



Norwegian
Helsinki Committee

Review of a Norwegian Helsinki Committee project in Eurasia

Documentation, accountability measures, and capacity building of civil society actors

Terms of Reference

2018

1) Background

The Norwegian Helsinki Committee (NHC) has received support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) since the 1980s. The current agreement with the MFA on project support in Eurasia is for the period 2017-2020. The overall budget for the whole period of the project is NOK 60 000 000 (app. 6 500 000 Euro). The agreement states that the NHC shall undertake a mid-term evaluation by 1 February 2019.

The main beneficiary of this review will be the project, as well as NHC's donors (MFA), the NHC board and NHC staff, with an aim to strengthen the work and give feedback, if needed, on adjustments for the further implementation of the project.

The NHC is seeking a review that can assess the implementation of the activities of the project, the progress, processes and the achievements so far. The review will also look at the results and effects of NHC support and capacity building on individual partner organisations.

The review will assess effects experienced by the projects' target groups as part of the outcome of the project. Target groups include human rights defenders, civil society activists, media representatives and lawyers, as well as public institutions and decision-makers.

The NHC is seeking an inclusive and participatory process that involves engagement and interaction with NHC and NHC's local partners in the project.

2) About the NHC

The NHC is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working to ensure that human rights are respected in practice. Its main methods are documentation, advocacy, teaching and democracy support (i.a. capacity building of civil society organizations).

The NHC bases its work on international human rights instruments adopted by the United Nations, the Council of Europe, and the Organization on Security and Co-Operation in Europe (OSCE), including the 1975 Helsinki Final Act.

The NHC is registered as an association under Norwegian Law and was founded in 1977. It is a not-for-profit NGO. A council of 50 prominent persons forms its highest organ. The Council elects a Board, which oversees the work of the Secretariat. The Secretariat has about 25 professionals employed. The organization has about 200 support members.

The NHC has sister committees in most countries in the OSCE-region, i.e. Europe, Central Asia and North America. It is a member of the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), The Civic Solidarity Platform, the International Coalition for International Criminal Court (CICC), the Norwegian NGO Forum, and the European Platform for Democratic Elections (EPDE). It serves as the secretariat for the Norwegian NGO Forum and the International Panel of Parliamentarian for Freedom of Religion or Belief (IPPFoRB).

NHC projects are supported by domestic and international public and private donors, of which the Norwegian MFA is the largest contributor. The NHC regularly receives support from members and occasional gifts from individuals and organisations. Its annual financial turnover is about 45 mill NOK. NHC's financial management and reporting is subject to audit by PriceWaterhouseCoopers.

According to its statutes, the NHC shall promote respect and protection of international human rights. It shall document violations of human rights, influence authorities to respect human rights, run and promote human rights education and support human rights organizations.

Based on its historic origin in the Helsinki Final Act, the NHC shall promote human rights in North America, Europe and Central Asia. When addressing issues of relevance to other regions of the world, the NHC may have activities related to these regions.

An important part of NHC work methods, is to co-operate with and strengthen local organizations and groups which wholly or partly have the same purpose.

The NHC Strategic Plan 2017-2021 states that the NHC will particularly focus on the following main topics and activities: 1) Documentation and work against impunity, 2) the promotion of democratic elections and democratic rule, 3) basic freedoms, with a particular focus on freedom of speech, freedom of assembly, freedom of religion or belief and the situation for human rights defenders and whistle-blowers, LGTBI-activists and women human rights defenders.

The NHC has extensive competence on the human rights situation in the Eurasia region including Russia. It has followed the situation in Russia closely since the 1970s and has a vast network of partners and contacts over the whole region.

In addition to the project in Eurasia, the NHC runs projects and/or activities in other countries in Eastern and Central Europe, Turkey, Norway and a global project IPPFoRB.

3) About the project

The overall goal of the project is to strengthen engagement and knowledge of the population when it comes to demanding state accountability for human rights and democratic principles. An important way to reach this goal is to work with partner organizations to strengthen civil society activities related to fundamental human rights.

The long term desired effect of the project is *a more informed and engaged population which is able to demand state accountability for human rights and democratic principles.*

The outcome for the target groups is *a strong civil society in a more aware and active society.*

In practice, the project aims to provide groups and individuals vulnerable to human rights violations with tools for preventive measures, victim support and legal aid. As a further measure to strengthen protection of human rights, the project provide reliable, accountable and evidence-based documentation about the human rights situation in Eurasia and make this available to stakeholders both within the country and internationally.

The project also aims to hold authorities and institutional representatives accountable to their fundamental human rights commitments.

