

Terms of reference

Evaluation of OurCity Backbone – Manta Mia (Manta, Ecuador)

1. Introduction

Background on funding partner

Fondation Botnar is a charitable organisation founded in 2003 in Basel, Switzerland, to carry on the philanthropic work of Marcela and Octav Botnar. We work with and for young people of all backgrounds to contribute to a world that is supportive of their wellbeing and respects, protects and fulfils their rights.

We reimagine the underlying systems of fast-changing urban and digital spaces where young people live, learn, connect and play to help create the conditions where they can thrive, focusing on low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). We recognise young people as rights holders and support their wellbeing by promoting societies that respect these human rights and promote the meaningful participation of young people, creating opportunities for young people to participate in decision-making, claim their rights, demand accountability, and shape their wellbeing.

Drawing on our experience and expertise of our partners, we focus on four interrelated areas where we believe we can make the biggest difference - enabling liveable and sustainable city systems and a human rights-based digital transformation, promoting mental health, and strengthening quality public education - and seize opportunities to address the challenges that young people face in increasingly interconnected urban and digital spaces.

Background on implementing partner

FARO is an independent think-and-do tank that generates evidence and implements initiatives to influence public policy and promote practices for a more equitable and sustainable society. Its areas of work include sustainable development and cities, democracy, research and evaluation, and education. For more information, please visit <http://grupofaro.org>

Programme description

OurCity is one of Fondation Botnar's key initiatives, aiming to collaborate with selected cities around the world and support their efforts to implement coordinated programmes that leverage

digital technologies and community engagement, aiming to ensure that young people's wellbeing and opportunities are secured. These efforts are taking a place-based approach and are directed towards catalysing stakeholders, driving policy change, strengthening processes and implementing strategic projects through inclusive engagement and advocacy. The initiative collaborates with young people, civil society, policymakers, innovators, and other city champions to nurture well-being and opportunity for all.

The OurCity initiative began implementation in Tanga, Tanzania, in 2019. Following its successful launch, the model was replicated in Cluj-Napoca, Romania, in 2020 and subsequently expanded to Barranquilla, Colombia, in 2022. OurCity has since welcomed Koforidua, Ghana, and Manta, Ecuador, into its fold in 2023.

In parallel to rolling out the OurCity initiative to more cities, Fondation Botnar, with its current partners, has started formalising the OurCity implementation model to ensure scaling to more cities is easier in the future. The insights from this evaluation will also feed into the development of the OurCity model.

In Manta, OurCity is delivered by FARO, which serves as the backbone organisation within the structure of the Manta Mia initiative. In the current OurCity model, backbone organisations¹ play a key role in OurCity initiatives. They support the development of an OurCity consortium and provide shared services to consortium members, such as capacity building, management and facilitation. They also manage Fondation Botnar's funding for the OurCity programme.

For more information, please visit: <https://www.fondationbotnar.org/project/ourcity-initiative/>

Current state of implementation

The OurCity model foresees implementation in a phased approach:

- Pre-selection phase focuses on identifying potential cities (6-12 months);
- Phase A is aimed at building trust and fostering stakeholder collaboration. It provides seed funding. It also involves targeted projects and the establishment of a governance model (up to 3 years);
- Phase B has a greater focus on implementing a shared vision and committing resources to achieving youth wellbeing. This phase also sees the programme being scaled up within the city (up to 5 years);
- Phase C marks the transition to a network-driven model, emphasising the OurCity Network's self-sustainability. Fondation Botnar will step back from direct funding (up to 4 years).

¹ More information on the role of the Backbone organisation will be provided at the RfP structure.

The Manta Mia programme began in March 2023 and is now in the middle of Phase A. During the first year of Phase A, OurCity's backbone organisation, FARO, conducted stakeholder mapping, a youth needs assessment, trust-building, and strengthened local capacities through the first seed fund.

The first seed fund was launched in February 2024. These funds aim to strengthen civil society organisations in Manta that focus on the well-being of young people. The implementation of grants began in June 2024 and will conclude at the end of August 2024.

In the second year of Phase A, the focus will be on identifying and strengthening youth leadership in Manta, prioritising issues from the needs assessment, identifying solutions, and strengthening existing initiatives that address current youth problems. The key goals for this second year will be to establish a youth committee and a governance model for Manta Mia.

