Terms of Reference

Consultant to Design Approaches and Workshops on Influencing Humanitarian Space and Access for NGOs

Starting date: 14 August 2022
End date: 31 December 2023
Location: Home Based with possibility of travel
Application deadline: 23 July 2022

About ICVA
Founded in 1962, ICVA (International Council of Voluntary Agencies) is a global network of over 140 Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) active in 160 countries, operating at global, regional, national and local levels, whose mission is to make humanitarian action more principled and effective by working collectively and independently to influence policy and practice. ICVA promotes and facilitates effective NGO engagement in the humanitarian sector, with a focus on Forced Migration, Humanitarian Coordination, Humanitarian Financing, and cross-cutting systems-strengthening issues.

Background to Consultancy
Despite growing humanitarian needs, humanitarian access - the ability of humanitarian agencies to reach populations in need, as well as the ability of affected populations to access assistance – is increasingly restricted.

One of the sources of humanitarian access restrictions are the policies and practices of state and non-state actors, which may deliberately or accidentally introduce bureaucratic or administrative impediments that restrict principled, timely or effective humanitarian response. Furthermore, despite their humanitarian mandate as independent and neutral actors, NGOs can also be targeted by negative press and “information wars”, which undermines their acceptance and creates a chilling effect on humanitarian response.

While NGOs have carried out a range of communications and engagements to improve access and counter negative perceptions, consultations with ICVA members have highlighted that the impact of this work, to date, is limited and severe access challenges remain.

Joint analysis and collective action is frequently cited by NGOs as the safest and most effective approach to influencing the gatekeepers of humanitarian access. NGO fora and NGOs consortia often discuss barriers to humanitarian access and good guidance and manuals are available for addressing these challenges.

There is a need to improve NGO external engagement to counter negative perceptions of humanitarian action and increase humanitarian access and space. The objectives of effective external engagement are to:

a) Ensure the interests and needs of vulnerable and crisis-affected people are responded to by decision makers and their intermediaries.
b) Improve humanitarian access and space for NGOs
c) Strengthen public understanding and support for NGO activities
d) Improved access to and influence with decision makers
External engagement must be able to deliver results, while minimizing negative repercussions for humanitarian staff and operations.

**Consultancy Objectives**

ICVA is seeking a consultant or consultancy firm to co-create approaches and resources to strengthen the quality of NGO influencing and advocacy related to humanitarian space and access for NGOs. This includes supporting our members to deepen their understanding of effective external engagement and collectively develop compelling approaches for use with a range of parties, including governments and other authorities, donors, humanitarian partners and the public.

As a basis for developing approaches that will be relevant across a range of humanitarian responses, the consultancy will focus initially on eight contexts in 2022 and 2023. Focused work at country level will support NGOs to develop external engagement action plans and communications based on context-specific access challenges and opportunities.

The consultant or consultancy firm is invited to provide their own methodology or menu of options that will deliver:

1. A practical framework for discussion on ‘Influencing Humanitarian Space and Access for NGOs’.
2. A participatory approach to co-design and facilitation of eight workshops at country level (in-person or remote support depending on context) – in 2022 and 2023.
3. A process for the development of eight action plans for Influencing Humanitarian Space and Access for NGOs in the specific contexts, based on the workshops.
4. A tool for tracking the impact of influencing efforts for follow-up and supporting the collection of best practices and lessons learned.

**Reporting Arrangements**

The consultant will report to ICVA’s Senior Policy & Advocacy Officer

**Consultant requirements**

**Essential**
- At least 10 years of progressive experience in advocacy, communications or campaigning with demonstrable experience in influencing restrictive authorities and delivering measurable change in policies or practices to ensure vulnerable people’s needs are met.
- Experience leading consultative and facilitative processes with NGOs and NGO Networks
- Excellent writing and communication skills in English

**Desirable**
- Demonstrated understanding of, or direct experience with, humanitarian issues
- Knowledge of humanitarian policy issues impacting national and international NGOs

Questions and applications including a cover letter or menu of options outlining proposed methodology, working days required, CV and budget can be sent to coordination@icvanetwork.org mentioning “Humanitarian Access Influencing” in the title of the email.
The closing date for applications is 23 July 2022

Notes:

1. The consultant must be registered to work in accordance with legal requirements in their country of residence and must be able to submit documentation proving all legal obligations are met.
2. Full compliance with ICVA regulations and safeguarding policy is required.
3. ICVA welcomes applications from local consultants based in the operational contexts to be studied and will be willing to discuss splitting the consultancy between individual contexts to facilitate this if required.