

TERMS OF REFERENCE:

EXTERNAL PROJECT EVALUATION

Women, Peace and Security Helpdesk

Location: UK-based preferred with consideration for remote working

Starting date: No sooner than 15 August and no later than 02 September 2024

Duration of contract: between September -December 2024

Deadline for applications: 1700 GMT on Monday, 05 August 2024

1. Background and context

The current UK National Action Plan (NAP) on women, peace and security (WPS) outlines a coordinated approach to implement UK commitments on WPS both domestically and internationally. The UK's Integrated Security Fund (ISF) is a government-wide fund that addresses the highest-priority threats to UK national security, at home and abroad, as outlined in the Integrated Review (and Integrated Review Refresh 2023). This includes responding to the knowledge gap on how gender can drive and exacerbate key threats as well as equipping UK Government staff with technical support to implement gender and conflict sensitive approaches to programming and policy.

In line with these commitments, the ISF funds the Women, Peace and Security Helpdesk, which is an expert call-down facility that aims to provide a flexible, responsive and easy-to-use service to the ISF and UK Government officers working in the UK and overseas. Its purpose is to improve the gender sensitivity of UK Government policies and programmes in the security and conflict space, in line with UK commitments on gender equality, and to strengthen HMG capabilities and processes to realise its commitment towards WPS. It provides primarily desk-based advisory support but also includes in-person trainings, research and accompaniment support.

The helpdesk started in December 2021 for a period of three and half years, coming to an end on 31 March 2025. The terms of reference (TOR) within this document sets out the scope for an independent evaluation of the WPS Helpdesk to assess its impact, performance and effectiveness over the project period. The evaluation should measure any change, and document challenges, risks, opportunities and results against the objectives for this project.

2. Project Overview

The WPS Helpdesk is a partnership between five organisations, managed by Saferworld, and bringing together Conciliation Resources (CR), Gender Action for Peace and Security (GAPS UK), Women's International Peace Centre (WIPC), and the University of Durham. We work with WPS experts in diverse contexts. We seek to provide high quality expert helpdesk services that contribute to the integration of WPS concerns in conflict/security-focused policy and programming, and boost UK capacity to sustain the integration and advancement of WPS in line with its National Action Plan on WPS. The support focuses on:

- Undertaking gender and conflict analysis and thematic research on a wide range of issues to inform WPS, intersectional gender-responsive conflict policy and programming. This includes gender and conflict analysis at local, national, regional and international level, and thematic desk-based research and/or consultations.

- Applying a gender and conflict lens to desk-based evidence review summaries and evidence synthesis.
- Advising ISF staff within UK and in-country missions to integrate gender-responsive policy and programming within their ongoing interventions in conflict and fragile contexts. This includes providing short trainings on gender and conflict analysis, WPS, project document reviews, gender-aware conflict sensitive MREL support, and short-term tailored accompaniment support.

The commercial contract was funded by the former Conflict Stability and Security Fund (CSSF), now the Integrated Security Fund (ISF), entitled “CSSF Gender: Women, Peace and Security Capability”. The total funding committed to this helpdesk is £1.7 million: £200,000 inception costs and, starting from April 2022, an annual budget of £500,000 (Official Development Assistance (ODA) and non-ODA) that any UK government stakeholder can access, and is free to use across UK government departments and ISF Portfolios. The overall objective of the helpdesk is to establish and increase capability across HMG on WPS policy and programming to make the UK’s work on conflict and instability more effective. The primary objectives of the helpdesk are:

- *Objective 1:* Improve the gender sensitivity of HMG policies and programmes in the security and conflict space in line with UK commitments on gender equality through ad-hoc gender analyses and evidence summaries.
- *Objective 2:* Strengthen HMG capability and processes to deliver against WPS commitments outlined in the [UK National Action Plan](#).

The final outputs of the helpdesk under this contract are as follows:

- The creation of a WPS helpdesk and associated communications;
- Delivery of ad hoc gender analyses with teams working on conflict and security across UK government teams, globally and in London;
- Delivery of analytical reports such as evidence reviews, evidence syntheses, evaluation reviews and technical advice on WPS to policy and programme teams based on task queries sent to the helpdesk;
- [Repository](#) of data and work performed throughout the contracted period, namely all products developed during this period including written and training products.

