

Terms of Reference for Facilitated Organisational Strengthening Self-Assessments for Civil Society Organisations in Sub-Saharan Africa

Executive Summary

Comic Relief is seeking a consultant (or consultancy team) based in, or from, Sub-Saharan Africa to facilitate organisational self-assessments with Civil Society Organisation funded partners. This is in preparation for Organisational Strengthening activities (the nature and level of which will be determined by these self-assessments) with these funded partners.

The budget for this consultancy is a maximum of 68,250 GBP (including fees, VAT if applicable, and any expenses – travel may or may not be possible due to covid-19 restrictions) and all tenders must be submitted by 3 May 2021.

Background to the Brief

Comic Relief is a grantmaking organisation based in the UK. Comic Relief and the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO, formerly the UK Department for International Development, DfID) jointly fund a number of programmes in areas that are a priority for both FCDO and Comic Relief. As part of both organisations' commitment toward strengthening civil society partners, in three active programmes, a portion of funding has been earmarked for strengthening the capacity and sustainability of its funded civil society organisation (CSO) partners.

Comic Relief's Social Change Strategy¹ sets out how we believe Comic Relief can best support meaningful social change in our role as an investor, communicator and influencer. An investment in organisational strengthening (OS) aligns with Comic Relief's Social Change Strategy to:

- support meaningful social change as an investor, communicator and influencer;
- invest in organisations (UK & international) to strengthen the work they deliver;
- shift resources and power to partners closest to the communities our funds are intended to benefit;
- enable funded partners to pursue their own objectives for social change;
- support funded partners from the start to plan for the end of investment;
- leave funded partners stronger at the end of Comic Relief's investment than at the start.

The aim of the earmarked funds for organisational strengthening (OS) is to support funded partners to become more effective, sustainable and better able to represent local people's priorities in key thematic areas. A summary of these programmes is outlined in the table on the following page:

¹ https://assets.ctfassets.net/zsfivwzfgl3t/2RubEZMRMtmEJ4eEcWh9rr/6736fd96661278b41138962e27e78994/Social_Change_Strategy_Final_-_External.pdf

Name and brief description of Programme	Start and end date of the Programme	Total Programme value	Funding available for OS	Numbers of funded partners to be supported by the OS fund	Location of partners
<p>Mental Health and Wellbeing in Kenya</p> <p>This programme invests in civil society organisations and representative groups originating in Kenya with a strong track record in addressing stigma & discrimination around mental health issues, or in improving access to quality mental health services. We will also invest in strengthening the CSOs we fund, and in bringing them together, to support them to thrive and continue to benefit communities long after programme funding ends.</p>	April 2019 to March 2024	£4.7m	circa £400,000	9	Kenya
<p>All in, All Learning! – Phase II</p> <p>The All In, All Learning! programme is an inclusive education programme which aims to improve education opportunities and outcomes for the poorest and most disadvantaged while building stronger and more inclusive education systems in sub-Saharan Africa. The eight partners involved in the OS programme are Ugandan organisations working with children of pre-primary age, or with children with disabilities, with most of them working at the intersection of Early Childhood Development and addressing the needs of Children with Disabilities.</p>	March 2019 to March 2024	£5.5m	£213,132	8	Uganda
<p>Maanda – Phase II</p> <p>The Maanda Portfolio invests in partners which work to address and prevent violence against women and girls; and to promote women and girls' leadership. The four partners involved in the OS programme are small women's rights organisations, based in Sierra Leone, Tanzania, Malawi or Uganda.</p>	May 2020 to March 2024	£5.5m	circa £250,000	4	Uganda, Tanzania, Malawi, Sierra Leone

In 2020, Comic Relief developed a set of principles to guide its OS work with funded partners. Based on Comic Relief and sector learning, the model identifies six guiding principles for Comic Relief's future work to strengthen CSOs, and recommended approaches based on good practice. The six guiding principles are:²

1. Cultivate funded partner ownership

- Fundamental to Comic Relief's OS work is that it is not donor driven and not compliance-focused. The aim of the OS work is to support CSO partners to address the organisational priorities they set, to help bolster their resilience, strength and long-term adaptability. OS should be optional. Self-assessment helps foster ownership at the start of an OS journey.
- Good practice and Comic Relief's own learning about OS tells us that funded partner ownership is key to successful OS. Ownership is understood as funded partners taking the lead in determining their own priorities and in the decision-making on how to address them. While funded partner OS plans are a 'deliverable' for the consultancy, the consultant(s) should facilitate the development of the plans rather than produce them directly.
- The consultant will encourage partners to involve various stakeholders in the self-assessment process, and will encourage shared ownership of the OS process within partner organisations.

