

TERMS OF REFERENCE
External Team of Consultant(s) for ACSFo Strategic Plan Development and
adaptation of management tools
Jan 2010

A: Organization Introduction:

Afghan Civil Society Forum Organization (ACSFo) was developed as a partnership between Afghan civil society actors and Swiss peace at the request of 76 participants of the first Afghan Civil Society Conference in Bad Honnef, Germany (29 November – 2 December 2001). The goal of the conference was to involve Afghan civil society in the peace and reconstruction process of Afghanistan in order to achieve a more sustainable post-conflict reconstruction. ACSFo has set its prime goal on provision and strengthening of the civil society in Afghanistan. ACSFo began its activities at the beginning of February 2002. The ACSFo Office in Kabul was opened two months later in May 2002.

For sustainable peace and stability in Afghanistan, civil society needs to play an important role by participating in all aspects of the country's development. The core mandate of ACSFo is to enhance people participation through inclusion of civil society into the social, political and development processes of the country. This has been done by raising the voice of civil society actors at workshops and dialogue forums and contributing to political processes. Furthermore, ACSFo tries to provide tools and information to civil society stakeholders in order to become critical and independent actors, through targeted civic education campaigns and capacity building across the country. Civil society organizations representing the Afghan population are the main target groups of ACSFo and its aim is to continue its out-reach into rural areas and deepen into the grass-roots level. ACSFo pays special attention to address the concerns of women and disadvantaged groups.

The government of Afghanistan has also been benefiting from the advocacy and information gathered by ACSFo on the policies and events. Between 2002 and 2009, the main goal of ACSFo was to support the implementation of the Bonn Agreement, the London Compact, the ANDS, etc. Thus, ACSFo supported the constitution-making process, the preparation for general elections in 2004. ACSFo was also involved in civic education campaigns, policy and event advocacy, conference facilitation, national consultations, peace promotion, networking and coordination, capacity building and research. Since early 2003, one of the main vehicles for ACSFo to reach out to civil society in Afghanistan has been the Jamea-e-Madani (civil society) Magazine. Published in national languages, the magazine is intended to provide a platform for information and dialogue among civil society actors in order to create a critical discourse around important topics in order to inform people about important issues in the rebuilding of Afghanistan.

B: This Assignment:

The last seven years of development and expansion has been full of challenges with a bunch of success to the organization. There have also been areas of shortcoming and failures. Given the recent developments, the strategy paper developed in 2005 is not adequately responding the current needs and requirements of the organization as well as the needs of the newly emerging challenges in the civil society arena. The projects ACSFo running at this time, most of them were not fully anticipated four years ago. In 2007 an effort made to develop a new strategy for the organization. It worked but didn't go through. The strategy was not finalized despite the reviews of many colleagues. Therefore ACSFo needs to acquire external consultancy support for development of new 3-year long strategic planning to be based on the Strategic Directions for civil society in Afghanistan defined in December 2009.

At the same time, ASCF, as a growing institution needs to adapt it's management tools to the increasing requirements of staff, members and donors for coherent institutional policies and procedures, transparency and sound financial reporting. The consultancy may be the first step of a longer term backstopping type of support to ACSFo on management issues.

C: Aim of the External Consultancy:

This consultancy exercise should address the following particular areas:

1. An in-depth analysis of ACSFo past two evaluations by SDC and NOVIB consultant(s) (2009)
2. Facilitation of a strategic planning process and finalization of a 3 year strategic plan.
3. Review of ACSFo's organizational structure and recommendations for an adaptation of the organizational structure in line with the strategic plan
4. Revision of key institutional processes and development of recommendations for adaptations including financial management, audit control mechanisms and multi-donor reporting.

Among others, the outcome of consultancy will provide inputs for the development of a proposal for core funding to OXFAM NOVIB and possibly other donors.