3. Evaluation overview

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to document evidence of the outcomes and wider impact of the project against the above objectives, recognising the nature of the contract, which is focused on providing on-demand advisory service to UK government stakeholders. The evaluation should also capture lessons learned during project implementation, documenting strengths and weaknesses of the partnership and project methodology. This should be analysed and presented with a view to guide future programming and wider organisational learning for both the ISF and the WPS Helpdesk.

The evaluation will use an inclusive approach that involves all project stakeholders, including (but not limited to); Helpdesk Management Team, ISF Project Team for the contract, Consortium partners represented in the Quality and Coordination Pool and on the Steering Committee, government helpdesk users, any other government stakeholders that participated in trainings, workshops, briefing and dissemination events. The evaluation approach must be responsive to human rights, gender equality, age sensitivity, disability inclusion and Leave No One Behind principles, and based on FCDO Ethical Guidelines. Conflict sensitivity and Do No

Harm considerations must be apparent within the conduct of the evaluation. The evaluator(s) will need to participate in the final project Outcome Harvesting¹ workshop with the project team and partners, as well as the Lessons Forum in early 2025, conduct a desk review of selected tasks produced by the helpdesk, conduct key informant interviews (KII) and/or focus group discussions (FGD), and reflection meetings. The process will include the opportunity for ISF, Saferworld and helpdesk consortium partners to reflect together on the relevance and impact of the helpdesk, the lessons learned and how potential future iterations of the helpdesk can be further improved and sustained for the UK government.

4. Purpose and objectives of the evaluation

Purpose

The overall purpose of the evaluation is to document evidence of the outcomes and wider impact of the project against its objectives. This evaluation presents an opportunity to independently assess the helpdesk's overall added value to improving UK capability on WPS, gender and conflict programming.

In assessing the degree to which the helpdesk was able to meet its intended objectives, the evaluation will provide key lessons about successful approaches to capacity development and strengthening on WPS and gender within HMG, and operational practices to implement knowledge and skills, as well as highlight areas where the helpdesk performed less effectively than anticipated and/or had unintended outcomes. The evaluation will generate and document good practices, especially with regards to the helpdesk partnership approach and innovations. Lessons that have wider relevance on how helpdesk models can engage with and influence important stakeholders to better integrate gender and intersectionality within their work on peace and security, gender equality, or in conflict and fragile contexts, are welcome.

The evaluation will provide Saferworld and helpdesk consortium partners with a rich source of information for future programming as well as providing accountability to ISF and HMG users. The evaluation will assess the relevance of the helpdesk and added value to contributing to wider systemic change on gender transformative behaviour within the UK policy and programming space.

The **specific objectives** of the final evaluation are to:

1. Assess the **relevance** and **appropriateness** of the project in terms of:

- The extent to which the helpdesk design, outcomes and outputs were relevant to the needs and priorities of HMG, and whether they were timely in responding to needs of ISF and users.
- Alignment with UK government's NAP on WPS and relevant strategies including the Integrated Review Refresh 2023 and the International Women and Girls Strategy 2023 - 2030 that promote gender equality, and its timeliness with regards to the development and implementation of the new UK NAP on WPS 2023 – 2027;
- The factors and constraints that influenced project implementation, including technical, managerial, organisational, institutional, and policy issues, as well as other external/context factors;
- The extent to which the project was able to adjust/adapt and manage risk throughout implementation

¹ See <https://www.saferworld-global.org/resources/publications/1223-outcome-harvesting-saferworlds-approach> for information about our Outcome Harvesting approach. This will likely take place in October 2024.

