



Terms of Reference: External Mid-Term Evaluation

The Digital Defenders Partnership (DDP) is seeking external consultants to carry out the Mid-Term Evaluation of our 2020–2023 strategic plan.

DDP was founded in 2012 by the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC), initially as an emergency grant mechanism in response to digital threats against human rights defenders (HRDs). Our programme of activities has grown significantly in recent years, with the aim of providing a more holistic response to digital threats against HRDs. Hosted as a programme of Hivos, DDP is currently supported by seven governmental donors, all of whom are FOC members, with an annual budget of approximately €3 million.

Our 2020–2023 Strategy concretised three areas of work:

- **Incident Emergency Response**, which aims to provide timely, flexible, and holistic emergency response resources which reduce the impact or risk of digital attacks against human rights defenders;
- **Sustainable Protection Support**, which aims to strengthen awareness and capacities necessary to build sustainable and effective responses to digital threats among human rights defenders at risk;
- **Facilitation and Community Building**, by which we aim to develop and maintain accessible, collaborative, resilient and responsive networks of expertise and support to human rights defenders under digital threat.

Our priority groups for support in accordance with our current strategy are:

- Journalists and other actors who make data available for the public;
- Women's rights defenders;
- Environmental, land, and indigenous peoples' rights defenders;
- LGBTIQ+ rights defenders.

Each area of work consists of several activities including small grants, digital protection accompaniment and support for organisations; strengthening the capacities of digital protection experts; development of learning materials and resources; and actively supporting collaboration in disciplinary fields including technology, digital security, HRD protection and digital rights advocacy. In order to support this work, during this strategic period we have diversified our team so as to include regional teams in Latin America, South-East Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

What we are looking for

In order to reflect critically on our work and respond creatively to the needs of human rights defenders including activists, journalists, and movements, we are looking for a team of consultants to evaluate the impact of our work generally and since the beginning of our ongoing strategic period in particular.

The overarching question we seek to evaluate is the extent to which our programme of activities effectively supports HRDs to continue their work in the face of socio-political violence, and its digital aspects in particular. To this end, specific questions which the evaluation may address include:

Programmatic Aspects

- How solid are the assumptions which drive DDP's theory of change?
- How accurate and adequate is DDP's analysis of context and needs, and to what extent does our programme of activities respond to this?
- What is the added value of DDP within the broader networks of support to HRDs at risk and Internet freedom?
 - Does the value of DDP's outcomes outweigh the costs of its implementation?
- Is our current set of grants adequate in responding to the context and our objectives?
 - To what extent do our Incident Emergency Funding (IEF) and Sustainable Protection Funding (SPF) adequately address the needs of human rights defenders under threat in the current global context?
 - To what extent does our support of Global and Regional Partners adequately address the needs of human rights defenders under threat in a holistic manner? What is the impact of this funding on the partner organisations and broader networks?
 - To what extent does Community and Network Funding (CNF) strengthen collaboration among digital rights activists?
 - Are these grant types the most strategic and effective use of our financial resources?
- What has been the long-term impact of accompaniment on digital security from a holistic perspective provided by our Digital Protection Facilitators (formerly Digital Integrity Fellows), both on the organisations and the DPFs/former Fellows themselves?
- To what extent is DDP's collaboration with allies in the fields of diplomacy, technology, digital security, and HRD protection (such as through the [Rapid Response Network](#), [CiviCERT](#) and our own Field Building networks) supporting our objectives and those of the broader field?
- To what extent is our programme of work consistent with Gender Equity and Diversity Inclusion and which barriers to this should be addressed as a matter of priority?

Processes and Structure

- To what extent has the expansion and geographical diversification of DDP's team supported our objectives?
- To what extent does DDP's governance and internal decision-making structure contribute to the results explored above?
- To what extent are our decision-making processes effective and consistent with our stated values?
- To what extent is DDP's working culture compatible with our stated values?

Scope, Methodology, and Profiles

There is naturally some flexibility in relation to the precise scope and methodologies which can be employed in the Evaluation, and we expect applicants to detail both (see below). In general terms, we will tend to prioritise methodological proposals which:

- Adopt a critical, intersectional feminist approach to socio-political violence against HRDs, its digital facets, its root causes and the potential responses to these;
- Will be framed, designed, and implemented by a diverse team located in the Global South;
- Create a safe space for participatory input from DDP's (potential) beneficiaries, donors, team members, and partners;
- Are familiar with alternative models of decision-making, flat hierarchies, consensus, etc.

In this connection, successful candidates will be able to demonstrate:

- Strong knowledge of the field of human rights defender protection and its key issues;

- Strong knowledge of digital rights and the role of technology in human rights violations;
- Knowledge of key issues and tools in relation to digital security, especially in the context of human rights work;
- Proven communication and research skills in a variety of socio-cultural contexts;
- A keen focus on intersectional and gender-justice issues in relation to all of the above.

Deliverables, Milestones, and Timeline

Subject to negotiation in light of the proposals made and their particularities, we suggest the following set of deliverables and timeline for the same:

1. Statements of Interest in relation to this TOR by 25 August 2021 (see the next section for details);
2. Following acceptance, an initial discussion to finalise scope and methodology by 3 September 2021;
3. An updated, detailed workplan by 17 September 2021;
4. Research to be carried out between September 2021 and January 2022;
5. Initial results to be shared with DDP by 31 January 2022
6. Final reports (one internal and one shorter public report) by 28 February 2022.

The budget available for this evaluation is €50,000 which includes travel-related costs.

How to apply

Statements of Interest should be addressed to Frerieke van Bree at fbree@hivos.org and submitted no later than midnight CEST on 25 August 2021.

Statements of Interest should include:

- A project proposal including scope, methodology, and timeline (2,000 – 3,000 words);
- An itemised budget;
- Curricula Vitae of the Consultants;
- If available, at least one example of a previous research-based publication or other relevant project.