)' expertise and experience relevant to this assignment (max. 1 page) 3) An initial proposal of evaluation matrix (max. 2 pages) 4) Written sample of an authored or co-authored evaluation (in case of co-authorship, please specify your exact contribution) 5) Total consultancy fee¹ (please note that the total available budget for consultancy fees for this evaluation is 30,000 EUR) <p>Applications should be sent to veuapplication@vienna.msf.org until November 12, 2023</p>

¹ Please specify the gross amounts and applicable VAT / tax rates or indicate if a VAT exception applies. Please note that MSF Austria is not part of the EU's Reverse Charge VAT mechanism. Do not include data collection costs (such as travel costs for visiting MSF sites), as they will be calculated separately based on MSF policies.

CONTEXT

The Emergency Response Unit (hereinafter: ERU) of the MSF's Operational Centre Geneva (OCG) was created in 2021 with the goal to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of OCG's capacity to respond to acute emergencies and to emerging challenges. The Director of the Operations Department made the proposal to set up the ERU to the OCG Congress, who approved it in April 2021. The new setup and concept were to respond to the outcomes of the 2020 Emergency Response project and subsequent consultative workshop. Considering that MSF is primarily an emergency organization, the Unit's creation derived from OCG's efforts to foster an emergency response culture at all levels, to strengthen its capacity to respond to acute emergencies with the right people, at the right time, and with the right resources, and to support strategic reflection for the long-term improvement of OCG's emergency response capacity.

ERU team is part of the OCG Department of Operations. As of Autumn 2023, the Unit is composed of 18 full-time staff and the team is led by one of the two Deputy Directors of the Department. Within ERU, 10 of the team members constitute the *Emergency Desk* (E-Desk) and coordinate the implementation of certain emergency interventions. While OCG responds to acute emergencies in most of its "regular" missions, with regular OCG desks² supporting a major part of all emergency interventions, the E-Desk manages primarily those with a high level of complexity, high acuteness of needs, and/or requiring specific skillsets and way of working. The E-Desk is lead by a program manager reporting to the Deputy Director / head of ERU. The other 8 members of the ERU team - including the Deputy Director / head of ERU - lead a certain number of back-office dossiers in relation to OCG's emergency preparedness and strategic actions (see Pillars 2 and 3 below), in addition to their occasional involvement in direct support to emergency operations.

In line with its main goals, the **ERU Action Plan** defines the Unit's specific objectives and deliverables across 3 emergency response pillars:

- **Pillar 1: responding to emergencies when they occur**, with all proposals from MSF OCG's missions and desks being sent to the ERU's leadership for approval / discussion and resource allocation, and subsequently with the Unit having the role to support respective emergency response operations for best possible outcomes. As part of ERU, the E-Desk leads major acute emergency interventions and supports other desks / missions with operational capacity.
- **Pillar 2: emergency preparedness**, for which ERU aims to strengthen OCG's readiness globally, regionally, and at mission level in terms of operational working space, medical operations capacity and capability, logistics and supply, staff availability and competency in emergency responses, as well as adapt OCG's systems and field tools to better fit emergency operations.
- **Pillar 3: strategic actions**, for which the Unit seeks to identify and promote ways for OCG to maintain and improve its ability to be fit for purpose in terms of emergency responsiveness in the future.

In terms of **deliverables**, the time of creation of the unit coincides with an increase in the volume of emergency interventions undertaken by OCG. The Unit has led the opening and development of the new Madagascar mission until its handover to OCG's Cell 3 in September 2023, and supported the development of MSF's Latin America emergency hub, and other mission and regional emergency response teams. The Unit also supported the building of the emergency response working space and capacity with some specific actions in several missions (e.g., South Sudan, West Africa, Tanzania, Yemen, DRC), as well as with emergency preparation workshops in collaboration with the OCG's Learning and Development team in several more. As of Autumn 2023, the Unit's senior advisors are working on several overarching dossiers and tools (i.e., OCG emergency response plan / strategy, emergency resources / tools, medical data in emergencies, WHO emergency medical teams (engagement, MSF working group, positioning), Emergency pool strategy, etc).

EVALUATION PURPOSE

The proposal was made with the commitment to evaluate the new Unit after 24 months of operation. In response to this commitment, the direction of OCG Department of Operations would like to have an overview of

² In MSF structure, a *desk* (also called *cell*) is a unit within MSF's Departments of Operations responsible for the coordination of MSF operations in a specific geographic area and/or for a specific cluster of programmes.

how well the new structural setup has responded so far to the initial purpose and goals of ERU. Hence, the evaluation purpose is to determine the extent to which the current setup has fostered the emergency response culture at all levels within OCG, strengthened OCG's capacities and capabilities to respond to emergency timely, efficiently, and effectively, and created the space for longer-term strategic planning for OCG's emergency response.

Therefore, this assessment is intended to get a better understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the current setup. The evaluation is expected to produce findings and recommendations to be taken onboard in the process of developing the next stages of ERU's organization and activities.

EVALUATION SCOPE

The evaluation will analyze ERU's current strategic plan, its pertinence vis-à-vis initially established goals and priorities for OCG's acute emergency response, as well as barriers and enablers in its implementation so far. The evaluation will not compare the new setup with the one in place before.

The new setup was proposed to be evaluated 24 months after having been put in place. However, a fixed date for the start of ERU is difficult to establish, since there has been almost a year between the recruitment of the Unit's lead (August 2021) and the recruitment of all Unit's members, including the recruitment of the senior advisor for analysis and external engagements. The above-mentioned ERU Action Plan was elaborated in April 2022, to include the whole team.

