



Terms of Reference for Final Evaluation

Title: VFL 2019 final evaluation

1. Background for the Assignment:

The programme Views from the Frontline (VFL) 2019 was commissioned under Priority Area 4 of the project “Upscaling Community Resilience through Ecosystem-based Disaster Risk Reduction (Eco-DRR)” funded by the European Commission’s Directorate-General International Partnerships (DG INTPA)¹. Views from the Frontline till date remains the largest independent global review of DRR at the local level. The EU-funded VFL 2019 is the latest iteration which was implemented from 2018-2022 (includes a one-year extension period).

VFL 2019 was implemented at a critical time, when most of the countries are reporting against the progress they made against global frameworks such as Sendai framework for DRR , Paris Agreement , Sustainable Development Goals and thereby accelerating the resilience building Agenda 2030. The Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030 mid-term review will conclude in 2023. VFL 2019 has come up with 9 global conclusions that are impacting the lives and livelihoods of the communities most at risk and these conclusions are also posing challenges to the achievements of the global frameworks. Moreover, the 50 months (including pilot countries) project duration of the programme also saw the cascading impacts of the pandemic, conflicts and climate change; especially in the 50 countries where the VFL 2019 was implemented across Asia, Pacific, Africa, Arab States Latin America and the Caribbean.

VFL 2019 has recommended and explicitly recognises the need to empower communities and create an enabling environment for the communities to reduce the disaster risk by providing access to resources, incentives and decision-making processes. Besides these overall needs, the following needs were specifically recognised at the planning stage of VFL 2019:

- Greater engagement of citizens in risk governance processes to ensure risk reduction policies and actions are appropriate to local realities, such as complexity, informality, fragility and insecurity

¹ Directorate-General Development Cooperation (DG DEVCO) at the time of contracting.

- Enhanced access to means of implementation at the local level to close the gap between policies and practice
- Coherent action to address underlying risk drivers, particularly in relation to small-scale disasters
- Strengthen public awareness, domestic transparency and accountability to increase political ownership for policy obligations and mobilisation of financial resources
- Develop relationships between affected populations and local governments to enhance local democracies and make national government more accountable and responsive to local stakeholders
- Strengthen coherence between state and non-state actors working across different administrative scales and separate yet interrelated thematic frameworks (e.g. DRR; Climate; Agenda 2030/Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Agenda for Humanity, New Urban Agenda. VFL 2019 is being implemented in 50 countries across Asia, Pacific, Africa, Arab States, Latin America and the Caribbean.

50 (including pilot countries) most disaster-prone countries worked towards addressing the above mentioned needs through the VFL 2019 project.

2. Goal, Objectives, Outcomes and Outputs

- Goal: The VFL 2019 programme aims to strengthen the inclusion and systematic collaboration between governments, at-risk people and civil society in the design and implementation of DRR and resilience policies and practices.
- Specific Objectives of the Programme:
 1. To establish a citizen-based process to measure local progress in inclusive risk governance
 2. To strengthen in-country civil society monitoring, DRR and advocacy capacities
 3. To support establishment of local-level baselines and generate local risk information to inform policy and local plans.
- Outcomes & Outputs of the Programme (Table 1)

Table 1: Outcomes & Outputs of the Programme

Outcomes	Outputs
1. Increased access to actionable, timely and disaggregated local data	1.1 Participatory monitoring of local perspectives on risk and resilience undertaken 1.2 Online database and data visualisation established

	1.3 Global and national reports on local data on risk and resilience published and disseminated
2. Increased capacities of local actors to engage in resilience actions	2.1 Individuals trained in monitoring risk and resilience 2.2 Individuals trained on local action planning
3. Increased use of local data in resilience building processes	3.1 Local action projects implemented 3.2 Best practice resources produced and shared 3.3 Civil Society advocacy campaign on importance of local data and actors delivered
4. Increased engagement between different actors in resilience building processes	4.1 Platforms for collaborative resilience building provided

3. Previous Evaluations

A Mid-Term Evaluation was conducted by an external evaluator in May-June 2021.

Recommendations drawn from the exercise aimed at informing the third component of the programme namely – “Actions at the local level, national and global level to use the data to inform better resilience building”. The top 5 recommendations were:

1. Invest in improving VFL2019 impact at national/local levels by making VFL2019 findings more visible, creating peer linking opportunities among GNDR members and other agencies, identifying new funding opportunities and support for stronger advocacy with the Government
2. Leverage VFL2019 evidence for amplifying citizens’ call for action on greater coherence in approaches to DRR, risk-informed development, and climate change in the Agenda 2030.
3. VFL2019 should actively enable greater replication of the VFL methodology making it open source and used in aligned sectors.
4. The project team needs to initiate dialogue and initial research for future iterations that allow for more dynamic data gathering platforms leveraging technology.
5. As nations recover from Covid-19 pandemic, proactive local advocacy and engagements for comprehensive build-back better initiatives should become part of the VFL2019 activities in the remaining part of the project. Knowledge and partnerships around Covid-19 recovery would significantly enhance impact of VFL2019 in local communities

The above recommendations shall orientate the final evaluation. Compared to the previous evaluation exercise, this evaluation will have a stronger emphasis on how the advocacy work has further influenced the policies and practices at the local, national and global level. This exercise will also establish opportunities for learning and establishing accountability amongst different stakeholders.