2. Assess the **effectiveness** and **efficiency** of the project, including:

- The helpdesk's effectiveness in achieving outcomes in line with its overall objectives. Assessing effectiveness should include reviewing the processes and methodology and adapting based on real-time challenges and opportunities as identified on a needs basis.
- Assess the overall value of the helpdesk to enhancing WPS and gender equality within HMG teams, particularly from teams that commissioned tasks.
- Assess the extent to which the strategies and approaches used by the helpdesk were effective in increasing the reach and expansion of the WPS Helpdesk across various HMG teams and departments, specifically in relation to the project objectives;
- Assess the extent to which the project substantively engaged with HMG teams/ departments that had comparatively less experience of working on gender/with a gender/intersectional lens on WPS.
- Assess to what extent the project's approach to ensuring conflict sensitivity within its methodology and steps (including during monitoring) was successful at identifying and mitigating conflict risks and unintended consequences;
- Analyse the effectiveness of the helpdesk's engagement with HMG on WPS and gender and conflict sensitivity and the effectiveness of its communications and outreach through dissemination of task-related findings and analysis generated throughout the project period. The bulk of this work has been 'on-demand', though the evaluation should also cover the smaller portion of work via planned elements, e.g. proactive task suggestions, newsletters, biannual digests, etc.;
- Assess the efficiency of the helpdesk management team staffing, planning and coordination mechanism, including the ability to deliver helpdesk products in a timely manner;
- Assess the effectiveness of the helpdesk's quality assurance and review methodology and process, including its ability to learn and improve throughout the project period;
- Assess the effectiveness of the project approach to collecting and using data to monitor results and manage the project.

3. Assess the **impact** of the helpdesk on the policy and programming change within UK government teams/ departments on WPS and on integrating gender in conflict programming and policy at large:

- To what extent the project contributed to the capacity strengthening of HMG helpdesk users. This should also investigate where possible the secondary impact within the HMG government department/ teams that the helpdesk users work for, for example, are they integrating and applying knowledge and analysis on WPS and gender in conflict contexts when designing and delivering their activities in fragile and conflict contexts;
- Assess any intersectional and feminist approaches incorporated into the task analysis and methodology and how that impacted outcomes for HMG users/ clients;
- The degree to which the helpdesk addressed inclusion and diversity and adopted diverse analysis and voices within its analysis and technical support provided to HMG users/ clients.

4. Document **good practices, innovations and lessons** emerging from the helpdesk/ project, and make **recommendations for future iteration of the project/ helpdesk model**, including:

- Identify good practices and lessons learned related to the helpdesk's operational capacity, ability to engage HMG stakeholders to generate demand, strategies applied in implementing communications and outreach to various HMG stakeholders across departments and any change observed during this period. This includes documenting good practices and lessons learned in relation to the helpdesk model adopted under this contract;
- Based on these lessons, provide actionable recommendations for Saferworld and helpdesk partners' broader work on gender, peace and security; and provide actionable recommendations for ISF on potential future iterations of the helpdesk and/or sustaining action to improve UK capabilities to fulfil its WPS commitments.

5. Evaluation methodology and process

The evaluation will use an inclusive approach that involves all project stakeholders, in order to generate diverse views on the helpdesk effectiveness, and take into consideration the challenges, risks and opportunities faced by both HMG staff while working on WPS and/or in conflict and fragile contexts as well as for the helpdesk consortium in supporting HMG to do so. The evaluator will integrate the helpdesk's outcome harvesting approach to understanding what changes in behaviour, relationships and practices have taken place as a result of its work and what the significance of those changes are both in the short- and long-term.⁴ It is expected that the evaluator will engage with the helpdesk management team, consortium partners, and ISF Project Team, HMG users and training or dissemination/ briefing session participants to identify and document significant outcomes realised during the project period.

The evaluation approach must be responsive to human rights, gender equality, age sensitivity, disability, inclusion and Saferworld's ethical guidelines. Conflict sensitivity and Do No Harm considerations must be apparent within the conduct of the evaluation.

The evaluator will use (but is not limited to) the following as the main sources of data:

Desk Review: The evaluator(s) will review and analyse evidence already collected to assess the helpdesk's progress towards expected results. The evaluator will be required to draw on a range of internal project documentation as well as the resources provided by the helpdesk management team and ISF that are/may be relevant for the purpose of the evaluation. These include proposal documents, baseline and endline monitoring information, the helpdesk annual reports, ISF annual portfolio reviews, the results framework, outcomes harvested, task reports, training feedback summaries and task commissioner feedback survey, etc.