Therefore, the timeframe chosen for this evaluation includes January 2022- January 2024.

EVALUATION OBJECTIVES, CRITERIA, AND QUESTIONS

To respond to the evaluation purpose stated above, the evaluation will focus on the following **objectives**:

- **O1.** Analyze the degree to which the new setup of OCG's acute emergency response has performed so far in terms of strengthening the organization's capacity to respond to emergencies in a timely, effective, and efficient way.
- **O2.** Establish the enablers and barriers ERU experienced during its first years of activities, and determine possible necessary changes in the setup, objectives, priorities, functions, and decision-making processes to increase ERU's capacity to respond to its mission.

To attain these objectives, the assessment will explore aspects of evaluation criteria of relevance, appropriateness, efficiency, effectiveness, and coherence, based on findings deriving from the following **evaluation questions**:

- **EQ1.** Does the new OCG setup and Action Plan relate to the outcomes of the 2020 consultative workshop?
- **EQ2.** To what extent does ERU's Action Plan respond to OCG's strategic plan's goals vis-à-vis its capacity to respond to acute emergencies and to emerging challenges?
- **EQ3.** How successful has been the implementation of ERU's Action Plan so far and what factors, barriers, and enablers influenced the implementation?
- **EQ4.** How adequate is ERU's staffing in terms of size, expertise, division of roles and responsibilities, for responding to OCG's goals vis-à-vis emergency responses and for the implementation of its own Action Plan?
- **EQ5.** What have been ERU's achievements so far in terms of creating greater awareness vis-à-vis basic principles and best practices of emergency response within OCG's departments and within OCG's Missions?
- **EQ6.** What have been ERU's achievements so far in terms of enhancing OCG's acute emergency response capacity and capability?
- **EQ7.** To what extent has the creation of the ERU facilitated OCG's timely and effective delivery of acute emergency responses?
- **EQ8.** To what extent has the new institutional setup including ERU facilitated the availability of appropriate resources (human, financial, expertise) for the delivery of acute emergency responses?

- **EQ9.** What has been ERU's contribution so far in the development of a longer-term strategic view on how OCG should organize and deliver its emergency response mandate?
- **EQ10.** How did ERU coordinate its action plan and activities with other OCG teams – including Mission-based teams – and with what results?

EVALUATION APPROACH AND DATA COLLECTION METHODS

The overall evaluation design and methodological approach is expected to be developed and proposed by the evaluation team during the inception phase, considering insights from inception interviews with evaluation commissioners, the initial assessment of available data, and the resources available for the evaluation.

Data collection methods to be used for gathering evidence and data for the analysis will likely include:

- **Analysis of relevant MSF documentation**, including ERU documentation, OCG strategic documentation, Mission documentation, etc.
- **Interviews** with key stakeholders of MSF-OCG and OCG missions.
- **Online survey** with relevant stakeholders.

While much of the work is expected to be completed remotely, the evaluator(s) will be expected to travel to Geneva during the data collection phase for max. 5 working days, for on-site data collection.

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

- **Inception report** that elaborates the methodology, develops the evaluation matrix, presents a detailed data collection plan, drafts data collection tools, and details the timeline of the evaluation. The inception report shall be drafted based on the [VEU Inception Report template and requirements](#).
- **Debriefing workshop** through which the evaluation team update stakeholders on preliminary evaluation findings, to check accuracy of factual data and to assess relevance and feasibility of recommendations.
- **Draft report** with adequate time scheduled for feedback and revisions.
- **Final report** containing findings, conclusions, and recommendations in response to the evaluation questions, objectives, and purpose as stated in this document. The final report shall be drafted based on the [VEU report writing guidelines](#).
- **Final presentation** of evaluation results to evaluation commissioners and to other MSF-Germany stakeholders (see Audience section below).

AUDIENCE

Based on the evaluation purpose stated above, evaluation results will be disseminated to the following stakeholders:

- MSF-OCG Board, MSF-OCG management team
- All MSF-OCG employees
- Other relevant MSF stakeholders

PRELIMINARY TIMELINE

Tasks/ months & calendar week	Dec-23				Jan-24				Feb-24				Mar-24				Apr-24						
	48	49	50	51	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
Inception																							
Preliminary analysis of project documentation																							
First round of online interviews with commissioners																							
Inception Report (IR) drafting																							
Feedback and adjustments to inception report																							
Data collection																							
In-depth interviews with key informants																							
In-depth analysis of project documentation																							
Online survey (if the case)																							
Reporting																							
Submission draft report & feedback collection/ response																							
Submission final report & presentation to commissioners																							
Further dissemination in MSF & uptake discussions																							

PROFILE FOR THE APPLICANTS

Applicants' selection will be based on the relevance of their experience and expertise to this evaluation assignment. Interested applicants should apply either as individual consultants, or as teams of consultants.

Applicants should have the following **qualifications and experience**:

➤ Required:

- ✓ Experience conducting evaluations for humanitarian or development organizations.
- ✓ Experience with implementation and/or evaluation of emergency interventions.
- ✓ Excellent knowledge of spoken and written English.
- ✓ Familiarity with the MSF Movement's mission, work, and structure.

➤ Desired:

- ✓ Experience conducting evaluations of organization strategies or organizational setup.
- ✓ Ability to read and speak in French.
- ✓ Experience working with the MSF Movement.