2. Evaluation purpose, objectives and questions

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide an independent review of the Manta Mia Phase A to date. It serves a dual purpose: (1) to assess the initiative and generate learnings that will guide the programme in the remainder of the current phase and the coming phase B, and (2) to assess the backbone set-up in order to inform the OurCity Model and strategies towards future replications in other locations.

The evaluation will pursue the following objectives:

- Assess the relevance and processes for enabling the effectiveness (early results) of the Manta Mia initiative;
- Assess the role of the backbone model in the areas of coordination, catalysation of stakeholder processes, fund management, and learning to identify and document key lessons to inform the Foundation's OurCity Model.
- Provide a set of forward-looking actionable recommendations that will guide Manta Mia in its current phase and the upcoming phase B. The recommendations will also inform the OurCity Model and strategies for further replication.

Indicative evaluation questions

The evaluation is expected to respond to the following questions. Please note that **evaluators are encouraged to further refine the evaluation questions** following an initial desk review and consultations with key stakeholders during the inception period:

Relevance – meeting the needs of young people

1. To what extent is Manta Mia seen as relevant by different stakeholders in addressing the current and emerging needs and opportunities of young people?
 - 1.1. To what extent do the tools and processes used to identify the needs and opportunities of young people capture the diversity and demographics of young people residing in the

city?

Effectiveness (early results)

2. What are the early and emerging results?
 - 2.1. Are there any early indications of projects demonstrating tangible outcomes for young people's agency and wellbeing? What are the key interventions that led to these early results and what are contextual enabling factors or barriers?
 - 2.2. [Tentative] To what extent is the youth committee supporting the backbone work or city policies? If it was not operational or inexistent prior to the initiative, what processes enabled its activation? What can be improved to embed its work into the city system?

Coordination and trust-building

3. How effectively are relationships of the initiative with city actors and between city actors developing, and to what extent is trust being fostered with and between key partners/stakeholders? What are key interventions that have led to successful development of trust-based relationships and what are the key contextual enablers and barriers?
 - 3.1. How is the backbone, which is external to the city, positioned and perceived by local actors including the municipality and youth?
 - 3.2. How effectively is a shared vision being forged among key stakeholders? How are competing needs, interests and power dynamics managed?
 - 3.3. What works well and what works less well, with regard to the emerging governance structure of the initiative and the partnership brokering of the backbone organisation?
 - 3.4. Are there any notable challenges and gaps in the stakeholder mapping conducted?

Fund management

4. How effectively has the seed grants process enabled trust building in the local ecosystem?
 - 4.1. What is the process for identifying grantees? To what extent is the process effectively supporting youth-led and smaller organisations in accessing seed grants and implementing them?
 - 4.2. What strategies were used to select entry point/seed grants? To what extent did they represent city-wide priorities and the specific priorities of young people in the respective city and/or to what extent were they focused on opening doors with relevant partners at the eco-system?
 - 4.3. How effective are the backbone organisation's structures and processes to deliver larger or smaller grants at scale?
 - 4.4. How can Fondation Botnar better support the grant-making process? Are there any policies, processes, or requirements from the foundation that restrict the backbone from working efficiently?

Learning and adaptation

5. How has the monitoring and evaluation framework outlined in the OurCity manual been operationalised in Manta?
 - 5.1. What monitoring, evaluation and learning processes and activities have been developed? What are the challenges encountered by the backbone organisation related to MEL?
 - 5.2. To what extent does the programme reflect the principles, strategic actions, and domains of change of Evidence to Action (E2A)²? To what extent has the E2A framework been integrated into MEL activities rather than implemented as a separate set of activities?
 - 5.3. To what extent has the programme adapted strategies and activities based on lessons learned?

Cross-cutting

6. Based on the findings from phase A, what needs to be improved in the OurCity Model in phase A? What could be lessons for the Model beyond phase A?
 - 6.1. What is the backbone organisation best placed to focus on? For example, should its main focus remain on coordination?
 - 6.2. Is the time duration of Phase A (up to 3 years) adequate for transitioning to phase B?
 - 6.3. What improvements can be made to the governance structure and partnership brokering for Manta Mia and the OurCity Model?
7. What lessons can Fondation Botnar, as a funding partner, learn from supporting Manta Mia? How, and to what extent, has the Fondation's way of working enabled or hindered success? What can be improved?

