

Terms of Reference

End-term evaluation of the core activities of Child Rights Connect under the grant agreement with the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency

Type of contract: Consultancy

Location: Online (*unless travel to Geneva, Switzerland is possible/allowed in the COVID-19 context*)

Indicative start date: April 2022

Indicative end date: July 2022

1. Summary

Child Rights Connect (CRCnct) is seeking qualified applicants to conduct an end-term evaluation of core activities, drawn from its 2020-2024 Strategic Plan¹ and supported under a grant agreement with the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (Sida) for 2019-2022.

2. Overview of CRCnct

Founded in 1983, CRCnct is a network of over 85 non-governmental organisations² with a worldwide reach spanning all regions and benefiting from a diversity of approaches and experiences in realising the rights of the child under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and its Optional Protocols (OPs). Reaching millions of children in 184 countries, CRCnct envisions a world in which all children have their human rights respected, protected, promoted and fulfilled, as enshrined in the UNCRC and its OPs.

CRCnct provides a unique platform to ensure local to global advocacy. Through CRCnct, children's rights defenders, including children, **speak with one global voice** in front of the international community and thereby have a stronger influence on political decisions that draw on local and national experiences, learning and data. Members in turn work to integrate international commitments into local and national advocacy and implementation.

CRCnct's theory of change rests on the **transformative role of children as rights-holders and States as duty-bearers, as well as convergence between children's rights defenders**, including Network members and other civil society actors, **and the UN human rights system** in affecting positive change towards the realization of children's rights around the world. As a key player situated at the intersection between rights-holders and duty-bearers and liaising between children's rights defenders and the UN system at the international level, CRCnct effects change through:

1. *Empowering children's rights defenders, including children* to effectively use the UN human rights system to reinforce their advocacy and work on children's rights at national level as well as influence the adoption by the UN of strong child rights standards and recommendations.
2. *Strengthening the international human rights system* for the adoption by the UN system of targeted recommendations to States and the further development of international law, policies and standards for States to improve the situation of children's rights on the ground.

¹ <https://www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/crct-strategic-plan-2020-2024.pdf>

² <https://childrightsconnect.org/member-network/>

The combined action of empowered children's rights defenders, including children, and strengthened international human rights system positively influences political actions affecting children's lives.

3. Background on Core Activities

Adopted by CRCnct's General Assembly (comprising all Network members) in May 2019, the **Five-Year Strategic Plan for 2020-2024**³ provides the framework for the implementation of the Core Activities to be reviewed through this evaluation. Under its Strategic Plan, CRCnct pursues the following strategic priorities:

1. Advance the recognition, protection and empowerment of child human rights defenders (CHRDs), including through child participation at national, regional and international levels.
2. Empower children's rights defenders through reporting to the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC Committee) in targeted States to advance sustained global engagement.
3. Strengthen accountability to children by building synergies between the CRC Committee, the other Treaty Bodies, the Human Rights Council (HRC), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the youth agenda.
4. Advance the ratification of the Optional Protocol on a Communications Procedure (OPIC) and its strategic use by children's rights defenders to contribute to the realisation of children's rights.

Additionally, under its Strategic Plan, CRCnct pursues the following organisational priorities:

5. More active and balanced membership
6. Strengthened governance and financial stability
7. A well-functioning organisation.

The Strategic Plan includes a Results Framework which delineates specific outputs under each of the strategic and organisational priorities⁴. It is complemented by an Operational Plan for 2020-2024 which guides how the organisation implements its Strategic Plan.⁵

This evaluation will not include a review of performance against organisational priorities. The last evaluation of CRCnct's programmatic work was undertaken in 2015⁶.

In implementing its Strategic Plan, CRCnct employs a varied spectrum of working methods ranging from advocacy to awareness-raising and knowledge-sharing; capacity-building; networking, mobilization and outreach; publications; and technical assistance (to name a few). A combination of these working methods is usually used to maximize the effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of CRCnct's work.

