



TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

Spotlight Initiative Mid-Term Assessment

1. Background

In 2017, the United Nations (UN) and the European Union (EU) launched a new, global, multi-year initiative (2017-2022) focused on eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls (VAWG) - the Spotlight Initiative. The Initiative provides a model for partnership with donors, civil society, and all UN partners, to deliver on the SDGs in a comprehensive manner leveraging comparative expertise. The initiative places Goal 5 at the center of efforts (as well as Goal 16) with the aim to provide an enabling environment for the implementation of all goals.

The Spotlight Initiative aims at being transformative, and is evidence and rights-based. It focuses on a small number of countries to ensure that significant financial investment can support a set of high-impact interventions focusing on catalytic impact, building on successful existing programmes and addressing gaps and bottlenecks. Activities launched under the umbrella of the initiative strengthen multi-sectoral responses that will, hopefully, end one of the most pervasive human rights violations. Activities address underlying causes of VAWG/harmful practices, including discriminatory social and socio-cultural norms, stereotypes, and unequal power relations. By doing so they contribute to strengthening institutional capacities and accountabilities for improved health and judicial responses increased availability, accessibility and quality of services (in relation to empowerment and support for long term recovery), and enabling the collection of reliable, globally comparable, and quality data.

Within the United Nations system, the Spotlight Initiative is a flagship programme of the development system reforms. It is modelling a new way of working together – that is more coherent, collaborative, inclusive and efficient – under the leadership of Resident Coordinators to develop holistic, technically sound programmes that shatter silos and harness synergies and complementarities. This will increase the effectiveness of programmes and operational efficiencies as well as reduce transaction costs for partners.

The modality for delivery of the Spotlight Initiative is through a UN multi-stakeholder trust fund, administered by the Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office (MPTF), with the support of relevant UN agencies (particularly UN Women, UNDP and UNFPA as well as UNICEF). The initiative is overseen by the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General (EOSG). All relevant entities will be engaged at country and regional levels based on their respective mandates, capacities and strengths.

2. Programme Framework

Overall goal: All women and girls live free from violence and harmful practices

Impact statement: All women and girls, particularly the most vulnerable, live free from all forms of violence and harmful practices because of prevention strategies and strengthened multi-sectoral and partnership-based responses.

Six outcomes: Implemented simultaneously and in a comprehensive manner, six main outcomes have been identified to contribute to the overall goal of ending all forms of VAWG/harmful practices, especially the most marginalized women and girls. Outcomes are based on evidence, research, and demonstrated practice and programmes that demonstrate the need for coordinated interventions that strategically complement, galvanize and take to scale existing investments in gender equality and VAWG/harmful practice actions.

Outcome areas:

Pillar 1: Legislative and policy frameworks, based on evidence and in line with international human rights standards, on all forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices are in place and translated into plans

Pillar 2: National and sub-national systems and institutions plan, fund and deliver evidence-based programmes that prevent and respond to violence against women and girls and harmful practices, including in other sectors

Pillar 3: Gender inequitable social norms, attitudes and behaviours change at community and individual levels to prevent violence against women and girls and harmful practices

Pillar 4: Women and girls who experience violence and harmful practices use available, accessible, acceptable, and quality essential services including for long term recovery from violence

Pillar 5: Quality, disaggregated and globally comparable data on different forms of violence against women and girls and harmful practices, collected, analysed and used in line with international standards to inform laws, policies and programmes

Pillar 6: Women's rights groups, autonomous social movements and civil society organisations, including those representing youth and groups facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination/marginalization, more effectively influence and advance progress on GEWE and ending VAWG

Regional and thematic contexts

The Spotlight Initiative currently includes 29 country programmes (6 in Latin America, 8 in Africa, 6 in the Caribbean and 4 in the Pacific), 4 regional programmes (Latin America, Caribbean, Pacific, Central Asia) and 1 thematic programme (Safe and Fair programme on violence against women migrants). Country programmes implement interventions according to a comprehensive approach (covering all 6 pillars of the Spotlight Theory of Change), while regional and thematic programmes cover a smaller number of pillars (3 to 5).

