

ANNEX 4 – EVALUATION TERMS OF REFERENCE

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ANNEX B

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE EVALUATION OF FINNISH HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

Introduction

As a component of official development cooperation, Finnish humanitarian assistance is an integral part of Finland's foreign policy. It is guided by the general policy papers for development cooperation and a sector-specific strategy paper from 1997. Annually, 10–15% of the development cooperation budget is allocated to humanitarian aid.

The Finnish humanitarian aid targets saving human lives, relieving human distress and helping those most in need. The aid should focus on the poorest countries. Humanitarian aid is not an isolated phenomenon, but an important tool that helps the international community to forecast, prevent and solve crisis. Finland seeks to promote the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian aid, and to advance the application of international quality standards in the work.

In 2003, Finland spent 42 million EUR on humanitarian aid and 5 million EUR on humanitarian mine action. Non-ear-marked general support to humanitarian organisations amounted to 12 million EUR. Of ear-marked funds, 57% were allocated to Africa, 37% to Asia and 5% to Europe. As the percentage distribution reflects, most people in need of humanitarian aid were in Africa. The start of the reconstruction phase in the Balkans explains the declining share of Europe, as humanitarian aid funds are no longer needed.

The most important channels of aid were the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the International Commission of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the World Food Programme (WFP), the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) for Palestinian Refugees in the Middle East, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Finnish channels were the Finnish Red Cross, FinnChurchAid and Fida International.

The Finnish humanitarian aid was last evaluated in 1995–1996.²⁰⁹ Overall, the conclusions were satisfactory, e.g. based on effectiveness, efficiency and relevance criteria. The evaluation report recommended that:

- the policy focus should be increased to achieve a more appreciable effect for Finnish humanitarian aid,

²⁰⁹ COWIconsult. Thematic evaluation of the Finnish humanitarian assistance. Evaluation report 1996:2. Helsinki: Ministry for Foreign Affairs, 1996. 178 p.

- the coordination among different actors should be strengthened to improve coherence in crisis management, and
- the Ministry for Foreign Affairs should play a more active role in mobilisation of resources towards a specific agenda, to get the maximum result from the national and international capacities.

It was further recommended that each line on action should be implemented using specific objectives against which progress could be measured. There were further specific recommendations regarding the humanitarian aid administration, relations with international organisations and NGOs. The recommendations were used as guidance, when the strategy paper for humanitarian assistance was finalised in 1997 (Annex H). The Finnish approach to humanitarian assistance was last re-affirmed in the Development Policy Programme of the Government early in 2004. The policy paper emphasised the importance of strengthening the continuum of humanitarian aid and development cooperation.

An appropriate period of time has now passed to review the progress and to re-evaluate the Finnish policy and practice on humanitarian aid against the background of international development in the sector. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs (MFA) has thus decided to carry out a comprehensive, independent and objective programme evaluation of the work since 1996.

Objectives

The main purpose of the evaluation is to underpin the forthcoming revisions of the Finnish humanitarian aid policy and practice. Therefore, the evaluation needs to provide future visions and clear recommendations for policy development and aid actions.

Specific objectives are to analyse and assess the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the Finnish humanitarian aid. An additional objective is to review how the recommendations of the previous evaluation were received in the administration and how these have been implemented.

Issues to be Covered

The period under review is 1996–2003. The evaluation should focus on disaster relief and assistance to victims of armed conflicts. It should cover all humanitarian aid funded with ODA budget, including bilateral, multilateral and NGO actions. Aid to prevention of conflicts and disasters, humanitarian mine action, support to human rights organisations and democratisation efforts should be reviewed only descriptively.

The descriptive part of the evaluation should cover at least the following issues:

- Brief historical background
- The overall position of humanitarian aid in Finnish development cooperation

- Previous evaluation report: how this was received and how the recommendations have been implemented
- Programme and policy development since 1996
- Aid actions and allocations since 1996
- The current policies for humanitarian aid
- How does Finland address the issues of changing humanitarian environment and efforts to improve aid relevance and quality? (To what extension is attention paid to on-going donor community's thematic discussions on cross-cutting issues like continuum, LRRD/4R, forgotten crisis, good humanitarian donorship and other quality and impact related matters?)
- The humanitarian aid administration, decision-making process and its resources
- The capacity of the Finnish NGO sector to contribute to the delivery of humanitarian aid: current strengths and development issues
- The influence of civil society actions and of the media in focusing humanitarian aid actions

The analytic part of the evaluation needs to address the following issues:

- Relevance

Has the implementation of humanitarian assistance been in line with general and sector specific policies of the Department for Development Policy? How does the Finnish policy and practice compare with those of international actors?