The work of CRCnct has long been supported by Sida through core funding⁷. Sida currently is the main core donor of CRCnct. This evaluation of Core Activities is undertaken under the framework of the grant agreement with Sida for the period 2019-2022 and coincides with the end of this current agreement in 2022.

4. Evaluation Overview

Intended users and use

The primary users of the evaluation report will be *CRCnct's Secretariat staff*,⁸ particularly the Management Team⁹, who will use relevant findings and recommendations to inform any needed adjustment to the implementation of the current Strategic Plan (including priorities, approaches, and working methods) as well

³ <https://www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/crct-strategic-plan-2020-2024.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/crct-strategic-plan-2020-2024.pdf>

⁵ <https://www.childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/crct-strategic-plan-2020-2024.pdf>

⁶ https://childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/GA_2016_7ChildRightsConnect_FinalEvaluationReport-1.pdf

⁷ See the applicable Sida General Conditions here: <https://www.ipiamr.eu/app/uploads/2021/08/Sida-NGO-ProjectCore-Support-General-Conditions.pdf>

⁸ <https://childrightsconnect.org/organisation/>

⁹ <https://childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/crcnct-orgchart-3.jpg>

as planning for the development of the subsequent strategic framework to start in 2023. Conclusions and lessons learned may also be used by the Secretariat for results-based reporting and knowledge management purposes. The gender and diversity analysis to be produced by this evaluation may particularly guide the Secretariat's development of organisational gender and diversity mainstreaming guidelines in 2022.

Given its role of strategic guidance and oversight, *CRCnct's Executive Committee*¹⁰ may also use relevant findings and recommendations to help guide decisions concerning subsequent implementation of the rest of the current Strategic Plan as well as identify general orientations for development of the future Strategic Plan.

Network members, gathered in *CRCnct's General Assembly*,¹¹ may also use relevant conclusions and recommendations to consider and approve any substantial adjustment to the current Strategic Plan as well as identify general orientations for the development of the future Strategic Plan.

This evaluation will also serve as quality assurance for *Sida*, which may use relevant conclusions and recommendations to inform their own reporting and knowledge management, as well as feed discussions with CRCnct on the future of the collaboration between the two organisations.

Objectives

Using the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria,¹² this evaluation aims to assess the coherence, relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of Core Activities under the strategic outcomes of the Strategic Plan, undertaken by CRCnct between 2019-2022. As an end-term review of results achieved under the 2019-2022 grant agreement between Sida and CRCnct, this evaluation should focus on evaluating the extent to which the set outcomes have been met, analysing the impact and sustainability of identified results where possible, identifying successful strategies and remaining gaps, and providing practical recommendations to enhance the implementation of the current Strategic Plan and inform the subsequent one.

While this end-term evaluation is by nature summative of results, a *strong learning objective* should be adopted to reflect on what has worked and what has not worked so well so as to identify concrete lessons and ways for CRCnct to enhance its ability to reach sustainable impact in the coming years.

Criteria

The evaluator should refer to the OECD/DAC quality standards and criteria for evaluating development assistance,¹³ as well as to the OECD/DAC glossary of key terms for evaluations.¹⁴

The following lines of inquiry for each stated evaluation criteria are indicative and should be refined at the evaluation inception phase. Two **cross-cutting issues** should be systematically reflected upon in the evaluation questions and subsequent analysis:

- *Child participation at all levels* as a cross-cutting priority of the Strategic Plan: The evaluation should produce an analysis of how well the Core Activities have promoted safe, empowering and sustainable child participation across the UN system and beyond, and formulate specific recommendations on how this could be improved.
- *Gender and diversity mainstreaming*: The evaluation should include an analysis of the differential impact the Core Activities may have had on girls/women, children/adults living with disabilities, and other particularly under-represented categories of the population, to gauge the reach, diversity, and inclusiveness of CRCnct's work. Specific recommendations on how this approach could be improved, having regard to the size and capabilities of CRCnct, should be formulated (which could feed into the

¹⁰ <https://childrightsconnect.org/organisation/#executive-committee>

¹¹ <https://childrightsconnect.org/organisation/#general-assembly>

¹² <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

¹³ <https://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/dacriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm>

¹⁴ <https://www.oecd.org/development/peer-reviews/2754804.pdf>

development of organisational gender and diversity mainstreaming guidelines, to be developed in 2022).

