

Terms of Reference (ToR)  
Final evaluation of an AFD-funded project

6 February 2023

**Deadline for submitting a proposal:** 20 February (12:00 GMT)

**Evaluation tentative start date:** First week of March

**Location:** Remotely

[Forus](#) is an innovative global network empowering civil society for effective social change. It brings together 68 National NGO Platforms and 7 Regional Coalitions from Africa, America, Asia, Europe, and Pacific.

Forus is seeking an external evaluator or team of evaluators to lead the final evaluation of its 3-year (2020-2023) project *“Towards a more influential and coordinated civil society for the realization of Agenda 2030 at national, regional and international levels”*.

The findings of the final evaluation will contribute to the final project reporting to the donors.

The evaluation is expected to generate strong evidence on the impacts of Forus activities within the framework of the project. Likewise, the recommendations of the evaluation will enable the Forus network to continue strengthening its accountability and learning processes, as established in the [Forus 2021-2025 Strategy](#).

## 1. Background on the project to be evaluated

The project is supported by the French Development Agency (AFD), and it was implemented at the global level with Forus national and/or regional members. The project duration was 3 years: from April 2020 to 31 March 2023.

### Objectives:

The overall objective of the project *“Towards a more influential and coordinated civil society for the realization of Agenda 2030 at national, regional and international levels”* was to enable a better equipped and coordinated civil society to influence public policies at the national, regional, and international levels, through a strengthened network supporting national platforms and regional coalitions of NGOs.

Forus and its members pursue this aim as a legitimate and representative catalyst of NGOs’ voices across the globe. Forus’ mission is divided into three pillars: to CONNECT civil society, to SUPPORT its capacities and to INFLUENCE public policies.

The project has three interlinked **specific objectives**, related to each of the aforementioned pillars.

1. **CONNECT:** (SO1) To consolidate the coordination and interconnections within civil society. This objective aims to connect, unite, and bring together civil society organizations, particularly the members of the Forus network.
2. **SUPPORT:** (SO2) To strengthen Forus and its members as representatives of civil society at the national, regional, and international levels. This objective corresponds to the capacity development activities of the Forus network.
3. **INFLUENCE:** (SO3) To support and strengthen the influence of civil society and its participation in political processes related to the Agenda 2030 and civic space. This objective relates to Forus' advocacy actions to promote open, peaceful, inclusive, and sustainable societies around the world.

#### **Key project activities include:**

- 1) **Connect (SO1):** strengthening the levels of transnational collaboration among Forus members, facilitating peer-sharing and interconnection spaces between members, and ensuring an inclusive, representative, and democratic governance within the network
- 2) **Support (SO2):** peer-learning activities, subgrating scheme and support to national and regional capacity development projects, dissemination and creation of toolkits, and implementation and consolidation of monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning processes
- 3) **Influence (SO3):** thematic advocacy working groups, particular focus on Agenda 2030 and enabling environment and civic space, policy/position papers, participation in/contribution to international fora, collaboration with other civil society networks and other relevant stakeholders, such as regional and international institutions

## **2. Purpose & scope of the Final evaluation**

The final evaluation will focus on the progress made in achieving overall and specific objectives of the project, with a particular focus on the impact and effectiveness of Forus' support to strengthen its members capacities in the monitoring and implementation of the SDGs of the Agenda 2030.

The overall purpose of the final evaluation is to:

- **collect evidence** of impact and change by evaluating both qualitative and quantitative data against a selected set of project indicators; capturing achievements of the project's results and indicators
- **draw lessons and concrete recommendations** for enhancing the quality of Forus activities and support to national and regional members, contributing to the project's learning
- **showcase examples** of change and lessons learnt
- **contribute to strengthening accountability practices** within the Forus network

Key evaluation questions:

1. Connect (SO1): Considering the changing context during which the project was implemented (Covid-19), to what extent did Forus contribute to connecting its members and enabling interaction and collaboration among its members and with other relevant stakeholders?
2. Support (SO2): How effective was Forus' support in strengthening the capacities of its national and regional members to represent civil society at the national, regional, and international levels?
  - a. How satisfied are Forus members with the capacity development activities conducted by Forus?
  - b. To what extent were Forus members' capacities enhanced to bring their own members together?
  - c. To what extent do regional/international partners recognize the role of Forus members in structuring NGOs?
3. Influence (SO3): To what extent did Forus' support enable its members to be more influential in regional and international policy processes and spaces related to the Agenda 2030 and civic space/enabling environment?

