Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law Mid-Term Review – Terms of Reference

1. Project background information

The Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law (KPSRL) was established by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in 2012 to strengthen the evidence base for security and rule of law (SRoL) policies and programmes. A Consortium comprised of the Clingendael Institute's Conflict Research Unit, Saferworld, and the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) manages the current contract, provides oversight and financial accountability. The project is supported by an Advisory Committee that serves as a representation of the KPSRL network, drawn from the Platform participants and selected experts in the field. The KPSRL network includes all people and organisations that actively engage in our activities.

The primary objective of the Knowledge Platform (KP) is to improve the quality and impact of SRoL policy and programmes. This is contingent upon the ability of those who shape SRoL policy and programmes to generate and incorporate new evidence, insights, and solutions into their work and decisions. Strengthening learning to inform policy and programming is, thus, the primary goal that the KP seeks to achieve. In order to fulfil its stated role in enhancing learning, the Secretariat of the KPSRL explicitly extends its focus to understanding how learning and 'knowledge uptake' happens within the network, and pursues a strategy of 'knowledge brokering' as a practical and applied activity, which takes existing organisational processes of the network participants as the starting point for support and collaboration. The main instruments are thematic learning events, the [Knowledge Management Fund](#) (KMF) and the Programmatic Learning Instrument. The KMF is a small grants mechanism (max. EUR 20,000 per application) aimed at creating new knowledge on SRoL. The PLI is a larger fund (up to EUR 200,000 per project) to support learning within and across programmes.

The Secretariat works towards the following two outcomes:
1) The breadth and diversity of participation and the intensity of exchange within the KP network increase.
2) Opportunities for learning by network participants about SRoL programme implementation and portfolio learning increase.

To achieve these outcomes, the Secretariat is committed to four main categories of output:
- Organisation and facilitation of online and in-person network events, including:
  - an Annual Conference, bringing together individuals from across the Platform's professional spectrum
  - innovative thematic meetings
  - sharing research findings and KP activity results.

- Early-stage development of new ideas, insights, and pilot approaches to SRoL programming, including:
  - funding initiatives that have a high potential to generate innovative knowledge through the KMF
  - a podcast bringing together practitioners, policymakers and researchers into dialogue.

- Further development and testing at scale in multi-country settings of new ideas, insights, and approaches to SRoL programming and portfolio learning, including:
  - designing and implementing pilots of the PLI
  - implementing non-pilot learning activities useful for the design of the PLI.

- Supporting development and implementation of DSH/MFA, embassy, and programme level learning agendas, including:
  - maintaining close ties with the MFA through a Liaison Officer
  - connecting the KP's learning agenda to MFA programmes, particularly the Addressing the Root Causes of Conflict Fund and the Dutch bilateral rule of law programme in Somalia[1]
  - linking meetings to processes by deploying new methods for uptake and involving new participants
  - maintaining an accessible online knowledge base and a stimulating website.

2. Purpose of the independent Mid-Term Review

The independent Mid-Term Review (MTR) is intended to inform the Secretariat's implementation of the remainder of the current KPSRL contract (2021-2024) and the process of developing a post-2024 strategy for the KPSRL. The process of developing a post-2024 strategy will take place in Q3-4 of 2023 and falls outside of the scope this assignment but shall be informed by its findings.

The MTR will be divided into two phases.. Phase 1 will assess progress towards the project's goal and outcomes as specified in the KPSRL's project documents (with a focus on the theory of change [ToC] and the Results Based Framework [RBF]) and facilitate a discussion on the implications for future plans and actions. It should highlight early signs of project success and/or failure and unexpected outcomes. It will also focus on the process the Platform has followed, aiming to establish how and why certain results have been achieved (or not), and pinpointing specific learning about what has worked and what has not. This phase of the MTR will also involve a participatory sense-making process to validate the findings with key stakeholders. During phase 2, the evaluators will accompany the KPSRL Secretariat and its Consortium Partners in a process of revising the ToC and the RBF.

3. Scope of work

Phase 1 of the assignment is the MTR itself. The Review will cover the duration of the current contract of the KPSRL, from its starting date in January 2021 to December 2022.

The starting point for this MTR are the questions identified in this TOR, organised along the criteria of *relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence,* and *sustainability,* to review the KPSRL project and develop a first perspective on project *impact*, or *signs of longer-term change*.[2]

The MTR will provide recommendations of ideas and changes for the final one and a half years of the project, to allow the project to achieve its intended results. This should include recommendations for the KPSRL Secretariat and the Consortium Partners on their strategy and positioning during the second half of the project and first insights into what scenarios the KPSRL might find itself in for the period beyond 2024.

The scope of the MTR contract, under phase 2, will extend to the facilitation of ToC and RBF revision.

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[1] The ARC programme ran from 2016 to 2021 but the KPSRL is still accompanying post-programme learning.

[2] The OECD definitions of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, and sustainability are available [here](#).