2. Enable access to quality local OS providers

- Quality local providers (with the competence, commitment and character to catalyse change) are vital to ensure OS is adapted to our funded partners' context, culture and language.
- The most effective providers specialise in OS.

3. Ensure quality OS methods. Quality OS support:

- takes an experiential approach, allowing time and space for learning and reflection;
- takes an asset-based approach, building on what funded partners already have and helping them to see and take their next step;
- uses consultative, participatory, and inclusive processes;
- recognises power dynamics and relationships;
- makes OS personal – partners understand how team members' emotions and intentions can support or block change happening;
- is on-going, accompanying funded partners over time.

4. Adequately resource OS change processes

- Resources include funding from Comic Relief, but there are also hidden costs in participating in OS for funded partners. It takes staff time, often away from their day-to-day roles, to engage in and be a part of the change process.
- OS should be harmonised and integrated with funded partners' programmes, not seen as separate.

5. Ensure participatory monitoring, evaluation and learning systems to reinforce ownership, learning and adaptation

- Comic Relief would like funded partners to set their own objectives for OS and to define what success looks like for their organisation. We know 100% success isn't possible.
- This might be through developing an OS Plan, with their priorities, their goal for each of their priorities, and the milestones they would like to reach in the coming year. This can then be reviewed every 6-12 months, with future milestones revised, based on their progress to date.
- We know that MEL must help OS, not get in the way. Good practice tells us that measuring OS: should not get in the way by being burdensome or resource intensive; should be light-touch and retrospective; should build on their existing MEL systems; and facilitate learning that helps along the OS journey.

6. Influence other stakeholders

- For funded partners who have ongoing OS activities with other organisations or funders, ensure that the assessment process at the start includes them so Comic Relief understands their approach to OS and so that CR's inputs are harmonised.

² A full document outlining the principles will be made available to those shortlisted for interview.



The concept of organisational buy-in and ownership (Principle 1) is seen as the most fundamental principle. In January 2021, Comic Relief consulted funded partners on developing these principles into a working model. With funded partners, Comic Relief agreed that *externally facilitated self-assessments* would be a good starting point to help funded partners identify their organisational priorities and develop an OS plan. Organisational Assessments help provide an analysis of organisational capacity, health, assets and gaps, as part of a diagnosis phase or first step of an OS cycle. A *self-assessment* helps funded partners remain in the driving seat and retain ownership, while an *external facilitator* provides an external view to guide a process which can help funded partners surface assets and gaps.

This consultancy will facilitate the production of OS plans by and for each funded partner, and these plans will be used as a basis for allocating the funds available for OS activities for funded partners. The ultimate aim of the OS support is to leave behind a cohort of strong, effective and sustainable CSO partners able to represent local people's priorities.

Comic Relief is therefore seeking an external consultant/s to work with up to 21 funded partners to conduct organisational assessments and to develop OS plans by August 2021.

Consultants can bid for work with all 21 partners or with a subset of partners. The maximum budget of 68,250 GBP above is based on working with all 21 partners; if a consultant proposes to work with a subset of partners, or if not all partners choose to participate, the budget is expected to be proportionately lower.

Approach and Methodology

1. **Value for Money** – Comic Relief has a commitment to understand, demonstrate and improve the potential impact of all the money it spends. This is an integral part of honouring, maintaining and growing trust amongst those who have given to Comic Relief and of our responsibility to those whose lives we seek to improve through our work in pursuit of a just world free from poverty.
2. **Adhering to Comic Relief's Safeguarding Framework** - The safety and well-being of everyone connected with our work is of paramount importance to us. Therefore, the consultant will need to demonstrate how they have considered the protection of participants throughout the consultancy.
3. **Participation** – The consultant will need to ensure that various stakeholders participate in the facilitated self-assessment process.
4. **Gender Mainstreaming** – Where appropriate, the consultant should consider the gender balance of the consultancy team.

