

Request for Proposals

Consultancy service to evaluate
the value and effectiveness of

START Fund Nepal

Terms of Reference



**START FUND
NEPAL**
START NETWORK

CARE NEPAL

CARE is an international NGO with local staff and community partners in more than 90 countries. We create local solutions to poverty and inequality and seek dignity for everyone every day and during times of crisis. CARE puts women and girls at the centre of everything we do because they have proven to be the best hope for creating lasting change in the world. CARE has been operational in Nepal since 1978 and works in partnerships with government and non-government stakeholders across the spectrum of humanitarian action and long-term development programs.

START NETWORK

Start Network is made up of 98 humanitarian agencies across five continents, ranging from large international organisations to national NGOs. Together, our aim is to transform humanitarian action through innovation, fast funding, early action, and localisation.

We're tackling what we believe are the biggest systemic problems that the sector faces. Problems including slow and reactive funding, centralised decision-making, and an aversion to change mean that people affected by crises around the world do not receive the best help fast enough, and needless suffering results. Our work focuses on three areas to change the system:

- Localisation: shifting power to those closest to the front line for more effective response.
- New forms of financing: providing fast, early, and predictable funding to improve community resilience and preparedness.
- Collective innovation: sharing expertise, insights and perspectives to shape a more effective humanitarian system.
- Anticipatory action: becoming proactive in disaster response by analysing forecasts, and member-driven research.

The Start Network is at a critical point in its journey. We have grown and diversified our membership over the past 10 years. We are now set to evolve into a decentralised “network of networks” by 2025. We are currently working with five national and regional networks (hubs) in Pakistan, DRC, Guatemala, India and the Pacific. They are

developing locally-owned ways of anticipating and responding to humanitarian crises. We aim to support the emergence and development of further Hubs in the coming years. Our ultimate ambition is to devolve leadership, membership, programming and decision making to the hubs, while the UK team transitions to provide services of support.

The global Start Fund is Start Network's flagship programme, first activated in 2014 and subsequently disbursing more than £125 million across 76 countries. The Start Fund provides rapid response, and anticipatory funding to network members to meet the life-saving needs of people affected by, or at risk of, under-the-radar, and small to medium-scale crises, filling a critical gap in the humanitarian aid system. The Start Fund has decentralised decision-making processes that includes Start Network member in crisis-affected countries determining which projects to award funding to. Funding is disbursed within 72 hours of members raising a crisis alert. This makes the Start Fund one of the fastest humanitarian financing mechanisms in the world. Humanitarian action is then implemented within a 45 or 60-day timeframe, with a mandatory requirement that assistance should start reaching affected populations within seven days of receiving the funding authorisation, in order to fill a critical gap in early humanitarian action.

START FUND NEPAL (SFN)

Start Fund Nepal is a Start Network programme and is hosted by CARE - Nepal. SFN is a collectively managed financing mechanism, developed in Nepal by international Start Network members (15) and local national NGOs (16) based in Nepal with support from the global Start Fund. SFN was launched in June 2021, with the support from the UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and its first pilot year ended in March 2022, following which the exposure and coverage of the fund has grown significantly. Phase II of Start Fund Nepal started in April 2022 and will conclude in March 2024.

Based on the global Start Fund's guidelines, Start Fund Nepal follows the 45-day implementation cycle and funding decisions are also made within 72 hours of a raised crisis alert. Responses are meant to reach crisis-affected populations within 7 days. Therefore, a key area of focus for Start Fund Nepal is rapid financing and response.

To date, 19 alerts have been raised out of which 2 were not activated. Amongst the 17 activated alerts, 6 were anticipatory alerts, a key focus of Start Fund Nepal. In phase II, altogether 5 different projects were directly awarded to LNNGO members. It has also been noted during the past few alerts that the involvement of LNNGO members has increased in decision-making meetings with about two-thirds involvement in allocation meetings and more than one-third involvement in project selection meetings.

CONSULTANCY PURPOSE

Since Start Fund Nepal was launched in June 2021, 19 alerts have been raised, of which 17 have been activated, consisting of a total of 25 projects that were implemented by different member and non-member organisations. These projects have been able to provide vital support to the at-risk and affected communities in a timely manner. This consultancy will evaluate the value and effectiveness of Start Fund Nepal.

OBJECTIVES:

The main objective of this evaluation is to evaluate the performance of Start Fund Nepal from inception to present (Phase I and II) around the following topics: the relevance of the Start Fund niche in Nepal; how the Start Fund Nepal complements other in-country funding mechanisms; the value of timely and locally-led decision-making and funding.

These are a set of evaluation questions which will be further refined by the evaluators:

1. What are the existing humanitarian funding opportunities and decision-making profiles in Nepal and how does the Start Fund in Nepal complement these? Is Start Fund Nepal succeeding at filling a critical gap in humanitarian funding?
2. Is the Start Fund in Nepal effective in promoting early action in responding to humanitarian crises?
3. To what extent have Start Fund Nepal-funded interventions been effective in addressing the immediate needs of the affected population?
4. How has Start Fund Nepal contributed to building the capacities of local and national organisations?
5. What measures can Start Fund Nepal put in place to ensure that Start Fund Nepal maintains its unique value?
6. To what extent does Start Fund Nepal promote locally led decision-making and direct funding to local and national NGOs? What value-add does Start Fund Nepal's model of locally led decision-making and direct funding to local and national NGOs offer in Nepal?