Audiences

Primary

- Manta Mia team, FARO
- Grant Managers for OurCity initiative
- Fondation Botnar's Strategic Learning and Evaluation Circle (SLE-C)

Secondary

- Fondation Botnar Management Office
- Fondation Botnar's Board
- Manta Mia external stakeholders including from local government and young people

² The Evidence to Action (E2A) framework was first conceived in 2019 in discussion between Fondation Botnar and the Melbourne Centre for Cities at the University of Melbourne to address an expressed need by the Cities portfolio for evidence building with their work with stated ambitions to embed learning processes in project cycles working in complex urban environments.

3. Methodology

Approach

The main focus of the evaluation is to support the learning and improvement of the work of the involved actors. The evaluation methodology should use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods. Fondation Botnar welcomes the use of diverse and innovative evaluation approaches and methods responding to the iterative and participatory nature of the programme. We do not anticipate an experimental design but rather one that is grounded in participatory and utilisation-focused approaches. Regardless of the approach chosen by the evaluation team, the evaluators are expected to foster participation at key moments of the evaluation, seeking FARO and Fondation Botnar's advice and support. As such, the evaluation team will be expected to refine the methodology and final evaluation questions following initial desk review and consultations with key stakeholders during the inception period.

Role of the external evaluator

The external evaluation team is expected to work in collaboration with the Grant Managers at Fondation Botnar and the backbone organisation to maximise the transparency and utility of the evaluation process and products. Fondation Botnar's Evaluation Function lead will be the point of contact for this evaluation. The contracted evaluator is expected to collaborate closely with FARO and Fondation Botnar to:

- Reach a shared understanding of the evaluation objectives and questions, and further develop the evaluation approach, methods and tools accordingly.
- Where appropriate, utilise the data from the programme's monitoring, evaluation and learning system and triangulate with other data sources.
- Recommend adjustments to the governance structure and partnership brokering processes of the backbone organisation.
- Facilitate a validation workshop to discuss initial findings as well as a workshop to co-create recommendations with Grupo FARO Foundation and Fondation Botnar.

Deliverables

The deliverables expected from the evaluation are as follows:

- Inception workshop (see below)
- Inception report of maximum 15 pages (plus annexes) including:
 - Understanding of the evaluation purpose and scope;
 - Proposed adjustments to evaluation objectives and questions as appropriate;
 - Data collection and analysis plan(s) including an evaluation matrix, data collection

- and analysis instruments and training plans for any field workers, if appropriate, to be developed in consultation FARO and Fondation Botnar;
- Work-plan and schedule for the overall evaluation process, specifying involved stakeholders' roles and moments for communication between the specific stakeholders;
- Draft outline of the evaluation report.
- Validation workshop involving key stakeholders (see below)
- Full draft evaluation report of up to 30 pages including a max five-page executive summary (anticipating one round of feedback). Please refer to the QA template, which will be provided during Inception, as a guide.
- Presentation and discussion of findings and co-creation of recommendations workshop (see below).
- Final evaluation report.
- Slide deck of key findings, conclusions and lessons to be shared with secondary audiences.

Please note that although this evaluation is commissioned for the purpose outlined in this ToR, there is a possibility of similar or future long-term engagement with this initiative.

Inception, validation and co-creation workshops

At a minimum, the evaluator/s will facilitate three consultation workshops with FARO and representatives of Fondation Botnar. At present, due to current travel advice, there is no expectation for travel to Manta. Arrangements can be further discussed during Inception but, for the purposes of the proposal, workshops can take place online. The minimum set of activities is specified below (in addition to KIIs with these stakeholders):

- Inception meeting or workshop with representatives of Fondation Botnar and FARO.
- Validation workshop with FARO and Fondation Botnar to verify and deepen findings.
- Co-creation workshop with FARO and Fondation Botnar to reflect on future steps and gather inputs for recommendations.

4. Ethical considerations

The evaluator/s are expected to comply with evaluation standards, including ethics, throughout the evaluation process, as set out in the UN Evaluation Group UNEG: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/2866>. Proposals are expected to outline how adherence to evaluation ethical norms and standards are ensured. Please note that Manta Mía initiative involves young people, aged 15 to 24 years, including those with disabilities.

5. Other requirements and logistics

Proposed timeline

Evaluation activities will start upon the execution of the consultancy contract and the Final Report including the respective slide deck should be submitted no later than w/c 19 May 2025. We welcome proposals that demonstrate strong project management strategies to prevent any delays or setbacks.