Cross-cutting questions:

- a) To what extent were transparency, accountability and good governance ensured in the project? How could it be improved?
- b) Does the project actively contribute to the promotion of Human Rights? How could it be improved?

The audience of the evaluation will be:

- a) Forus' decentralized Secretariat team and governance: for mapping out reflections and lessons learnt from the project activities
- b) Members and partner organizations (in particular, institutions and CSOs that collaborate with Forus on advocacy and campaigning) that may be interested in the results and lessons learned from this evaluation
- c) Other external stakeholders (e.g., donors): for assessing the impact of the network's activities, and/or the effective and efficient use of the funding to achieve stated goals and results of the project

### **3. Evaluation approach and methods**

The evaluation will be carried out by a specialized consultant or team of consultants reflecting the intercultural nature of the Forus network. The Secretariat team will support the steering of the evaluation, the result of which will be shared with Forus' governance.

Contributions from members will be used to determine the perception, image and added value of Forus to its members. The evaluation shall be conducted remotely and will also include a desk review, questionnaires and/or interviews with key Forus partners and external stakeholders. It will also pay attention to lessons learnt on project methods and strategies and determine the overall relevance, effectiveness, impact, and sustainability of the project.

The evaluation will develop and apply a rigorous analytical framework to identify the impact of Forus in the above-mentioned areas. Evaluators are expected to detail this framework in the technical offer.

The evaluation will draw out how Forus contributed to the impact of its members' advocacy work, particularly around SDGs. Consultants will be expected to collect data from a cross-section of representatives of Forus members and external partners, including a diversity of respondents and different levels of seniority. Interviews of a minimum of 5 external partners, (e.g., representatives of donor agencies, national governments, international institutions such as the UN and EU, and partner CSOs) are to be conducted. Case studies of Forus members could also be included, if relevant. The list of interviewees and subjects for the case studies will be determined with Forus at the inception phase. The evaluation methodology and data collection tools will also be determined during the inception phase. Likewise, the Forus Secretariat will also provide the evaluators with key data from the Forus MEAL systems during the inception phase.

Principles underpinning the evaluator's **approach** are:

- Participatory and culturally sensitive process valuing knowledge and approaches from within the context
- Impartiality and independence of the evaluation process from the programming and implementation functions
- Credibility of the evaluation, through use of appropriately skilled and independent expert
- Transparency of the evaluation process, including wide dissemination of results
- Usefulness of the evaluation findings and recommendations, through timely presentation of relevant, productively critical, clear, and concise information, and commitment to building capacity. The evaluator may refer to the Critical Friend methodology.

The evaluation must have a cross-cutting consideration for inclusion, ensuring that factors related to gender, culture, and language.

The evaluation will consist of several **phases**:

- Contracting: contract is signed, and a discussion of the assignment takes place. First documents and key data are provided to the evaluator
- Inception phase: a kick-off meeting and an inception meeting will be held. Submission of inception report (which describes a proposal for the design of the evaluation and elaborates on how data will be obtained and analysed). The Forus Secretariat will also provide quantitative and qualitative data to evaluators from the Forus' Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability and Learning systems used by the Secretariat. Data triangulation and quality control are very important and need to be discussed in the inception report. Evaluation questions and evaluation matrix will also be discussed and validated at that stage.
- Evaluation phase: The evaluator studies all necessary project documents and data; re-constructs and analyses the intervention logic and its assumptions. It is expected that

data and information will be obtained through different methods such as: analysis of documents and data, online interviews (with a limited number of persons), online-survey (if applicable), others. (No field trips to visit the partners and members are foreseen)

- Final draft report: submission and presentation of final draft report. Inclusion of comments from partners and Forus.
- Final delivery: submission of final deliverables. Presentation of final evaluation findings to the project's main donor together with Forus staff.