4. Scope of Evaluation, Key Evaluation Issues, Questions and Criteria

The evaluation is a final project evaluation. It will cover activities in the 50 (including pilot countries) countries which have taken place since the beginning of the project (2018) until the final evaluation (2022).

The overall purpose of the final evaluation is to:

- gather evidence of change by evaluating both qualitative and quantitative data against the project's indicators; capturing achievements of the programme's results and indicators; going beyond the recommendations of the mid-term evaluation conducted in 2021.
- draw lessons and concrete recommendations contributing towards (a) Programme Goal and Outcomes and (b) overall GNDR strategy 2021-2025.
- showcase examples of change of policies and practices and lessons learnt particularly in the areas of (a) localisation, (b) risk-informed development and (c) strengthening the collaborations across levels for building a coherent approach towards risks and resilience.
- showcase examples of how the programme has ensured accountability towards the communities most at risk.

For the purposes of this evaluation, the key questions identified by the stakeholders were organised in line with OECD DAC criteria under several main evaluation criteria: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability and (road to) impact. Furthermore, the evaluation will look at capacity development, partnerships, visibility and results-based management (RBM)/ monitoring/ evaluation as cross-cutting themes.

Evaluation Questions:

Relevance and Coherence:

1. Are the project's objectives and target groups addressing identified needs at the local and national context?

2. Were the conclusions at the global level and national level feeding into the overall global policy frameworks as well as the strategic framework of GNDR (internally)?

Effectiveness:

3. Is the project design articulated in a coherent way? Is the definition of goal, outcomes, and outputs clearly articulated? To what extent were the originally defined objectives of the intervention realistic (achievable)? Was the project planned adequately?
4. To what extent have the existing management structures supported the programming and implementation, including monitoring?
5. What are the changes produced by the project at the national and global level? What has been the progress made towards achievement of the expected outcomes and expected results? What are the results achieved? What were the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement of objectives?
6. To what extent have beneficiaries been satisfied with the results? (Please use scoring and consider using an online survey to reach a larger number of beneficiaries.)
7. How were lessons learned identified in the mid-term evaluation addressed?
8. What is GNDR's comparative advantage in designing and implementing this project?
9. How has VFL 2019 contributed to the global policy dialogue and influence to accelerate the achievement of the Sendai Framework for DRR, Agenda 2030, Paris Agreement, etc.?

Efficiency:

10. Were the project funds managed effectively? Could the activities and outputs be delivered with fewer resources without reducing their quality and quantity? How was the efficiency affected owing to the impacts of COVID 19?
11. Have GNDR's organisational structure, managerial support and coordination mechanisms effectively supported the delivery of the programme?

Sustainability:

12. Is the project supported by national/local civil society organisations (CSOs)? Do they demonstrate ownership of the project results, leadership, commitment and technical capacity to maintain/implement the benefits of the project?
13. What is the likelihood that the benefits from the project will be maintained for a reasonably long period of time following the end of the project? How far were the project results institutionalised at the local and national level?

Impact (road to):

14. What are the intended and unintended, positive and negative, long-term effects of the project?
15. What would the development have been like without the project intervention?

Capacity Development:

16. How did the project contribute to capacity development of its stakeholders/beneficiaries? What adaptive or management capacities of national partners have been supported? (Please mention also under all other relevant evaluation criteria, and consider as a general cross cutting theme).

Cross-cutting themes²:

17. Gender:
 - a) To what extent has the project supported women's equal participation with men as decision-makers?
 - b) To what extent are female and male stakeholders satisfied with the results of VFL (2019) in their community?
 - c) Did women and girls face any particular constraints or obstacles in their participation with the project and its activities? If so, how successful was the project in addressing these constraints?
 - d) To what extent were the needs and priorities of women, girls, boys and men reflected in the: (i) activities implemented following the design of the local action plans? (ii) overall design of the VFL (2019) project?
 - e) Were efforts made to ensure equal representation by men and women at all levels of project delivery?
18. Partnerships and Coordination: How were relevant regional, national and local actors and stakeholders included in GNDR's programming and implementation, incl. policy advocacy processes?
19. Visibility: Did the project implement EU visibility guidelines? Were project partners and beneficiaries aware of these?
20. Inclusion: How did the project contribute towards addressing the needs of women, children & youth, people with disabilities through the implementation of the project?
21. Safeguarding and Protection: What mechanisms were in place to safeguard and protect rights of the communities most at risk?