Women and girls are exposed to intersecting forms of violence regardless of where they live. The Spotlight Initiative will take this into account and base regional theories of change on thematic components according to regional context, where specific forms of violence are most prevalent, and/or where existing structures/momentum will enable rapid and efficient scale-up of activities. The specific outputs and output indicators will be developed along with partners at the regional level to reflect regional specificities which include:

- Sexual and gender-based violence, and harmful practices, in **Sub-Saharan Africa**.
- Femicide in **Latin America**.
- Domestic violence in the **Pacific**.
- Domestic and family violence in the **Caribbean**.
- Trafficking of women and girls and sexual exploitation in **Asia** (TBC).

In every country programme and regional programme, a maximum of 5 UN agencies¹, depending on their mandate and added value, are recipient implementing partners which work under the leadership of the resident Coordinator.

3. Rationale and purpose

All country and regional programmes are implemented in two phases. Disbursement of funds under Phase II is contingent on a mid-term assessment by the Operational Steering Committee. Once the recipient United Nations organizations of a specific programme confirm to the Administrative Agent they have reached the 70 per cent disbursement threshold for the first phase, the Operational Steering Committee will request to conduct a mid-term assessment using the Results-oriented monitoring methodology. As indicated in the Spotlight Initiative Fund Terms of Reference, mid-term assessments will play an important role in the Operational Steering Committee's decision to validate the implementation of the second phase of budgets for all programmes ("Phase II"). While the specific criteria for decision are still to be defined by the Operational Steering Committee, the information collected by the Mid-term assessment will be an important component for decision.

As per the Spotlight Initiative's Terms of Reference, results-oriented monitoring and evaluations are required to assess the performance of each programme (including programme, endline and thematic evaluations). The Mid-term assessments, which follow a results-oriented monitoring methodology, are commissioned by the Operational Steering Committee. They are designed as an independent review to provide a brief snapshot on the implementation of interventions at a given moment. They will serve not only as a support tool for project management by informing stakeholders about the performance of the interventions, but also contribute lessons learnt for further programming, design and implementation of interventions. They are also used to test the global and regional theories of change of the initiative.

Results-oriented monitoring, on the other hand, refers to a strategy which main goal is to report on progress of the highest stages of the logical causal chain, especially changes at the output, outcome and impact levels. It allows decision-makers to continuously assess the relevance of Spotlight interventions and track the progress made towards achieving its planned objectives.

As per the Spotlight Initiative TORs, all country and regional programmes for the 2018 and 2019 Investment Portfolios will be implemented in two phases. Disbursement of funds under Phase II will be contingent on a mid-term assessment commissioned by the Operational Steering Committee and overseen by the Spotlight Secretariat. As per recommendation from the Spotlight Secretariat and in line with EU practice, **Mid-Term Assessment of performance (MTA)** will be conducted according to the principles of "Results-Oriented monitoring" (ROM).

The MTA will be conducted in compliance with the principles and standards for project evaluation² set forth in the UN Evaluation Group's (UNEG) Norms and Standards for Evaluation (2016)³ and UNEG's Guidance on *Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality*

¹ With 1 exception, approved by the Spotlight Operational Steering Committee, in Mexico, where 6 Recipient UN Agencies have been selected.

² While the UNEG guidelines are meant for evaluations, the principles they detail can be used/adapted for mid-term assessments and reviews

³ <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1914>

in Evaluation⁴. Furthermore, they will also be guided by the *Evaluation Policy for the European Union*⁵ and the *EU Results-Oriented Monitoring Handbook*⁶.

ROM aims at enhancing accountability and management capacities with a strong focus on results, and supports decision makers by providing an external opinion on implementation. ROM is conducted by external experts according to four criteria: 1) Relevance (the extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries/agents of change' requirements, country needs, global priorities and partners' and donors' policies); 2) Effectiveness (the extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, taking into account their relative importance); 3) Efficiency (the measure of how economically resources/inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted into outputs); and 4) Sustainability (the continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed).

