External Peer Review for

**The Strategic Evaluation of Austrian Development Cooperation's
Engagement in Palestine**

Terms of Reference (ToR)

1.   Background

The Austrian Development Agency (ADA) was founded in 2004 as the operational unit of Austrian Development Cooperation. The Federal Ministry for Europe, Integration and Foreign Affairs (MFA) is responsible for the strategic planning and alignment of Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC). ADA's three major goals are combating poverty, ensuring peace, and preserving the environment. ADA currently funds around 600 projects and programmes which are implemented through partner organizations in ADA's key regions and priority countries. Its strategy is described in the "Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy 2019-2021"[1] outlining principles as well as operational priorities.

Peer Review is an internationally established tool in development cooperation to ensure quality and enhance learning. Other bilateral development cooperation actors integrate elements of peer review into their strategic and programmatic evaluations.[2]

ADA's evaluation unit, together with MFA's evaluation unit, is responsible for commissioning and managing strategic evaluations. The Austrian Development Cooperation (ADC) introduced the instrument of Peer Review (PR) in 2018 as a tool to enhance the methodical, methodologic or subject level quality of its strategic evaluations. It is meant to supplement the quality assurance process through ADA and FMA evaluation units and the Evaluation Reference Groups. The Evaluation Policy of the Austrian Development Cooperation, which has been developed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (BMEIA, VII.4) jointly with the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and in cooperation with other key Austrian ADC stakeholders, makes reference and encourages the use of peer reviews as a useful tool to enhance quality and learning[3].

These Terms of Reference (ToR) are developed for the methodologic peer review of the Strategic Evaluation of ADC's Engagement in Palestine.

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[1]FMA (2019). Three-Year Programme on Austrian Development Policy 2019–2021
https://www.entwicklung.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Dokumente/Publikationen/3_JP/Englisch/3JP_2019-2021_EN.pdf
[2] For example, the Swiss Development Cooperation (SDC), see SDC paper presented at 2018 Annual DeGEval Conference in Dresden, Germany. Also the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) has institutionalized external peer review.
[3] FMA (2019). Evaluation Policy of the Austrian Development Cooperation.
https://www.bmeia.gv.at/fileadmin/user_upload/Zentrale/Aussenpolitik/Entwicklungszusammenarbeit/Web_Evaluierungs policy_EN.PDF

The assignment for the methodological peer review is for one peer reviewer for 14 working days and will be spread over the period end November 2021 to June 2023. This assignment is desk-based, with one visit to Vienna during the assignment.

2. Purpose

The peer review aims at:
- Supporting evaluation management in developing a suitable evaluation and technical approach at the outset of the evaluation
- Contributing to the quality assurance of the strategic evaluation
- Supporting the application of rigorous evaluation methods which are up to date

3. Responsibilities

ADA's evaluation unit is responsible for steering the evaluation process and the communication between evaluation team and peer reviewer. The evaluation unit will ensure that adequate time is given to the reviewer to submit her/his written input. The peer reviewer will be provided with an evaluation plan and approximate timelines for their feedback at the outset. Delays or changes will be communicated to the reviewers timely. Equally, the peer reviewer is asked to communicate his unavailability for a certain time period in a timely manner to the ADA Evaluation unit.

4. Deliverables
The Peer Reviewer contributes to the quality of strategic evaluations by commenting in writing on the draft ToR, the selected proposal, the draft inception report and suggested methodological approaches, the reconstruction of the Theory of Change, guidelines for interviews, focus group discussions and workshops as well as the preliminary findings and the draft evaluation report. Furthermore she/he will participate in five meetings (kick-off, presentation draft inception report, Theory of Change workshop, presentation preliminary findings, as well as findings and recommendations workshop) as well as ad-hoc virtual meetings related to her/his written feedback provided. One of the meetings might take place in Vienna, all others will be conducted virtually. Finally, she/he will provide a written input to ADC's After-Action Review exercise in which the lessons learned from the evaluations process will be shared. All deliverables will be submitted in English unless otherwise agreed in advance with ADA's Evaluation Unit.

5. Payment

Payment will be based upon deliverables and be made in three instalments, as follows:

- First instalment of 30% of the maximum payable amount upon submission of comments on the draft TOR;
- Second instalment of 30% of the maximum payable amount upon submission of comments on the selected proposal, the Theory of Change (ToC) and the draft inception report;

- Third and final instalment (40% of the maximum payable amount) upon submission of the comments to the preliminary findings, the draft evaluation report and submission of the After-Action Review comments as outlined above.

6. Qualifications of the peer reviewer

The peer reviewer should be an acknowledged expert in the field of evaluations and should have the following qualifications:
- In-depth knowledge and professional experience in evaluation methods and methodologies, proven by at least two publication (can be also working papers, etc.)
- Proven experience in peer reviewing evaluations in the area of development cooperation;
- In-depth knowledge and experience on Theories of Change in the context of development cooperation;
- Experience in designing and applying evaluation methodologies in fragile contexts and politically sensitive environments is an advantage;
- Familiarity with strategic evaluations in the context of Austrian Development Cooperation is an advantage;
- Fluency in both oral and written communication in English is a requirement;
- Strong analytical skills;
- Excellent writing and communication skills.

7. Working days
The cooperation will be agreed on during the whole period of the evaluation, starting with the ToR and ending with the evaluation report. The following table describe the maximum working days for the peer review.

Meetings (participation)	Working days
Kick-Off (virtual)	0.5
Theory of Change Workshop	0,5
Presentation of Draft Inception Report	0.5
Presentation of Preliminary Findings	0.5
Presentation of Revised Report (Findings and Recommendation Workshop)	0.5
Comments on Evaluation Products (in Writing and follow-up calls)	
Commenting on draft ToR	2
Commenting on selected proposal	1
Commenting on ToC	1.5
Commenting on Draft IR	2.5
Commenting on Draft Evaluation Report	2.5
Input After Action Review	1
Reserve Days	1
Total	14

The following tentative timeline is planned for the evaluation:

Evaluation Process	Tentative Timeline
1. DESIGN PHASE	
Elaboration of Terms of Reference for the evaluation	September-December 2021
Recruitment of evaluation team and review of proposals	January – March 2021
2. IMPLEMENTATION PHASE	
2.1. INCEPTION PHASE	
Document review and initial interviews	April 2022
Kick Off Meeting	April 2022
Theory of Change Workshop	Mid/End-May 2022
Draft Inception Report Submission	June 2022
Presentation Inception Report in Vienna	end June 2022
Written Feedback, Integration of Feedback and Submission Final Inception Report	End July/Early August 2022
2.2. INQUIRY PHASE	
Data Collection in the field	September-October 2022
Data collection in Vienna	September 2022
Presentation of preliminary findings	November 2022
Data Analysis & Synthesis	November-December 2022
2.3. REPORTING PHASE	
Draft Report – Submission	Mid-January 2023
Presentation of Preliminary Findings	End January 2023
Commenting of draft report (by EVAL and ERG)	By mid-February 2023
Integration of feedback and submission revised evaluation report	March 2023
Revised Evaluation Report – Presentation and refinement of recommendations (Workshop)	March 2023
Submission/Approval final report	April 2023
3. UTILIZATION PHASE	
Inputs in After Action Review	April 2023
Preparation Communication Material	April 2023
Kick-Off for Management Response	May/June 2023
Webinar on Evaluation Results	May/June 2023