² Use scoring rubric for each of the cross-cutting themes documenting evidence for the score.

Forward looking insights³:

22. Should VFL programming continue in the future? Were the approaches and strategies used by GNDR effective, relevant and potentially sustainable?
23. What did the stakeholders and beneficiaries consider the most necessary approaches/areas of future VFL interventions in their respective countries? At the regional and global level?
24. Based on the information and assessment of project progress and achievements, what other approaches/beneficiaries/donors etc. should be considered for a future iteration? How should a future iteration change?

The final set of evaluation questions will be agreed in the inception report.

The project performance should be assessed based on the scoring rubric (Table 3) for the following evaluation domains, at the local level and the national level and the global level. 50 countries (including 2 pilot countries) have participated in VFL 2019. It is expected that at least 50% would be taken as sample countries.

Table 2: Scoring grid

	Country 1	Country 2	Country 3... Country 25	Global Component	Overall Project
Relevance/Coh erence					
Effectiveness					
Efficiency					
Sustainability					
Impact					
Capacity Development					
Partnerships, Coordination					

³ These are not scored but documented for the future iterations

Visibility					
Project RBM/M&E					

Table 3: Scoring rubric for project's performance

Rating	Performance description
Excellent (Always)	Performance is clearly very strong or exemplary in relation to the evaluation question/domain. No gaps or weaknesses were identified.
Very good (Almost always)	Overall strong, but not exemplary performance on virtually all aspects of the evaluation question/domain. Weaknesses are not significant and are managed effectively.
Good (Mostly, with some exceptions)	Performance is reasonably strong on most aspects of the evaluation question/domain. No significant gaps or weaknesses, and less significant gaps or weaknesses are mostly managed effectively.
Adequate (Sometimes, with many exceptions)	Performance is inconsistent in relation to the question. There are some serious but non-fatal gaps/weaknesses. Meets minimum expectations/requirements as far as can be determined.
Poor (Never or occasionally with clear weaknesses evident)	Performance is unacceptably weak in relation to the evaluation question/domain. Serious and widespread weaknesses on crucial aspects. Does not meet minimum expectations/requirements.
Insufficient evidence	Evidence unavailable or of insufficient quality to determine performance.

Source: Adapted from "Policy and Guidelines for the Conduct of External Evaluation and Review", New Zealand Qualifications Authority, September 2009 and further drawing on Rich Tobin.

Evaluation Approach & Methods:

The evaluation shall mainly be conducted remotely through interviews, group discussions and a desk study. The evaluation will develop and apply a rigorous analytical framework to identify the impact of VFL 2019, particularly in terms of advocacy, policy, campaigning and communication activities. Evaluators are expected to detail this framework in the technical offer.

The evaluation will assess the impact of the advocacy, policy, campaigning and communication activities led by the GNDR Secretariat, and that of its implementing partners. The evaluation will draw out how GNDR contributes to the impact of its members' advocacy work at the national and global level, and factors affecting the engagement of the stakeholders with GNDR for this type of work. A critical analysis of the impact of factors external to the platforms and coalitions, including donor-driven processes, and effects related to partners including GNDR should be included. Consultants will be expected to collect data from a cross-section of representatives of implementing partners and external key stakeholders, including a diversity of respondents and different levels of seniority. Interviews with implementing and external partners, including representatives of donor agencies, national governments, international institutions such as the UN and EU and CSOs, should be undertaken in a minimum of 25 countries. Case studies of a minimum of 5 GNDR implementing partners will be included. The list of interviewees and subjects for the case studies will be determined with GNDR at the inception phase. The evaluation methodology and data collection tools will need approval from GNDR.

Principles underpinning the evaluator's approach are:

- a) Participatory and culturally sensitive process valuing knowledge and approaches from within the context;
- b) Impartiality and independence of the evaluation process from the programming and implementation functions;
- c) Credibility of the evaluation, through use of appropriately skilled and independent expert;
- d) Transparency of the evaluation process, including wide dissemination of results;
- e) Usefulness of the evaluation findings and recommendations, through timely presentation of relevant, productively critical, clear and concise information, and commitment to building capacity.

The evaluation will have a cross-cutting consideration for inclusion, ensuring that factors related to gender, culture, language and other areas are taken into account.