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): Interviews will be conducted with helpdesk management team, consortium partners, quality and coordination pool experts, steering committee members, ISF Project Team and any other HMG users and training participants of the helpdesk that we have worked with. This is to further discuss, test and validate harvested outcomes and to identify additional outcomes (intended and unintended). This can be done online.

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs): Focus group discussions could be adopted by the evaluator(s) to supplement KIIs and desk research if they want to cover a significant group of HMG users that might have commissioned a task or several tasks, depending on feasibility and practicality. We are open to suggestions on whether this works given the time management. This can be used to receive feedback on how experts that have worked on tasks or HMG users that commissioned tasks perceived the helpdesk process and end result (task product) and to further discuss, test and validate the harvested outcomes and to identify additional (intended and unintended) outcomes, and lessons learned. This can be done online.

Outcome Harvesting: Throughout project implementation, Saferworld in collaboration with helpdesk partners has been gathering evidence of relevant outcomes through a participatory process known as

outcome harvesting² (OH) and through feedback survey forms dispatched to task commissioners after each task is signed off. As part of this assignment, the consultant will systematically review evidence collected through OH, annual reporting and collect complementary primary data through KIIs and if required supplementary FGDs that will enable them to verify and/or reject, and further substantiate, the harvested outcomes, and lessons learned. The consultant will also participate in the **final Outcome Harvesting workshop** where project staff, partners and key project stakeholders will “harvest” outcomes over the final 6 months of the project. This will be an important step in the data collection and will take place in London (hybrid approach with participants joining online and in-person) between September – November 2024. The evaluators should also present the evaluation findings in a presentation at the planned Lessons Forum in early 2025.

The outcome harvesting and data collection methods should be described in more detail in the expression of interest, clearly outlining how they will be used in practice during the evaluation process.

6. Evaluation outputs

The expected outputs are:

1. **Inception report** - final methodology/work plan produced and shared after the briefing meeting with WPS helpdesk management team and ISF Project Team. The Inception Report should include the following key elements:
 - a. A short orientation summary of UK WPS and gender equality commitments and major UK stakeholders engaged in implementing and monitoring the UK NAP on WPS (2023 – 2027) and any cross-linkages between this strategy and other relevant HMG teams.
 - b. Light evaluability assessment to identify existing data gaps for the purpose of the evaluation.
 - c. Evaluation matrix that would refine questions and sub-questions per evaluative criterion, respective methods for data collection/data sources (e.g., KIIs, FGDs, project monitoring reports, surveys, etc.), and evaluation-specific indicators and benchmarks to assess a given question/sub-question.
 - d. Detailed methodology, including data collection methods and tools, sampling strategy, methods of analysis and triangulation.
 - e. Proposed list of interviewees and if applicable FGD participants, disaggregated by stakeholder group and gender.
 - f. Workplan outlining anticipated timelines and expected Level of Effort for each phase of work.
2. **Draft and Final Report:** The Draft Report will be shared with the helpdesk management team, Consortium partners and the ISF Project Team for their comments, alongside the production of a Comments Matrix. The Final evaluation report, incorporating ISF, helpdesk management team and consortium partners’ feedback, should be written in clear and concise English language, and be of high quality to share both internally and externally. The Final Report should be no longer than 25

² See the publication [Doing things differently](#) for an overview of our approach to Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning.

pages (excluding annexes) and include an Executive Summary of no more than 4 pages. When preparing the Draft Report, evaluator(s) should consult the FCDO evaluation guidelines.

3. Presentation/validation of findings at the Lessons Forum in early 2025 with helpdesk management team, Consortium partners, ISF Project Team and any other relevant stakeholders (which might include but not limited to WPS Policy Team, OCSM), including a **PowerPoint slide deck** of the evaluation findings including notes for each slide.

4. Two-pager on project achievements and lessons learned: Evaluator(s) must also develop a stand-alone document (no more than two pages) to outline the main project results at the outcome level as well as key programmatic and operational lessons learned. In addition to this, they should summarise two of the most interesting outcomes in about 500 words to support the two-page summary.

7. Duration, location and management arrangements

The evaluator(s) will be expected to deliver within the stipulated timeline and submit a workplan for this work, including at least 2 days (excluding travel to the country if not based there) in London, for participation in the project's final Outcome Harvesting Workshop (to be confirmed later). The remaining allocation of days will be done remotely/from home.

