



## TERMS OF REFERENCE:

### **ECFR's *Supporting pro-active European peacebuilding and diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa* project evaluation**

<b>Title of Consultancy:</b>	Final Evaluation of the ECFR project <i>Supporting pro-active European peacebuilding and diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa</i>
<b>Closing Date:</b>	5 February 2024
<b>Evaluation Timeframe:</b>	March – June 2024
<b>End Date:</b>	June 2024
<b>Location:</b>	remote, with on-site visit to ECFR offices as necessary (please note that experience/knowledge of MENA region is essential)

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## BACKGROUND

The European Council on Foreign Relations (ECFR) is an award-winning, pan-European think-tank that combines robust expertise on European foreign, security, and defence policy with innovative, data driven research and powerful advocacy. With a network of offices in seven European capitals (Berlin, Paris, London, Madrid, Rome, Sofia, and Warsaw, and a presence in Brussels), and over 90 staff from more than 25 different countries and a team of associated researchers in the EU 27 member states, ECFR is uniquely placed to provide a pan-European perspective on the major strategic challenges Europe is facing.

ECFR launched its Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Programme in 2011, in response to the unrest that swept across the Arab world. Given the direct impact on Europe of instability in the MENA region, as well as the growing perception of US regional disengagement, there was a need for European countries to assume a more active and coherent role in addressing regional challenges, including by better understanding, prioritising, and responding to the developments driving ongoing instability.

ECFR is seeking to commission a forward-looking, end-term review of the project *Supporting pro-active European peacebuilding and diplomacy in the Middle East and North Africa*, which is a three-year project, with an annual budget of about EUR 400,000, and covering the period between November 2021 and October 2024 (for the evaluation this would include the period up to June 2024). This project funding is integral to and supports ECFR's broader MENA Programme, which is complemented by multi-year programme support from other donors.

The MENA Programme seeks to strengthen European efforts to play a strategic role in de-escalating regional conflict and charting pathways towards meaningful stabilisation, including by shifting the focus of European calculations towards a more comprehensive approach that addresses core drivers of instability and focuses on multilateral peacebuilding mechanisms. It covers all countries in the Middle East and North Africa region. It strives to promote European diplomatic engagement, in cooperation with like-minded global and regional actors (including the UN), that emphasises locally-owned, inclusive engagement, also taking into account the role of women and other under-represented groups.

Whilst workplans are developed for each year, the overall programme priorities include:

1. Providing platforms for dialogue with and between European, regional and conflict actors in support of diplomacy, regional conflict resolution and peacebuilding efforts.
2. Identifying paths through which European governments can play a specific added-value role in furthering good governance, stabilisation and development goals, economic and gender inclusion, respect for human rights and democratic institutions in the context of severe regional constraints.

These priorities are implemented through a series of complementary activities, including: Track 1.5/2 diplomacy through strategy group meetings; a range of written formats, podcasts, and social media to present and promote its research and policy recommendations; regular travel to the MENA region and interaction with policy makers, practitioners, and experts to inform our research, advocacy and briefings; working with Visiting and Associate Fellows from the region; and hosting workshops, roundtable discussions and other events to generate new thinking, analysis and solutions.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION**

The main purpose of the evaluation is to provide an external and independent assessment of the project, to establish to what extent the results were achieved, including its outcomes and impact.

The overall objectives of the end-of-project evaluation are the following:

- Provide an independent systematic and objective assessment of the achievements and results, weaknesses and strengths of the project implementation and the extent to which it has contributed to the desired project goal.
- Assess whether the project's underlying assumptions were correct and whether the results chain describes the most effective route toward expected results.
- Generate lessons learned and good practices from the respective goals of the project.
- Provide clear and forward-looking recommendations that can guide the ECFR MENA Programme and its partners in developing future projects and interventions.

## **KEY ISSUES TO BE ADDRESSED**

The following questions could be addressed during the program evaluation but are subject to discussion and agreement with ECFR during the period of designing the evaluation approach. The evaluator is free to further prioritise these questions in the proposal and suggest others it deems necessary.

### **Relevance:**

- To what extent is the project relevant to the priorities of stakeholders and target groups?
- To what extent are the objectives of the project adequately defined, realistic and feasible, and to what extent are results verifiable?

### **Effectiveness and Impact:**

- To what extent have the project objectives been achieved or are expected to be achieved?

- What are the results and impact achieved, both intended and unintended? To what extent can these be linked to ECFR and the MENA teams work?
- What were the main internal and external factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of results?

**Coherence:**

- To what extent is the project design coherent, valid, and relevant for the overall MENA Programme?
- How coherent was the project with other regional dialogues and policy-specific discussions and approaches?

**Efficiency:**

- To what extent have the resources (financial, human, technical support) been allocated strategically and sufficiently to achieve the project outputs/outcomes?
- Have the project goals and objectives been met in a cost-effective manner?
- Were the project's activities in line with the schedule of activities as defined in the work plans? If not, what were the factors that hindered timely delivery and what were the counter measures taken to address these issues?

**Sustainability:**

- To what extent are the benefits of the project likely to continue?
- What factors have positively influenced the sustainability and impact of the intervention?

**METHODOLOGY**

The end-of-project evaluation will be planned and conducted in close consultation with the ECFR MENA programme and Strategic Partnerships team. The evaluation approach and methods must be agreed with the Strategic Partnerships and the MENA team. The MENA team, with support from the Strategic Partnerships team, will provide the necessary substantive and logistical support, including the submission of all documents for desk review.