The evaluation will consist of several phases:

- (i) Contracting: Contract is signed, and a discussion of the assignment takes place. First documents are provided to the evaluator.
- (ii) Inception phase: An inception meeting will be held, along with the submission of an inception report. This should be more detailed in terms of the overall design and process of evaluation. It should also mention the method and approach that will be taken in regard to how data will be obtained and analysed based on the key documents provided. The use of a data collection planning worksheet or a similar tool is required. Data triangulation and quality control are very important and need to be discussed in the inception report. Evaluation questions and evaluation matrix shall be discussed and validated at that stage.
- (iii) Evaluation phase: The evaluator studies all necessary project documents; re-constructs and analyses the intervention logic and its assumptions. Existing data needs to be analysed and interpreted. It is expected that data and information will be obtained through different methods such as: analysis of documents, structured interviews, semi-structured interviews face-to-face (with a limited number of persons) or by phone, group discussions, online-surveys (if applicable), others. (Field trips to visit the partners and members as foreseen as necessary and on the availability of the budget).
- (iv) Final draft report: Submission and presentation of final draft report to GNDR Senior Leadership Team. It should include all the comments from the partners and stakeholders.
- (v) Final delivery: Submission of final deliverables. Presentation of final evaluation findings to the European Commission together with GNDR Secretariat.

The evaluators will work closely with the GNDR Secretariat, ensuring regular communications and meetings throughout the evaluation phase. Support for the logistical aspects of the evaluation can be provided by the GNDR Secretariat.

5. Deliverables

- Inception report, including a detailed methodology, list of interviewees and tools for the evaluation
- Draft and final evaluation report in English addressing the evaluation questions and including
 - executive summary of key findings and recommendations;
 - evaluation findings, analysis and conclusions with associated evidence and data clearly illustrated. Use of tables, graphs, quotes, anecdotes and stories to illustrate findings and conclusions is encouraged;
 - case studies, which should illustrate stories of the impact of GNDR/its members on specific policies, processes and their implementation;

- recommendations for the next actions, which should be practical and linked directly to conclusions;
- appendices, including methodology and evaluation tools, list of interviewees/interview dates, questionnaire, and brief biography of evaluator(s).
- Two presentations of final findings: to GNDR Secretariat, VFL programme team and governance, and to GNDR's main funder, the European Commission.

Final payment is dependent on the submission and approval of the final evaluation report.

6. Profile and qualifications of the consultant

Applicants may be individuals or a team of consultants. As a diverse network, GNDR encourages mixed teams, with different backgrounds and genders.

Key qualifications should be:

- Relevant academic degree.
- A minimum of ten years' experience and expertise in the non-profit sector, preferably networks in the field of development and linked to networks.
- At least three evaluations in the last five years, ideally impact evaluations, and focusing on advocacy, policy, campaigning and communication work implemented by NGOs. At least one evaluation should have been remotely conducted in the last two years.
- Demonstrated experience of evaluation involving qualitative data and 'soft' outcomes.
- Demonstrated experience of evaluating multi-country projects that are funded by the European Commission.
- Working experience in several countries and continents.
- An understanding of the nature of capacity development work and advocacy activities.
- Experience in project cycle management.
- Excellent oral and written English skills.
- Capacity to study documentation and conduct interviews in English, French and Spanish.

7. Application procedure

The application documents must be submitted no later than 28th Aug 2022 in electronic format to the following address: rehema.batti@gndr.org specifying "Final Evaluation" in the subject line.

The application file should include:

1. A technical offer including:

- Evaluation methodology: Describe your overall approach and evaluation methodology including, but not limited to, evaluation questions, evaluation design, proposed tools and methodology.
- Understanding of the issues at stake and the Terms of Reference.
- Relevant experience: Provide details of projects of similar scope, complexity and nature you have worked on previously.
- Specific expertise: advocacy campaigning, Global frameworks (incl. Agenda 2030), civic space, international networks.
- Key personnel and staffing: Describe the key personnel. Include CVs (no more than 2 pages each and attached as annex) of key personnel who will be part of the proposed plan.
- Timeline: Include a detailed timeline of key activities. Three references (including telephone numbers) and web links to previous work (if available) or Annexes.

2. A detailed financial offer including:

- A line-item budget: The cost estimates used to prepare the budget should be presented in Euro (including VAT and any other taxes). The tenderer should include his/her proposed daily rate, including all costs.
- A budget narrative.

Applicants should clearly highlight any current or previous working or personal links to GNDR, as well as any risk around conflict of interest.

The interviews will take place during the week of 30th August 2022. A multilingual selection panel composed of GNDR staff will conduct the interviews.

Provisional calendar

A total maximum of 40 working days is currently estimated for this assignment (negotiable depending on methodology).

Contracting of evaluators	Early Sept 2022
Inception phase, including kick-off meeting / inception meeting	By 15th Sept 2022
Evaluation phase	Sept – Oct – 5th Nov 2022
Final delivery	10th Nov 2022