Coherence [How well do the Core Activities fit]

- How compatible have CRCnct's Core Activities been with other relevant interventions in the child rights sector at the international level, in particular having regard to Network members' work? This should include an analysis of CRCnct's global added value in the international child rights sector.
- How could complementarity and coordination with others be improved, having regard to the size and capabilities of CRCnct?
- How have other interventions and policies in the child rights sector at the international level supported or undermined CRCnct's Core Activities?

Relevance [Did Core Activities do what was needed]

- To what extent do the current strategic priorities still meet the central needs and aspirations of CRCnct's beneficiaries, target groups, partners, institutions, and global priorities in the evolving context?
- How might the Core Activities/Strategic Plan be adapted in future strategic planning cycles to better respond to their needs?
- Specifically, how should the Core Activities/Strategic Plan (outcomes and design) be adapted to better meet the aspirations, rights and needs of particularly vulnerable categories of children (girls, children living with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ children, children from minorities, and indigenous children), having regard to the size and capabilities of CRCnct?

Effectiveness [Have the set outcomes been met]

- To what extent have the stated programmatic outcomes been achieved or are likely to be achieved by the end of the current strategic cycle?
- Specifically, to what extent have the Core Activities contributed to safe, empowering and sustainable child participation at all levels (as a cross-cutting priority of the Strategic Plan)?
- Are there any differential results across groups of children and children's rights defenders supported (girls/women, people living with disabilities, people living in different regions, etc.)?
- What are the major factors that have influenced the achievement or non-achievement of the stated outcomes?

Efficiency [How well have resources been used]

- Have identified results under programmatic outcomes been delivered in an economic and timely way?

Impact [What difference did the Core Activities make]

- Beyond immediate results, what transformative, positive longer-term effects have the Core Activities contributed to or generated on children's well-being and human rights (i.e. changes in systems and norms at all levels, from international to national / local)?
- What negative effects have the Core Activities contributed to or generated?

Sustainability [Will the identified benefits last]

- How likely to continue are the identified positive effects of the Core Activities?
- How can the sustainability of the identified benefits be improved, having regard to the size and capabilities of CRCnct?

Methodology

The evaluation should be **utilisation-focused** in that reflection on the intended users and use of the review should guide the entire process.

As much as possible, the evaluation should also use a **participatory approach** within its methodology and analysis. Where child safeguarding considerations allow, this may include consultations with children as both

actors of the implementation of CRCnct's Strategic Plan (primarily through the Children's Advisory Team)¹⁵ and final beneficiaries of CRCnct's work. The evaluator will be responsible for developing a methodology which allows a safe, empowering and sustainable child participation throughout the evaluation process, and be required to strictly adhere to CRCnct's *Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure*.¹⁶

CRCnct will review the proposed evaluation methodology at the inception phase. The primary data should involve mixed quantitative and qualitative research methods. The methodology may include: (i) a *desk review* of organisational documents and records (including the Strategic and Operational Plans, results framework, annual reports, previous review reports, programmatic documents, and various records containing monitoring and evaluation data); and (ii) *first-hand data collection* including through, as possible under the COVID-10 context, key informant interviews, surveys and/or focus group discussions with CRCnct staff, members of the Children's Advisory Team, members, partners, beneficiaries and donors. Any consultation with children will require the presence of a supporting adult, in line with CRCnct's *Child Safeguarding Policy and Procedure*,¹⁷ with due regard for independence and the ability for children to freely express their views. Depending on the timing of activities and travel restrictions in the COVID-19 context, this may also include direct observation of a Core Activity.