D: Outputs:

1. A Three Year strategic plan for ACSFo
2. Suggestion for revised organogram/organisational restructuring

3. Recommendations for the adaptation of key institutional processes and especially financial management.
4. ACSFo concept paper and proposal (initial draft) for submission to OXFAM NOVIB
5. A longer term organizational capacity building proposal/plan

E: Terms of Reference for the Consultant(s):

ACSFo is a growing, dynamic organization which plays a key role in the Afghan development landscape. It is one of the leading voices of Afghan civil society. However, with its growth, the requirements for strategic coherence, and efficient and transparent decision making and management processes are increasing. To face this exiting challenges, ASCF must adapt its institutional and management tools on time and reassess its strategic orientations. This will enable ASCF continue playing its role efficiently, maintain high acceptance among its members and stakeholders, keep staff performance at the exceptionally high level and maintain donor confidence. The team of consultant(s) (not less than two, not more then four) shall work in a coordinated manner with one person (team leader) responsible for total output. This is to assure coherence between the strategic and managerial recommendations. The following tasks shall be completed:

Tasks more related to the strategic process:

1. Develop and propose a methodology for the strategic planning process and an outline for the strategic plan.
2. Review relevant ACSFo, documents, including policies, reports and proposals. The important raw materials will include but not limited to SDC building citizenship project review report (Jeremy Condor report), OXFAM NOVIB civic education project review (Jesper Frovin Jensen report), Counterpart International OD assessment reports, ACSFo annual audit reports and etc
3. Review relevant supplementary documents including Board Meeting minutes and decisions, internal management documents, published research reports, and any other relevant documents.
4. An overall external and internal analysis of ACSFo (2002 to 2009) is required in order to do an assessment of the past activities, programs, achievements, impacts, failures, shortcomings and challenges. This assessment/review will require interview with ACSFo staff, management, BoDs, field level beneficiaries, govt. counterparts, representatives from political parties, social organizations, intellectuals, parliamentarians, civil society activists, donors, partners and members.
5. In case of need, collect information from external stakeholders about future vision, and potential directions for future.
6. Make sure that the outcomes and conclusions of the reviews and assessment (as described above) adequately are fed into the new strategic plan.

7. Facilitate the strategic planning process.
8. A final version of the strategic plan should be prepared after review of first draft by ACSFo management and BoDs. The new strategic plan should envision and develop the strategic planning for the years 2011-2013.
9. In light of new strategic plan, new project concept document should be prepared which will then be converted to complete proposal document for submission to OXFAM NOVIB.

Tasks more related to Adaptation of organizational structure and management procedures including finance and audit control procedures:

10. Review ACSFo's organizational structure and decision making processes and provide recommendations for a revised organizational structure in line with the strategic plan (desk study)
11. Assess ASCF's financial overall health (reserves versus cash flow, recurrent expenditure, etc.)
12. Revise financial management procedures and audit control system based on existing audits, donor perceptions and additional assessments as required. Particular emphasis shall be placed on transparency towards donors (avoid double funding), full cost recovery for project implementations (earmarked funding)
13. Provide input/recommendations for a sustainable resource mobilization strategy in line with the strategic plan (desk study). This will include recommendations for the relation between core funding and project funding, cost recovery, reserves, donor diversification, etc.
14. a project proposal/plan to be developed for longer term organizational capacity development which will address the implementation of the review recommendations and other areas of organizational capacity building identified by ACSFo management

All the above activities will be done in collaboration and coordination with the ACSFo Director and Management under the supervision of the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of ACSFo.

F: Methodology

Strategic planning process:

The consultant(s) will be provided with all available written documentation (Terms of Reference for ACSFo, program documents, monitoring reports, project progress, annual and financial reports, MOUs, minutes of the Board, Steering committees, grant documents, etc). The consultant(s) will prepare and submit to the ACSFo an outline of the methodology that he/she will follow for the review and strategic planning process. The outline will contain, but not be limited to the following information:

- A draft itinerary of how the strategic planning process and reviews will be conducted including but not limited to field visit plan, interview plan, workshop plan, group discussions plan, meetings plan and etc.
- A list of potential interviewees (in collaboration with ACSFo Executive Director)
- A proposal for debriefing and reporting mechanisms

The consultant(s) will develop the three years strategic plan¹. The final draft will be shared in debriefing meetings with ACSFo staff, management and BoDs in order to insert final revisions in the plan.