The evaluation expert or team of experts is ultimately responsible for the overall methodological approach and design of the end-of-project evaluation, which should be adapted to the requirements of the TOR. The end-of project evaluation should use a participatory and gender sensitive approach, engaging relevant staff at ECFR and partner levels, stakeholders, and beneficiaries through structured methods. Both quantitative and qualitative data should be utilised in assessing the project.

The final evaluation can include but should not necessarily be limited to the following data collection methods:

- Desk review of relevant documents
- Individual and/or group (in-person/ virtual) interviews with internal and external stakeholders,
- Surveys and/ or questionnaires to internal and external stakeholders

The exact methodology should be defined, discussed, and agreed with ECFR during the first days of the evaluation, in order to find the most appropriate methods that take into account programme activities that include track 1.5/2 diplomacy and largely private and confidential discussions.

### **EXPECTED DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE**

The consultant or team of consultants are expected to submit an evaluation report that documents the evaluation activities and results following a clear structure. The evaluation report will contain the findings, conclusions, and recommendations as well as a recording of the lessons learned. The report will be written by the consultant.

The consultant or team of consultants will initially prepare a draft report, which will be discussed with the ECFR MENA and Strategic Partnership teams. While considering the comments provided on the draft, the evaluation expert shall use their independent and impartial judgment in preparing the final report.

In sum, the **main expected deliverables** are:

- An inception report outlining the proposed approach and timeline, which will be agreed upon between the ECFR team and the evaluator(s)
- Draft report for ECFR review
- A learning and validation workshop (virtual or in-person tbd) on evaluation findings and draft recommendations, facilitated in cooperation with ECFR
- Final written report, with a summary power point presentation.

### **Guidance and quality assurance**

- The findings should be referenced.
- The research should abide by ethical protocols including participant confidentiality and privacy if they require that.
- All evaluation approaches should be gender sensitive.
- All presentations and reports are to be submitted in English, in electronic form, in accordance with the deadlines stipulated above. The evaluation expert is responsible for editing and quality control of language. ECFR retains the sole rights with respect to all distribution, dissemination, and publication of the deliverables.

### **REPORT STRUCTURE**

The final report should not be longer than 20 pages, excluding the annexes and the executive summary, and should be accompanied by a summary power point presentation. Annexes to the final report should be kept to an absolute minimum. Only those annexes that serve to demonstrate or clarify an issue related to a major finding should be included. While considering the comments provided on the draft, the evaluation expert(s) shall use their independent and impartial judgment in preparing the Final Report.

### **SELECTION CRITERIA**

**Essential profile:**

- University degree in social sciences or related field from a reputed institution and postgraduate education in social sciences methods, strategic management, evaluation, or equivalent experience.
- At least 7 years of proven relevant experience of conducting evaluations in an international development environment.
- Demonstrable experience of think tanks and research-based advocacy organisations.
- Knowledge of European foreign and security policy issues an advantage.
- Working and/ or evaluation experience in the Middle East and North Africa region, in particular with governments and civil society organisations in the region.
- Experience with conducting sensitive evaluations, incl. peace-keeping and diplomacy-focussed project evaluations.
- Excellent drafting and report writing capacities.
- Highly motivated and committed to the values of transparency and integrity.
- Availability to carry out most of the work in March-June 2024.

**Desirable experience:**

- Experience in monitoring and evaluation of grants funded by European donors.
- Familiarity of engaging with people at different levels in foreign ministries.
- Experience in results-based programs/ project management approach.

**Working language:**

- The working language will be English.

**REMUNERATION AND COSTS**

The Consultants should provide their estimated total fee as a lump sum or as standard daily or hourly rates. Approximately 30 days have been scheduled for the evaluation.

**HOW TO APPLY**

**The application should include the following documents in English:**

- A cover letter outlining motivation and evidence that the evaluator(s) is qualified to undertake this evaluation.
- Curriculum Vitae with full description of the applicant's profile and experience.
- The approach and proposed data collection methods based on the information provided in these Terms of Reference, including timeline. The timeline should also take into account that European summer holidays and the final evaluation report will need to be finalised by June 2024 at the latest. This is particularly relevant for any interviews/engagement with European stakeholders.



- Financial offer for undertaking the work, with estimation as to the number of days that will be spent on each task.
- Contact details for at least two independent referees with in-depth and proven knowledge of the applicant's expertise and relevant work experience.

**Please indicate “ECFR MENA Programme Evaluation Application” in the subject line of your email application. Applications should be sent in English by email to [larissa.schuurman@ecfr.eu](mailto:larissa.schuurman@ecfr.eu) by close of business of 5 February 2024.**

Please note that only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

*The European Council on Foreign Relations is committed to creating an inclusive work environment where diversity is valued and where there is equality of opportunity. We actively seek a diverse applicant pool and therefore welcome applications from qualified candidates of all regions, countries, cultures, and backgrounds. Selection of candidates is made on a competitive basis, and we do not discriminate based on national origin, race, colour or ethnic background, religious belief, sex, gender identity and expression or sexual orientation, marital or family status, age, or ability. We kindly ask applicants to refrain from including in their application information relating to the above as well as from attaching photos.*