- Efficiency/cost-effectiveness:

Were the financial and staff resources and other inputs used efficiently to achieve results? Relevant questions include the balance between non-ear-marked vs. ear-marked aid, the optimal sizing of aid targets, the appropriate number of small projects, and the utilisation of Finnish expertise.

- Effectiveness/timeliness

To what extent did the assistance achieve its purpose? Has the aid been focused on greatest needs and largest funding deficiencies? Proper timing of assistance.

- Relevance/Appropriateness

"Relevance" refers to the overall goal and purpose of a programme, whereas "appropriateness" is more focused on the activities and inputs.

- Connectedness

To what extent have the humanitarian activities taken into account the country-specific contexts and longer-term and interconnected problems?

- Coherence

Refers to policy coherence, and the need to assess security, developmental, trade and military policies as well as humanitarian policies, to ensure that there is a consistency and, in particular, that all policies take into account humanitarian and human rights considerations.

Coherence can also be analysed solely within the humanitarian sphere - to see whether all actors are working towards the same basic goal.

- Co-ordination

Finnish interventions in relation to what others are doing. International coordination. The role of Finnish embassies abroad.

- Protection

Assessment of the levels of security and protection in the area of the project or programme and, where relevant, the steps taken to improve them.

Cross-cutting and thematic issues need also be addressed:

- Poverty: The ultimate goal of development co-operation is to alleviate poverty and to improve the position of the least privileged and marginalised groups of society. Although the approach in humanitarian aid is mainly for short- and medium-term actions, it will be necessary to assess the justification of the aid from the poverty point of view: e.g. who were the actual beneficiaries, and how much did they benefit.
- Gender: Have the actions provided equal access to and control over resources and services as well as participation in decision-making on different levels for both sexes. How do the interventions affect roles and position of both men and women in the target areas?
- Environment: Have environmental aspects in the widest sense been taken into account in design of interventions? Have there been any environmental impacts?

Methods

The evaluation shall begin with desk work comprising a study of relevant background papers and reports, and interviews with representatives of the MFA, consultants, NGOs, researchers and other relevant informants. Part of the informants, including international actors, may be interviewed through questionnaires.

The field work comprises further collection of data and interviews with the MFA representatives both in Helsinki and in the embassies and liaison offices, government officials at various levels, consultants, workers of NGOs and other key informants, local stakeholders, beneficiaries and other donor agencies working in sector and includes also eventual visits to the field.

The Appraisal Team

The work will be carried out by a team, which should have the following expertise:

- solid professional training in political, social or other relevant sciences
- practical experience in and in-depth understanding of humanitarian aid issues
- familiarity with the work of international humanitarian aid agencies
- high proficiency in evaluation methods
- knowledge of international agreements on standards and performance, such as the Red Cross/NGO Code of Conduct and the SPHERE criteria for quality of humanitarian aid as well as relevant aspects of international humanitarian law

The team should be balanced by gender, and preferably include representation from developing countries. Because part of the internal documentation cannot be translated, the team should include at least one member with fluency in Finnish.

Reporting and Timetable

The evaluation is expected to start in June/July 2004 and shall be completed by the end of the year 2004. The draft final report shall be submitted to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs by the end of November 2004. The tenderer is requested to suggest its own time-table and whether field visits are included in the assignment.

After the desk study, *an inception report* will be prepared to present the future activities of the evaluation, and to adjust the scope of the study, if necessary. The report may include a proposal for eventual field visits, with proposed specific targets for project or programme evaluation. The inception report shall be submitted electronically in Word format.

After the field work, *an interim report* will be prepared and the preliminary findings will be discussed with key stakeholders to ensure the completeness of the study. The interim report shall be submitted electronically in Word and PDF formats within 4 weeks after the completion of the field work phase.

At the final stage *a draft final report* shall be prepared. After the discussion and comments from the MFA, the reporting shall be completed in *a final report*

The final report shall address in a balanced way both the positive aspects and the existing or likely problems. The recommendations must be clearly based on the findings and analysis of the evaluation. The report must contain an executive summary, not exceeding 15 pages, in which the main findings, conclusions, lessons learned and recommendations should be summarised. The main report should preferably not exceed 140 pages, excluding appendices. The reporting language is English.

The final report shall be submitted in Word and PDF formats, both electronically and as CD-ROM and in such a condition that it can be printed and published directly as hard copy. In addition, 10 printed copies of the final report are needed to the MFA.

Mandate

The Evaluation Team shall discuss all relevant issues related to the work with authorities, officials and contributors concerned, but is not authorised to make any commitments on behalf of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland.

Helsinki, 5 May, 2004