The role of NHC in the project is to: 1) assist in developing the project in the manner that suits NHC overall goals in the most efficient manner; 2) be responsible for contact between partners and NHC and with the MFA; 3) monitor and follow closely the project implementation; 4) give advice, assistance and participate in selected activities during project implementation; 5) stay informed and follow closely the human rights situation in Eurasia; 6) create joint platforms and networks; 7) disseminate information and recommendations.

The partners' responsibilities include: 1) developing project plans in cooperation with the NHC; 2) implementing activities according to agreed project descriptions, plans and budgets; 3) keeping the NHC informed about the project and other relevant factors; and 4) producing timely reports.

4) Purpose and scope of review

The purpose of the review is to assess 1) implementation of the project in terms of its aim, activities, impact and outcome; 2) the results or effects of the project on the target groups and 3) to provide suggestions to improve NHC's roles and responsibilities to achieve the project's planned goals and results.

The review should assess:

1. Developments of NHC's and partner organisations' capacity to document human rights abuses, provide legal aid in individual cases, and communicate human rights issues to different stakeholders, such as national authorities, national prosecutors/investigators, national courts, international organisations, international courts, and authorities in Norway and other countries. Assess changes and effects at different levels experienced by the projects' partners groups as results of their partnership in the project.
2. The project's involvement with and results in working on vulnerable groups as well as the impact on the general public.
3. How NHC and partner organisations are able to deal with bureaucratic and other obstacles to human rights work, such as legislation restricting fundamental freedoms, harassment, threats of violence, violence, and other forms of obstruction.
4. NHC and partner organization's communication and outreach related to the project. Assess if the project is able to reach the wider public and which channels have proved most effective.
5. NHC's follow-up of agreed conditions vis-à-vis partners and donors.
6. Outreach through social media, ordinary media, publications, meetings, seminars, etc. to a wider public.

The review should provide recommendation on how:

1. NHC implementation of the project can be strengthened.
2. Strategizing and reporting by partners to NHC can be strengthened.
3. NHC can strengthen its reporting on the project, in particular how fulfilment of project goals can be substantiated.

The review findings will provide input to internal planning and adjustments of the NHC administration of the project as well as administration of similar projects.

5) Methodology

The methodological framework is mainly desk review, and meetings where possible. It should consist of the following elements:

1. Interviews, meetings and possible groups discussions with NHC staff.
2. Interviews, meetings and possible groups discussions with representatives of 5-7 local partner organisations that receive support from the project.
3. Some of the local partners that have received support previously may be engaged in discussion about the long-term effects of their cooperation with the NHC.

4. Interview with relevant international stakeholders, such as human rights organizations, leaders of international human rights campaigns, relevant staff of international organizations, staff of relevant embassies, experts on support to human rights defenders, etc.
5. Review of selected project products, such as reports, statements, website material, social media accounts, and other relevant material;
6. Quantitative assessment of number of readers of social media accounts; news sites; participants at public meetings and seminars, etc.
7. Review of reporting to MFA and its compliance with agreement conditions

NHC will make relevant material available for the review, such as applications, narrative reports, and strategic plans. Interviews and meetings may be conducted in person or by conference calls, skype, etc.

6) Reporting

Review results should be presented in a report. Main findings should be summarised in a PowerPoint-presentation.

The report will be in English and should not exceed 30 pages (excluding appendices). It should, inter alia, include an executive summary, conclusions, and recommendations and be available in both printed and electronic formats.

A draft report should be presented electronically to the NHC no later than 15 February 2019.

7) Team

The review should be conducted by 2-3 people. A contact person for the review should be appointed by the reviewing agency. The NHC would prefer a team that consists of people with extensive work experience and relevant language skills from Eurasia including Russia. The NHC would look positively on a gender-balanced team.

Qualifications needed:

- Fluency in English and Russian;
- Demonstrated competence in human rights work and NGO organisational development;
- Extensive experience with results framework, evaluation, including of human rights projects;
- Experience with reviewing grant management.

8) Time frame and budgets:

The review process should ideally start in the first part of January 2019 and the first draft of the report should be submitted to the NHC no later than 15 February 2019.

Written comments to the draft report by the NHC should be provided no later than 25 February 2019.

The final report should be presented no later than 5 March.

The NHC has a budget for the assignment, including covering related costs (travel, telephone, etc.)

9) Tender/bids

Tender/bids should be submitted to Bjorn Engesland, Secretary General, be@nhc.no and copied to nhc@nhc.no by 1 January 2019.

The documentation should include budget, timeframe, a brief statement of qualifications and motivation. In addition, a CV of each team member should be included, as well as general information of relevant competence and experience of the reviewing agency.