5. Evaluation Implementation

The evaluation should take place between **April and July 2022**, with a first draft evaluation report due by **30 June 2022**, and final report and contract concluding by **25 July 2022**.

A total of up to **30 working days** will be available for:

- *Evaluation preparation* (including finalising the evaluation methodology, performing the initial desk review, creating data collection tools, and drafting a brief inception note);
- *Data collection* (including travel to Geneva, Switzerland as necessary and possible);
- *Data analysis and synthesis* (including transcription, data aggregation, draft report, presenting findings to CRCnct, and incorporating CRCnct's feedback into a final report).

The **deliverables** for this evaluation will include:

- A brief inception note outlining the evaluation methodology due within the first ten working days;
- A draft report outlining key findings, supporting evidence, and practical recommendations due by **30 June 2022 at latest**;
- An oral presentation of key findings with CRCnct staff after submission of the draft report;
- A final report incorporating all relevant feedback (after maximum two rounds of feedback), due by **25 July 2022 at latest**. The final report should include pragmatic recommendations in response to the evaluation questions. An Executive Summary of the main findings and recommendations should accompany the final report, to facilitate discussions on current and future strategic orientations with all concerned stakeholders.

CRCnct Secretariat staff will provide technical and logistical support as appropriate throughout the evaluation process (compilation of documents, identifying and/or serving as interpreters, assisting with scheduling meetings if desired, feedback on the methodology, etc.).

6. Budget Guidelines

The estimated budget for this evaluation should not exceed **CHF 15,000**. This figure only includes the consultant's fees and any expenses other than travel and accommodation expenses, if relevant, which will be directly paid for by CRCnct should travel be necessary and possible.

¹⁵ <https://childrightsconnect.org/our-children-advisory-team/>

¹⁶ <https://childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/crcnct-child-safeguarding-policy-procedure.pdf>

¹⁷ <https://childrightsconnect.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/crcnct-child-safeguarding-policy-procedure.pdf>

Please note that payment in full will not be made until all evaluation deliverables have been received and verified as meeting CRCnct's quality standards.

Cost saving will be a consideration in the selection process.

7. Application Guidelines

Key qualifications

The selected consultant or team of consultants should have:

- Demonstrated experience in results-based organisational and/or project evaluation;
- Excellent knowledge of child rights and understanding of the wider human rights sector;
- Robust understanding of the workings of the UN human rights system;
- Experience in international policy advocacy and human rights programming;
- Demonstrated experience in applying a human rights-based approach to programming as a methodology;
- Demonstrated analytical, communication and report-writing skills;
- To guarantee independence, **no previous experience of working with/collaborating with CRCnct, other than in an independent evaluator's capacity;** and,
- A strong track record of implementing high child safeguarding standards.

Desired qualifications

- Degree in or relevant working experience in the area of international law, international relations, human rights, social sciences, political sciences or related field;
- Experience with qualitative and quantitative M&E data collection and analysis methods;
- Experience in working on politically sensitive issues and ability to maintain security and confidentiality considerations throughout the evaluation process and beyond;
- Strong interpersonal skills;
- Strong facilitation and presentation skills; and,
- Strong ability to communicate effectively in English, both verbally and in writing. Additional language skills (preferably French and Spanish) are an asset.

Applications close on **14 January 2022 COB**. Interested candidates are asked to send a **CV (maximum 2 pages) and a short technical proposal (maximum 3 pages)** to recruitment@childrightsconnect.org, with the email subject: "Evaluation Consultant application".

The technical proposal should include: (i) a brief overview of the candidate's *key skills and experience* that are relevant to this consultancy; (ii) a concise description of the *desired evaluation approach and methodology*; (iii) a short *cost justification / budget* for this consultancy; (iv) an extract from or a link to a *previous evaluation report*; and (v) the names and contact information for *three recent references*. If you apply as a team, please specify the roles within your team and clarify who will lead.

Please appreciate that, owing to the volume of expected applicants, only short-listed candidates will be contacted. We regret that we are unable to answer phone enquiries.