The evaluators will work closely with the Forus Secretariat, ensuring regular communications and meetings throughout the different phases. Support for the logistical aspects of the evaluation can be provided by the Forus Secretariat.

## 5. Deliverables

- a) Inception report, including a detailed methodology, list of interviewees and tools for the evaluation
- b) Draft and final evaluation report in English addressing the evaluation questions and including:
  - o Executive summary of key findings and recommendations
  - o Evaluation findings, analysis and conclusions with associated evidence and data clearly illustrated. Use of tables, graphs, quotes, anecdotes, and stories to illustrate findings and conclusions is encouraged
  - o Case studies (if relevant) to illustrate stories of the impact of Forus and its members on specific policies, processes and fora related to the Agenda 2030
  - o Recommendations for the next actions, which should be practical and linked directly to conclusions
  - o Appendices, including methodology and evaluation tools, list of interviewees, questionnaire, and brief biography of evaluator
- c) Two presentations of final findings: to Forus team and governance, and to the main donor

Final payment is dependent on the submission and approval of the final evaluation report.

## 6. Profile and qualifications of the consultant

Applicants may be individuals or a team of consultants. As a diverse network, Forus encourages mixed teams, with different backgrounds and genders.

### Key qualifications :

- Relevant academic degree (master level)
- A minimum of ten years' experience and expertise in the non-profit sector, preferably networks in the field of development and linked to networks
- At least three evaluations in the last five years, ideally impact evaluations, and focusing on advocacy, policy, campaigning, or communication work implemented by NGOs. Track-record of evaluations related to the implementation and monitoring of SDGs is an asset.

- Demonstrated experience of evaluation involving qualitative data and ‘soft’ outcomes.
- Demonstrated experience of evaluating multi-country projects
- Working experience in several countries and continents
- An understanding of the nature of capacity development work and advocacy activities
- Experience in project cycle management
- Excellent oral and written English skills
- Capacity to study documentation and conduct interviews in French and Spanish is a strong asset.

## 7. Application procedure

The application documents must be submitted no later than 20 February 2023 in electronic format to the following address: [recruitment@forus-international.org](mailto:recruitment@forus-international.org) specifying “Final Evaluation – AFD project” in the subject line.

### The application should include:

- a) A technical offer including:
  - Evaluation methodology: Describing your overall approach and evaluation methodology including, but not limited to, evaluation questions, evaluation design, proposed tools, and methodology
  - Understanding of the issues at stake and the Terms of Reference
  - Relevant experience: Provide details of projects of similar scope, complexity, and nature you have worked on previously
  - Specific expertise: advocacy & campaigning, Agenda 2030, civic space, international networks
  - Key personnel and staffing: Describe key personnel who will be part of the proposed plan and include their CVs (max. 2 pages each and attached as annex)
  - Timeline: Include a detailed timeline of key activities
  - Three references (including telephone numbers) and web links to previous work (if available)
- b) A detailed financial offer including:
  - A line-item budget: The cost estimates used to prepare the budget should be presented in Euros (including VAT and any other taxes). The tenderer should include their proposed daily rate, including all costs
  - A budget narrative

The maximum budget for the evaluation is EUR 25,000 including all taxes and costs.

Applicants should clearly highlight any current or previous working or personal links to Forus, as well as any risk around conflict of interest.

## 4. Provisional calendar

A total of 30 working days is currently estimated for this assignment.

Deadline for applications	20 February (by 12:00 GMT)
Interviews	20 to 28 February
Contracting of evaluators	End February 2023
Inception phase, including kick-off meeting and inception meeting	Early March
Evaluation phase	Mid-March – mid-April
Final delivery	Mid-May 2023