Simultaneous to the development of the strategic plan (when relevant) the consultant(s) will review ACSFo's organizational structure and suggest an organogram/organizational structure that is in line with the strategic plan. The consultant(s) will also make recommendations for and/or draft a sustainable resource mobilization strategy in close coordination with ACSFo management and BoD. A participatory approach will be used throughout the assignment.

Adaptation of organizational structure and management procedures:

The assessment will focus on decision making structures, financial management and audit control as priority areas. It is assumed that changes will be introduced in a stepwise manner and not through radical reorganization.

The consultant(s) will have access to the relevant documentation on the structure of ASCF and the decision making process operated in this structure.

Particular emphasis shall be placed on the interplay between decision making levels (staff, middle management, top management and board) and the clarity and efficiency of the distribution of decision making powers among these levels, including the board and relevant elements of board organization.

Financial and audit control procedures shall be revised based on available recent audits, own assessments and consultations with stakeholders and key donors. Emphasis is placed on transparency towards stakeholders and donors. With this respect that consultant(s) shall elaborate basic elements of a risk management strategy for ASCF referring to main risks for transparent financial management and audit control.

An important element of the consultancy is the financial sustainability of ASCF. It can be expected that the cash flow of ASCF will increase substantially over the last two years. This growth should happen with a vision of sustainability and transparency towards stakeholders. Members of ACSFo should participate adequately in the financial growth, project funding must cover its costs (full cost

¹ An outline for the strategic plan will be prepared and submitted first.

recovery) and ASCF management should not be overburdened with the management of small projects.

The consultancy shall assess the current situation with respect to these aspects and define recommendations for a sustainability path for ASCF.

G: Arrangements

ACSFO will be mainly responsible to provide related documents, arrange meetings, interviews, facilitate field visits, and provide logistical support required for the assignment. The OXFAM NOVIB and SDC will jointly finance the process and will cover all the cost related with consultation i.e. consultation charges, consultant(s) accommodation, food and refreshment, transportation, travel and other facilities associated with consultation.

H: External Consultant(s)

The consultant(s) will be a specialist team in strategic planning (especially re NGOs and Civil Society Organizations) with experience in institutional development, resource mobilization and finance. S/he will review documents, undertake field visits, conduct interviews and prepare ACSFO three years strategic plan. He/she would also assist ACSFO to draft new project concept and proposal for submission to OXFAM NOVIB. He/she would also provide recommendations and assist ACSFO to draft a new organogram and resource mobilization strategy.

Minimum combined qualifications and experience required from the team of consultant(s):

- Advance degree in management, social science, public affairs or international development studies (preferable)
- Experience in financial assessment (level of external auditor)
- At least five years of experience in planning, monitoring and review of the projects at the macro level (preferable)
- Extensive experience in undertaking reviews/studies and writing/developing strategic plans for organizations (preferable)
- Ability to present information in a transparent and comprehensive manner and preparing strategic plan documents (preferable)
- Written and spoken fluency in English
- Previous work experience in Afghanistan, preferable in the planning related fields in an asset.

I: Timeframe

Strategy development (tentative)

Preparatory Work	1 days
Review of all related document	3 days
Meeting the Board and managerial staff	2 days
Meeting partners and beneficiaries	5 days
Meeting other stakeholders	2 days
Drafting the strategy	4 days
Presenting and feedback workshop	2 days (in two occasions if needed)
Finalization of the document	4 days
Assist shaping the new concept based on the strategic plan	2 days
Assisting/Advise the management on proposal development	3 days

Adaptation of organizational structure and management procedures (tentative)

Preparatory Work	1 days
Review of all related documents (audits)	2 days
Meeting the Board and managerial staff	2 days
Meeting donors and stakeholders	4 days
Analysis of decision making and procedures	3 days
Elaboration of recommendations	3 days
Consultation of preliminary recommendations	2 days
Finalization of the document	2 days

J. Project duration

The project will start ASAP and should be ended no later than end of July 2010.

K. Station of Assignment

ACSFo office, Kabul, Afghanistan

L. Application deadline

12 June 2010

Applications must be sent to jobs@acsf.af, info@acsf.af and azizrr@acsf.af

More information: 0093-700-277-284, 0093-700-224-563