Key deliverables and activities	Responsible	Time/deadline
EOI submission deadline	Evaluators	6 September 2024
Short-list EOI submission	Fondation Botnar	w/c 9 September 2024
Invitation to proposal submission	Fondation Botnar	20 September 2024
Deadline for clarification questions	Evaluators/ SLE-EF Fondation Botnar	4 October 2024
Proposal submission deadline	Evaluators	18 October 2024
Selection of evaluator	Fondation Botnar	1 November 2024
Agree/sign contract	Fondation Botnar	w/c 4 November 2024
Kick-off/inception meeting	Evaluator	w/c 11 November 2024
Submission of draft Inception Report	Evaluator	20 December 2024
QA ³ of Inception Report	SLE-EF Fondation Botnar	w/c 6 January 2024
Feedback on Inception Report	Fondation Botnar/Faro	w/c 13 January 2024
Submit final Inception Report		24 January 2025
Data collection and analysis	Evaluator	end-Jan – end Mar 2025
Validation workshop	Evaluator	w/c 31 March 2025
Submission of draft evaluation report	Evaluator	w/c 14 April 2025
Co-creation workshop	Evaluator	w/c 28 April 2025
QA of draft Evaluation Report	SLE-EF Fondation Botnar	w/c 5 May 2025
Feedback on draft evaluation	Fondation Botnar/Faro	w/c 5 May 2025

³ Please note that this refers to Internal Botnar QA. The evaluator is expected to undertake their own comprehensive QA before submitting draft reports.

report		
Submission of Final Report	Evaluator	w/c 19 May 2025
Slide deck for sharing with secondary audiences	Evaluator	w/c 19 May 2025

Field trips

As mentioned above, due to current travel advice⁴, we do not expect in-person visits to Manta. This can be further discussed during Inception where travel advice is updated. Collaboration with local partner/s is strongly encouraged.

Budget

We anticipate a budget in the area of CHF 60,000, excluding expenses.

6. Evaluator requirements

It is envisioned that the evaluation is conducted by more than one evaluator. The level of involvement of each team member must be specified in the proposal.

Experience and skills required

- **Evaluation design:** the team should consist of members with demonstrated skills and expertise required to design, plan, and conduct mixed-methods evaluations and participatory evaluations.
- **Data collection and analysis:** The team must have demonstrable skills in quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis. In addition, team members must have experience conducting interviews with a wide range of stakeholders, including senior-level policymakers.
- **Relevant subject matter knowledge and experience:** It is desirable that team members have knowledge and experience in one or more fields relevant to this evaluation (youth engagement, understanding of city or urban-based interventions, policy advocacy, systems thinking, and partnership brokering).
- **Geographic:** It is desirable that evaluators be based in Ecuador or the region and, depending on travel advice, be able to conduct in-person visits to Manta.
- **Equitable partnerships:** Where proposals involve an evaluation firm that is not based in Ecuador, the evaluation team must demonstrate equitable partnerships between the evaluation firm and in-country evaluators through balanced resourcing and level of effort.

⁴ <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/ecuador>

- **Interpersonal and communication skills:** Strong interpersonal and communication skills with a demonstrable ability to develop and maintain positive relationships and effectively manage stakeholder interactions.
- **Language:** Excellent written and spoken English; fluency in Spanish is essential.
- **Conflict of interest:** The evaluator is a neutral party and has no conflict of interest with Fondation Botnar or Manta Mia/FARO.

References

Applicants are requested to include at least three hyperlinks as examples of evaluations that are broadly representative of the evaluation team's capability.

7. EOI and deadline

EOI

Evaluators are required to submit a letter of interest that outlines relevant subject knowledge, potential team composition and geographic location (**max 1.5 page**) in addition to their evaluation profile and references. Please note that reviewers are not obligated to read submissions that exceed the page limit. Evaluators that best meet the qualifications and experience requirements will be informed by w/e 20 September. **Please note that only selected applicants will be contacted and invited to submit proposals.**

Deadline

EOI should be submitted no later than 6 September 2024 at 12noon CET in pdf format to evaluation@fondationbotnar.org clearly mentioning in the subject line Manta Mia evaluation.

Please note that a **full proposal is not required** at this stage.