Relevance

1. Assess the relevance of the intervention logic for the objectives set in the original project proposal and as applied in practice by the KPSRL Secretariat. Did adaptations take place since the project began? Why, how and what impact did these adaptations have on project delivery ?Are there other adaptations that the Secretariat should make?
2. To what extent has the KPSRL become participatory? Does it involve and engage network members sufficiently and in a balanced way (including policymakers, practitioners, and researchers from within and outside of the Netherlands)?[3] Does it do so effectively? And to what purpose(s)? This question should be answered separately for the case of actors in Fragile and Conflict Affected Settings (FCAS). Has the KPSRL become more accessible and relevant for FCAS actors at multiple levels?
3. To what extent is the KPSRL relevant to the needs of its network participants?
4. Has the KPSRL managed to expand access to the KMF for FCAS actors in particular?
5. Does the KMF grant structure match the needs of the grantees and potential grantees?
6. Is the KPSRL Secretariat's communication serving and matching the needs of its community?

Effectiveness

The MTR should trace the KPSRL contribution from outputs to goal and goal relevance.

7. Goal and goal relevance - What evidence is there to indicate that the participants in the Platform learn thanks to the KPSRL contribution? What do those participants do differently as a result of their learning?
8. Outcome 1 - Is participation, in its intensity and diversity, adequate given the purpose of the KPSRL?
9. Outcome 2 – Is the KPSRL approach to learning effectively contributing to creating a safe space for the learning of its network?
10. Approach – output – Is the KPSRL portfolio of learning activities balanced by themes, approach, and type of participants, and does it contribute adequately to the KPSRL outcomes?

Efficiency

11. Is the current set-up of the Secretariat and of its instruments (such as the KMF) efficient?
12. What impact has inflation had on the KPSRL capacity to deliver its expected results?
13. To what extent has the Secretariat become a learning organisation under the current contract? Is its approach to and tools for internal learning adequate to its needs?

Coherence

14. It is not currently obvious that "coherence", interpreted as internal and external consistency in the KPSRL portfolio of learning activities, is a value compared to answering to the diverse needs of the KPSRL community. Building on both evidence and sense-making discussions, should the KPSRL consider coherence as a value for the KPSRL's work? And if so, in which way?
15. If so, to what extent has the KPSRL become more coherent both internally with respect to different strands of activities and externally to the demands of network members, main developments in the field, and with the MFA learning goals and efforts? The MTR should explore coherence both from the point of view of methodologies for learning and from that of thematic content.

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[3] Sufficiently from the perspective of the network participants, balanced with considerations on what is feasible.

Sustainability

16. How should the KPSRL prepare for the period post-2024? Include suggestions that will inform the strategy process planned for Q3-4 of 2023: what scenarios might await the KPSRL after December 2024?
17. How can the network and learning within it best be sustained in the medium and long term?

MTR approach and methodology

Approach

The Consultant(s) is/are expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach, ensuring close engagement with the MTR Reference Group (which includes the KSPRL's Secretariat, Consortium Partners, Advisory Committee and the MFA representatives).

The Consultant(s) is/are expected to use a theory-based approach that builds on the KPSRL Theory of Change. Aside from the KPSRL TOR, the consultant(s) is/are welcome to propose any analytical framework that they find helpful for phase 1.

The consultant(s) is/are welcome to propose methods of analysis but is / are expected to go beyond the use of data sources and methods already available from monitoring. The data collected for monitoring will be shared, so that the consultant can accordingly refine its approach. Existing monitoring data includes a simple version of outcome harvesting at the level of goal and goal relevance, survey data of event participants, and tracking of the KPSRL online network engagement.

Data shall be collected and analysed through mixed methods (qualitative, quantitative and participatory), and used to produce insights against the original Theory of Change and to support a participatory sense-making process.

Data collection

Below are suggestions for the data collection phase. Applicants are, however, welcome to propose methods and instruments they believe fit this exercise better.

Desk review - The Consultant(s) shall review all relevant sources of information as provided by the Secretariat Team including the original project proposal and Theory of Change, the results framework(s), and annual reports, governance documents, website and survey data, Knowledge Management Fund documentation and learning reports, Programmatic Learning Instruments design documents, and any other material that might be considered useful or relevant.

Primary data collection -The Consultant(s) shall collect primary data through engagement with at least the following:
- Network participants (from all relevant constituency groups – including practitioners, academics and policy makers – and from the Global North and South)
- KMF grantees and Programmatic Learning Instrument partners
- Secretariat staff (current and previous)
- Consortium Partners
- MFA staff
- Advisory Committee members past and present
- Grantees of the Addressing the Root Causes of Conflict (ARC) Fund (learning leads)
- Grantees of the Dutch bilateral rule of law programme in Somalia.

Data analysis and sense-making

The consultant(s) are expected to involve the Secretariat staff, the Consortium Partners, the MFA contact point, and the Advisory Committee members in a sense-making process including reflection on evaluation findings and recommendations.

The Consultant(s) will produce recommendations for improvements that should be considered during the remainder of the project period (in order to allow the project to achieve its intended results).