The consultant will also need to take into account principles of impartiality, respect for people, transparency, privacy, accountability and professional objectivity throughout the process.

Project Management and Logistics

This consultancy will be supported by an internal working group comprising members of Comic Relief staff and, ideally, funded partners, if they wish to participate (if they are unable to participate Comic Relief will build in consultation/feedback loops with funded partners where possible). The consultant will be provided with a 'project information package' of key documentation for review. The main point of contact and link to the reference group will be Comic Relief's Senior Portfolio Manager for Government Funded Partnerships, who will be available for questions and discussions throughout the consultancy.

We are looking for consultancy firms or consultancies based in Sub-Saharan Africa, ideally in one or more of the countries where the funded partners are based.

The Covid-19 context in countries where partners are based will dictate some of the working arrangements. In some countries, travel to or within the country will not be allowed due to current travel restrictions in place. If however it is completely safe and within all local laws and regulations, the consultant(s) may be able to work with at least some of the funded partners in person; this will also be dictated by funded partners' preferences for in-person or remote working. Consultants should therefore budget for in-person meetings and expenses where it is deemed feasible, practical and desirable, but be prepared to carry out all meetings remotely if preferred by funded partners and/or if the situation changes. Meetings with the UK-based internal working group will be via remote video calls.

Budget

Budget available is up to **GBP 68,250** including fees, VAT if applicable and any expenses. This work is likely to be completed remotely given covid-19 travel restrictions, but it is possible that at least some of the meetings could be completed in person depending on the location of the consultants and the preferences of the funded partners, as well as the laws and regulations in each country. Please budget for travel and meeting expenses accordingly if you think that it is feasible to complete some meetings in person. Agreed expenses can be claimed against receipts. Value for money will be considered when analysing the applications.



Deliverables and Timeframe

The main aim of the consultancy is to support organisations to identify the organisational strengthening activities needed to achieve their organisational mission. To do this, the consultant will:

Activity/Deliverable	Timeframe
Review programme documentation on Comic Relief's OS model	June 2021
Review background information about the funded partners, including their funding applications, Annual Audited Accounts, Funding Overview Forms and first Annual Reports (where available).	June 2021
Work alongside a working group comprised of Comic Relief staff and funded partners to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ agree the methodology/methodologies proposed for the self-assessments ○ agree the format for the outputs of the self-assessments, listed below 	June 2021
Facilitate self-assessments with partners	June - Early August 2021

The outputs from the process will be:

Output	Deadline
Following completion of the assessments, take part in meetings to support Comic Relief's Portfolio Manager(s)' portfolio-wide analysis of the OS needs and priorities, as well as a debrief reflecting on the consultancy as a whole. This deliverable is expected to require no more than three days (assuming a maximum of one meeting day per programme, but it may be feasible to combine two or three programmes into one longer meeting, depending on the findings of the consultancy).	Early August 2021
An OS plan for each funded partner (up to 21 reports) identifying: the purpose and priorities for OS support with a rationale; a timeframe; key actions/activities with possible methods and anticipated resources required; and milestones against which to measure progress. While this OS plan must be produced and owned by the partner, the consultant will support its production.	Early August 2021
A first draft diagnostic report outlining the strengths, weakness and priorities that have been identified by each funded partner taking part in the OS assessment. As well as reflecting on each individual organisation, the report should include a brief analysis of portfolio-wide common OS needs and priorities which are important for multiple funded partners, so that OS activities may be coordinated in a group setting where relevant. Comic Relief will comment on this report and further changes may be requested from the consultant.	Early - Mid August 2021
Final draft diagnostic report, as above, following amendments made after comments from Comic Relief	Late August 2021

Consultant Profile and Competencies

We are searching for individuals or consultancy organisations based in, or from, Sub-Saharan Africa with the following skills and experience:

