

## **CALL FOR PROPOSALS**

### **Evaluation of ISHR' s project "Supporting HRDs by strengthening laws, norms and standards for their recognition and protection at national, regional and international levels"**

**(2025-2026)**

#### **ABOUT ISHR**

The International Service for Human Rights (ISHR) is an independent, non-governmental organisation dedicated to promoting and protecting human rights. We achieve this by supporting human rights defenders, strengthening human rights systems, and leading and participating in coalitions for human rights change.

#### **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

ISHR seeks to engage one or several independent consultant(s) to conduct an evaluation of a two-year project supporting the empowerment of human rights defenders (HRDs), carried out between January 2025 and December 2026 and funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Finland. The project builds upon ISHR's long-term engagement to support human rights defenders from all regions and aims to support their engagement with the UN and regional human rights systems; strengthen HRD protection frameworks at the national, regional and international level; push for accountability and improved access to rights; and highlight and increase visibility of their situation globally.

The project has following main objectives:

1. HRDs are better equipped, connected and supported with the tools and networks to be effective and influential in promoting, protecting and contributing to the realisation of human rights;
2. States, businesses and other non-State actors respect and protect HRDs, contribute to a safe and enabling environment, and are held accountable for violations and abuses against HRDs;
3. Human rights laws and mechanisms are accessible, responsive and effective for HRDs and victims of violations and contribute to the promotion and protection of human rights.

The main project activities include: delivering a variety of online and offline training interventions and advocacy support for HRDs to strategically engage with UN and regional human rights mechanisms; conducting advocacy on HRD protection and on accountability; national and regional consultations on strengthening legislative protections for HRDs; and mobilisation and engagement for the support of HRDs using effective narratives.

#### **OBJECTIVES OF THE EVALUATION**

The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness, sustainability, and impact of the project. The evaluation should also identify lessons learned and make recommendations for improvements relevant for future programming.

The specific objectives of the evaluation are:

1. To assess the project's relevance and impact for targeted beneficiary groups;
2. To assess the project's fulfillment of the set objectives and outcomes detailed in the project's scope of work, with references to project indicators;
3. To identify any unexpected outcomes or impacts of this project contributing to the overall program goals or otherwise benefiting target groups;
4. To assess the project's sustainability, including with reference to required human and financial resources and capabilities; and
5. To identify lessons learned and make recommendations to enhance the relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of this and future projects.

The evaluation should also integrate consideration of key cross-cutting issues, including gender equality, environmental impact, disability, support for groups most at-risk, and risk management.

#### **SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION**

The evaluation is expected to include a document review, key stakeholder engagement (including through interviews with relevant ISHR staff, surveys, questionnaires and solicitation of inputs from key beneficiaries, targets and stakeholders) and observation of at least one project activity.

The external evaluator(s) will be provided with all data and information relevant to the project, including periodic reports to the donor (narrative and financial), publications and tools, and other relevant project documentation. The evaluator(s) will also be provided with contact details for relevant partners, project participants and other concerned stakeholders (UN experts, diplomats etc).

At minimum, the evaluator will be required to:

- Undertake a review of all relevant documents including among others recently conducted evaluations of specific programmes/activities that are part of this project (e.g trainings). other relevant reports and project documentation.
- Conduct interviews or convene discussions with all relevant programmatic and operational ISHR staff, approximately 5-6 individuals
- Organise and conduct at minimum 5 interviews with key partners, beneficiaries, stakeholders or project involved experts and collect inputs from other project participants through questionnaires.
- Attend or observe at least one project activity in person, such as Business and Human Rights Forum in Geneva (November)

#### **TIMEFRAME AND BUDGET**

The evaluation is expected to be conducted between October 2026 - December 2026 and completed no later than by 15 February 2027. Candidates should include an estimate of the time required to complete the assignment in the proposal. Candidates should include in their proposal the cost of travel and observation for at least 1 activity in Geneva over a period of 5 working days.

The estimated budget for this evaluation should not exceed EUR 15,000 and should specify daily or hourly rates, other costs and include a total cost.

## DELIVERABLES AND SCHEDULE

The evaluator is expected to conduct the review during **October 2026- December 2026**.

The expected activities of the evaluation will include:

- Kick-off meeting (beginning of October)
- Inception report of the planned evaluation from the evaluator(s) (end of October)
- Attendance to Business and Human Rights Forum (week of 23 November)
- Debriefing/presentation of the preliminary results (prior to submission of the draft report) December 2026
- Submit draft evaluation report (by end-January 2027)
- Submit final evaluation report (by 15 February 2027)

The report should include at least the following sections:

- Background and introduction
- Methodology
- Main findings with regards to the evaluation criteria of relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations and implementation plan for ISHR based on evaluation findings
- Relevant annexes, including questionnaires, persons and institutions interviewed, relevant documents related to ISHR activities etc.

## GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

The evaluator(s) will report to the ISHR Senior Fundraising and Grants Manager. They may also contact other relevant members of staff, including to solicit contacts with partners and trainees. The evaluator(s) may seek support from ISHR in order to get introduced to relevant stakeholders, although they are expected to work independently.

## PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

Candidates should have the following qualifications and experience:

- Professional experience in project design, implementation, and evaluation, ideally in the human rights field;
- Background and/or experience working with human rights defenders;
- Background and/or experience conducting advocacy interventions, with knowledge of UN human rights bodies a plus;
- Previous experience in evaluation of human rights projects; with experience in evaluating international human rights training, capacity building and advocacy projects a plus; and
- Fluency in English.

Applicants must disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest in their proposal.

## HOW TO APPLY

Applicants should send a CV and cover letter describing their experience conducting evaluations and how their skills correspond to the criteria set out above. Any relevant sample documents should be included. Additionally, applicants should submit two professional references and a short proposal containing suggested timetable for the evaluation, methods to be deployed and an estimate of costs (budget) which includes cost of travel and observation of 1 activity.

Applications should be emailed to [fundraising@ishr.ch](mailto:fundraising@ishr.ch) quoting the following reference **"Project evaluation - Finland"**.

**Application deadline: Wednesday 23 September 2026.**

Incomplete applications will not be considered. Please kindly note that due to the high volume of applications, only short-listed candidates will be contacted. All applications will be handled in accordance with [ISHR's Privacy Policy](#).