The consultancy must start **no later than first week of September 2024** and the draft evaluation report must be submitted no later than **20 December 2024**.

The evaluator(s) will work with the helpdesk management team representing Saferworld and all other consortium partners who will work with the consultant on evaluating the project methodology, results framework and outcomes harvested so far.

The evaluator(s) will be working under the overall supervision of WPS Helpdesk Team Leader (Saferworld). As managers for this assignment, Saferworld will:

- Provide the evaluator(s) with relevant documents upon commencement of the assignment.
- Coordinate and communicate with the ISF Project Team counterparts, HMG users/ clients of the helpdesk, and other related stakeholders as needed.
- Provide the evaluator(s) with appropriate logistical support to ensure that the objective of the assignment is achieved with reasonable efficiency and effectiveness.
- Support in identification of key stakeholders to be interviewed, surveyed, or consulted as part of KIIs and if applicable FGDs.
- Provide and consolidate feedback on deliverables and facilitate communication with the ISF Project Team and any relevant HMG stakeholders.

Any matter related to the final evaluation process should be presented to the WPS Helpdesk Team Leader in writing.

8. Resources

Saferworld will meet the following direct costs relating to the evaluation:

- If required, local travel and refreshment costs during the Outcome Harvesting workshop and Lessons Forum;

The consultant will be responsible for the following costs:

- All data and airtime/communication costs.

9. Payment Schedule

Payment will be made in three tranches on satisfactory submission of the following deliverables:

Deliverables	Level of Effort (#days)	Due Date	Payment (%)
Deliverable 1: Submission of final inception report including final methodology and tools for data collection. This should include a clear workplan ensuring timeline reporting.	3 days	06 September 2024	10%
Deliverable 2- Submission of first draft final evaluation report including at least two stories of change.	15 days	25 November 2024	40%
Deliverable 3 - Completion of the final evaluation report that addresses the feedback from the helpdesk management team and partners including final exec. summary report, PPT presentation, a two-pager summary of project achievements and key results including two important outcomes detailed in no more than 500 words and any relevant annexes.	3 days	20 December 2024	50%

10. Profile of consultant(s)

Saferworld is looking for an individual or a team of evaluators to support this review, with the following essential skills and experience:

- At least 10 years' experience in conducting and leading reviews and evaluations using participatory methods (outcome mapping, harvesting, contribution analysis, systems thinking).
- Excellent knowledge on WPS and gender in conflict programming and policy design.
- Excellent written and spoken English and the ability to communicate well with others whose first language is not English.
- Strong experience and communication skills to facilitate interviews (including remotely), with a range of actors.
- Strong qualitative data research skills.
- Demonstrable experience of producing high-quality, credible reports in English
- Demonstrable experience conducting evaluations for gender equality, WPS in conflict and for commercial contracts

- Sensitivity to the programme's principles (partnership, feminist, diversity and inclusion, adaptability and, gender equality).

Desirable:

- Advanced university degree (Master's degree or equivalent) in sociology, development studies, political science, peace and conflict studies, international relations, public administration, or other related field.
- Experience working with government and donors, particularly FCDO
- Experience of evaluating commercial contracts and FCDO framework agreements.

Application process

Saferworld invites expressions of interest from evaluators/companies with the required skills and experience. The expression of interest should comprise:

- A cover letter outlining relevant experience, and suitability for the consultancy (maximum 1 page)
- An outline of the methodology proposed for the assignment (maximum 2 pages)
- CV/company profile, including contact details for two referees/references
- A sample of previous work relevant to the assignment (in English)
- Indicative budget (maximum 1 page) covering daily rate(s) and any related expenses. Rates should be in GBP and inclusive of VAT and all other applicable taxes.
- Please submit expressions of interest with all supporting information to jobs@saferworld.org.uk
- Your e-mail must have the subject heading indicating **WPS Helpdesk Project Evaluation**.
- Deadline for applications is **1700 GMT on 5 August 2024**.
- We regret only shortlisted candidates/companies will be contacted. It is anticipated that interviews will take place the week following the application deadline.