- Excellent facilitation, listening and analysis skills.
- Demonstrated experience working with civil society organisations of different sizes and capacities in the Global South including small CBOs, small to medium sized local CSOs, national NGOs, and country offices of international NGOs.
- Demonstrated understanding of capacity strengthening/institutional development principles and approaches, including capacity building, institutional strengthening and accompaniment.
- Experience in conducting organisational assessments, and familiarity with a range of organisational assessment tools.
- Expertise in the effective application of capacity strengthening tools and approaches resulting in enhanced organisational capacity and performance.
- Experience in mentoring, coaching, facilitation and training applying adult learning principles and practices for capacity strengthening and partnership building through formal and informal methods.
- Ability to listen to diverse views and experiences, consolidate, and interpret them.
- Ability to clearly communicate findings and recommendations in an accessible way to a variety of audiences and stakeholders.
- Experience in specified programme countries and themes is desirable.
- Experience delivering meetings remotely in an effective and engaging manner.

The consultant can bid for work with all of the partners or with a subset of the partners. If bidding for a subset, the bid should outline the rationale for the selection (for example, it is possible to bid for the work by geography or thematic portfolio).

The selected consultant will be expected to read and comply with Comic Relief's [Safeguarding Framework](#) and [Code of Conduct](#).

Shortlisting Specifications

If you are interested in applying to complete this work, please provide a response to this document (8 pages of A4 max, excluding Annexes), and include:

1. Experience in this area, with a specific focus on organisational strengthening of civil society organisations, and examples of other similar work undertaken. This should highlight organisational assessment tools and methods used in similar work.
2. A brief explanation of why you are motivated to apply, why you believe this work is important, and the values you employ in your work.
3. A description of your proposed approach and methodology/methodologies for the work, including what areas you expect to cover with the funded partners, key milestones and accompanying timeline.
4. A quality assurance plan that sets out the systems and processes for quality assuring the organisational assessment process and deliverables of the project, from start to finish. This plan should include your approach to safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
5. A summary of how you will mitigate Covid-19 restrictions and your previous experience of delivering engaging online sessions.
6. A breakdown of the expected allocation of days for the different deliverables.
7. Team composition (if applicable) including roles and responsibilities for this work and their relevant experience.

8. Details of two referees:
 - a. A brief description of your relationship with them/the work you carried out and when
 - b. Name, job title, organisation, email address and telephone number
 - c. Please request permission from your referees before you send us your proposal
 - d. We will not contact your referees unless we intend to contract you/your team

Annexes should include:

1. A budget which includes consultancy fees, expenses and VAT where appropriate. Please demarcate fees (e.g. daily rate) from other related expenses.
2. CVs of relevant team members (max 2 pages per person)
3. Two examples of relevant, previous work by the applicant (ideally previous assessments of a comparable nature/scale)
4. Any other relevant information

Comic Relief, at its sole discretion will select the successful proposal and shall be free to:

- Accept the whole, or part only, of any submission
- Accept none of the proposals
- Republish this Request for proposals

Application process

Tenders must be submitted by 5pm British Summer Time (BST) on 3rd May 2021 to c.baker@comicrelief.com with the subject line "Facilitated Self Assessments for OS". Any applications received after this time will not be considered.

Shortlisted applicants may be invited to discuss their proposals in more detail at Comic Relief's discretion. Interviews with shortlisted candidates are expected to take place between 11th - 15th May 2021. If you anticipate that you will not be available on any days during this period, please state this in your application outlining your availability, to facilitate efficient scheduling.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to ensure that their application is complete and meets the requirements laid out in this Terms of Reference. Failure to comply may lead to your proposal being rejected. Please ensure that you read and fully understand the requirements of this consultancy. If you have any queries in relation to your submission or to any requirements of this tender, please email: c.baker@comicrelief.com

Processing your data

Please let us know if you would like us to keep your personal details in our database for future reference. We will process your personal data according to the UK data protection law (the General Data Protection Regulation). If you want to know more about how we will use it, please refer to our [Privacy Notice](#) on our website.