The evaluation will provide clear recommendations for Start Fund Nepal, with the aim to help strengthen the national fund and its projects further and expand its donor base.

EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

The successful bidder is expected to suggest a suitable methodology to respond to the above-indicated evaluation questions. It is expected that a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies will be used, which may involve:

- desk-based reviews of relevant documents and processes from Start Fund Nepal, including alert notes, proposals, final project reports, research pieces, learning exchanges, PDMs, etc.
- key informant interviews with staff across Start Fund Nepal as well as with external stakeholders, such as Start Fund Nepal members and their partners, local and federal government authorities, etc.
- potential focus group discussions with crises-affected and at-risk populations involved in Start Fund Nepal responses.

QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE:

- Advanced university degree in disaster risk reduction and/or management, business administration, economics, statistics, development studies or other related discipline;
- At least five (5) years of experience in monitoring and evaluation (M&E) methods and approaches (including quantitative, qualitative, and participatory); planning, design and implementation of M&E systems; research; and report writing;
- Experience in disaster risk reduction and management; Experience with Forecast-based Action, Anticipatory Action (AA) and Financing is an asset.
- Knowledge and experience with outcome harvesting or behavioral change evaluation methods.
- Experience with household level data collection.
- Understanding and knowledge of basic computer applications such as MS Word, Excel and database management. Knowledge of statistical software like STATA, R or Python is an asset.
- Excellent writing and analytical skill in drafting concept notes and reports.

KEY DELIVERABLES:

The services should result in the following deliverables:

- An Evaluation Inception Report with more nuanced Evaluation questions (if required), a proposed evaluation methodology including data collection plans, data sources and timelines.
- A draft evaluation report and a powerpoint presentation (PPT) including the interim findings and emerging recommendations.
- A final Evaluation report with a powerpoint presentation.

TIMELINE:

It is expected that the consultants will work over a 2-month period, with an estimated start date of January 2024 at the latest. While the exact date and number of working days will be flexible and adapted to operational requirements, and finalised in the application process, a suggested breakdown of the activities is as follows:

Activity	Deliverable		Payment
1	Inception report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Briefing and planning meetings with Start team members. ● Review of programme documents ● Desk review ● Detailed review of questions, approach, methodology, data collection tools, workplan etc. ● Presentation to and feedback from the Start Funds MEAL team 	40% of payment following the submission and acceptance of the Inception Report
2	Data collection and analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● KII consultations ● Data compilation and analysis. 	
3	Data analysis and report writing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Completion of data analysis ● Completion of draft report including the interim findings and emerging recommendations 	
4	Reporting and validation of findings	Validation meeting to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Present the draft report and the findings, including the database, of the assessment. ● Gather feedback on the findings and build consensus on recommendations. ● Support finalisation of the research. 	40% of payment following submission of draft report
5	Finalisation and dissemination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A final report for the Start Fund team. ● A shorter report for external audiences ● A presentation with PPT slide deck which includes key findings and recommendations. 	20% upon sign off of final report and other deliverables

LOCATION AND OFFICIAL TRAVEL INVOLVED

The project will likely require ground-level information; therefore, the consultant/consultancy will have to manage all required transportation in Kathmandu and outside Kathmandu themselves.

LINE MANAGEMENT:

The MEAL specialist of Start Fund Nepal will supervise the work progress along with Program Manager- Start Fund Nepal.

Submission of Proposals

Interested parties can submit their financial and technical proposals by 21 Dec 2023 to npl.carenepal@care.org along with their CV. A combined proposal is also acceptable.

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS

- Technical and Financial proposals separately
- Examples of previous evaluations/reports by the consultants
- CV(s) of the Consultant(s) with full date of birth in DD/MM/YYYY format. The date of birth is required for vetting purpose.
- For firms: Copies of- Firm registration certificate, VAT registration certificate, latest tax clearance certificate. For firms that are tax exempted by the government, a copy of the tax exemption certificate should be submitted.

If any documents/information is not available or not applicable, the reason(s) must be clarified in the proposal form. CARE Nepal will have the right to disqualify the proposals from the selection process if the proposal submission guideline has not been followed.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSAL

The technical (70%) and detailed financial (30%) proposals will be evaluated based on following:

Technical

- Understanding and interpretation of the Terms of reference
- Methodology
- Time and activity schedule

Organizational/Personnel Capacity Statement

- Relevant experience related to the assignment.
- Team Composition as per ToR
- Curriculum Vitae with relevant references

Financial

- Proposed budget with detail breaks down.

Payment terms:

The payment will be made on deliverable basis upon mutual agreement.

1. Inception report: 40%
2. After Draft report submission: 40%
3. After Final report submission: 20%

START NETWORK CULTURE

- To carry out the responsibilities of the role in line with the Start Network Code of Conduct and with a commitment to safeguarding adults and children.
- A commitment to the Start Network vision, principles, values, and approach.
- The Start Network team is an agile group of individuals who use their experience and skills across the network, so flexibility to work in and with different teams and functions is a part of our culture.