Support with theory of change revision and reform of the Result Based Framework

Upon satisfactory completion of phase I, the consultant(s) will facilitate a participatory process for revising the Theory of Change based on MTR findings.

The assessment of the ToC will first of all look at its substantive aspects, considering the main assumptions and understandings of how the work and structure of the secretariat and the broader platform are organized and contribute to network strengthening and learning.

The consultant(s) is/are free to propose suitable approach for an adequate space and process, as well as facilitation style that is conducive to supporting the Secretariat, Consortium Partners, MFA contact point, and AC members to agree on a final, revised TOC.

Finally, the consultant will support the revision of Result Based Framework that will be produced based on the revised TOC, ensuring that indicators measure what is important to measure, and that they do so in a robust, credible way.

4. Organisation and governance

The KPSRL Learning Officer will be the evaluation manager and consulted for all design choices of the evaluation.

The representatives of KPSRL Secretariat, the Consortium Partners, the MFA, and the Advisory Committee will establish a MTR Reference Group to act as the key reference point for the Consultant(s).[4] This group will provide guidance to the Consultant(s) and organise to validate the findings of the MTR through an appropriately inclusive process. The final MTR report will be shared with key stakeholders through this group.

5. Expected deliverables

The following deliverables of phase I will be expected:
- An inception report, with refined evaluation questions, methodology, work plan and timetable for the MTR to be approved by the MTR Reference Group
- A draft report, including preliminary findings and recommendations, which will be validated through an appropriately inclusive process to be agreed by the MTR Reference Group and the Consultant(s)
- A final report of not more than 30 pages with key findings and recommendations.
- The raw data collected during the evaluation.

Upon satisfactory completion of phase I, the following deliverables are expected of phase II:
- Revised theory of change for the KPSRL
- Revised Result Based Framework.

The total budget available for phase I is EUR 29,000 and for phase II is EUR 11,000, both excluding VAT.

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[4] At least one representative from the Consortium Partners, one from the Secretariat, one MFA contact point, and two members of the Advisory Group will form the MTR reference group.

6. Expected timeline

Main tasks/activities	Suggested timeline
Deadline for the submission of EoI	15 November 2022 at 23.59 CET
Invitation for interview to maximum three applicants[5]	Invitations will be sent out in the week of November 14th, and **interviews will take place on 21 and 22 November 2022**
Evaluation award	1 December 2022
Contract signatures	9 December 2022
Initial desk review of key project documentation and relevant background information, and inception visit	12 December 2022 – 12 January
Submission of a draft inception report	15 January 2023
Meeting with the Reference Group	Week of 16 January 2023
Submission of revised inception report	24 January 2023
Conduct data collection (no trips are expected outside of the NL, but at least one visit to the Hague is expected)	25 January - 23 February 2023
Present preliminary findings and recommendations to the MTR Reference Group for validation, and facilitate sense-making discussion	2 March 2023
Prepare the draft MTR report according to the TOR and updated methodology from inception report	16 March 2023
Receive feedback and comments from MTR Reference Group, as well as selected peer reviewers	30 March 2023
Revise the draft MTR report based on comments and feedback received, and prepare a final consolidated version of the report	13 April 2023
Facilitate a workshop for revising the TOC	4 May 2023
Revised RBF	25 May 2023

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[5] Interviews will be conducted by the evaluation manager, Head of Secretariat, and one Consortium Partner.

7. Application process

The application process is composed of an expression of interest (EoI), presentation and interview. The KPSRL Secretariat will select a maximum of three applicants based on the EoI and invite them to a short interview, where they will present their approach and answer any clarification questions.

The main criteria that will be used to evaluate the consultant(s)'s background are:

1. Experience with evaluations of networks, alliances, or communities of practice.
2. Experience with evaluations of projects and programmes whose primary aim is learning.
3. Experience with evaluations in the SRoL sector.
4. Experience with facilitation of processes of theory of change design.
5. Involvement of perspectives from FCAS countries. Diverse teams are strongly preferred.

The main criteria for evaluating the proposed approach and methods are:

1. Fit for purpose with the objective and scope of the evaluation.
2. Innovative character.
3. Credibility of findings based on the strength of evidence.
4. Ability to draw useful implications for the future through participatory sense-making.

In the Expressions of Interests (max 4 pages), please include:
1. An Expression of Interest of no more than four pages, including:
   a. Team composition and why the proposed team has the experience and competencies to carry out the evaluation
   b. Key elements of the proposed approach and methodology for phase I and II
   c. The division of responsibilities in the consultant team
   d. A budget (not exceeding EURO 29,000 for phase I and EUR 11,000 for phase II excluding VAT)
   e. In an annex, two samples of written reports (it can be a link to published reports) and two references for similar assignments.

2. Professional CV(s) for all the proposed consultants (no more than five pages).

Please submit clarification questions to G.Ferrari@kpsrl.org by 10 November 2022.

Please submit all documents to G.Ferrari@kpsrl.org. The deadline for submission is 23:59 CET on Wednesday 15 November 2022.