4. Methodology

The selected entity will be expected to deliver **Mid-term assessment using the ROM methodology, for all Programmes in the Spotlight Initiative (for each individual country, regional and thematic programme).**

At the beginning of the assessment, a preparatory desk review will be performed based on the logical framework of programmes, budgets and planning/progress of activities.

Then, Result-oriented monitoring experts will conduct field missions with the aim of ascertaining credible information on progress with respect to results, as well as their quality and sustainability. During these missions, experts interview all the parties involved, using a standard set of monitoring questions to structure the analysis of documentation and empirical data. Parties interviewed are expected to include beneficiaries/agents of change, key stakeholders involved in the implementation of the programme, civil society organizations and local and national authorities. The purpose of all interviews is to obtain key stakeholders' reactions and suggestions which can confirm, refute or complete information already gathered on the project by the desk review.

At the end of the mission, ROM experts provide recommendations to improve the future project implementation that are relevant for main Spotlight managers and partners, as well as examples of what worked and what didn't to support the advancement and implementation of some key principles of the UN reform.

- **Timeline:**

Once the recipient United Nations organizations of a specific programme confirm to the Administrative Agent they have reached the 70 per cent disbursement threshold for the first phase, the Operational Steering Committee will request to conduct a mid-term assessment using the Results-oriented monitoring methodology.

Mid-term assessments are expected to be conducted as follows:

⁴ United Nations Evaluation Group. Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations. 2014. Access online: <http://www.unevaluation.org/document/detail/1616>

⁵ <https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/node/71167>

⁶ https://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/rom-handbook-results-oriented-monitoring_en

- 6 Country Programmes in Latin America (Argentina, Guatemala, Ecuador, El Salvador, Honduras, Mexico) MTA to start by end of 2020;
- 8 Country Programmes in Africa (Liberia, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Uganda, Zimbabwe) MTA to start by end of 2020;
- 4 Country Programmes in Pacific (Papua-New Guinea, Samoa, Timor Leste, Vanuatu) MTA to start by end of 2021;
- 6 Country Programmes in the Caribbean (Belize, Grenada, Guyana, Haiti, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago) MTA to start by end of 2021;
- 4 Regional Programmes (Latin America, Caribbean, Pacific, Central Asia) MTA to start by end of 2020 for LA and by end of 2021 for all other programmes;
- 1 Thematic Programme (Safe and Fair Programme for ASEAN Countries) MTA to start by end of 2020.

Total : 29 programmes.

- **Desk phase:**

ROM experts will conduct a desk review, analysing all the relevant documents such as action documents, logical framework and budget, planning of activities, progress reports by implementing partners, including the project's visibility and communication action plan. The political and policy context of the project should also be considered.

This preparatory phase will result in the draft of a workplan that will be submitted to the Secretariat. Research questions listed below can be adjusted, and amendments to the mentioned deliverables can be suggested if deemed relevant by the research team.

- **Field phase**

ROM experts will design and implement missions in each country to conduct interviews with all parties involved in order to check the quality of the outputs. The information obtained is expected to answer the following questions:

- 1) Relevance

- Does the action align to the principles of the Spotlight Initiative as listed in the Spotlight Initiative Fund TORs?
- Are the Initiative's deliverables aligned with the UN agencies' mandate and priorities? Are the right UN agencies involved?
- Are programmes aligned with the 2030 SDGs agenda? Are programmes implemented in line with the UN System reform?
- Does the action presently respond to the needs of the target groups / end beneficiaries?
- Is the action adapted to the present institutional, human, financial capacities of the partner government and/or other key stakeholder(s)?
- Do all key stakeholders still demonstrate effective commitment (ownership)?
- Are there any complementarity issues with other ongoing/planned action(s) (including Capacity Development) managed by donors that need to be addressed?
- Have all relevant circumstances and risks been taken into account to update the intervention logic?
- Are the indicators to measure results well defined and relevant to measure the achievement of the objectives?

- Are the Initiative's deliverables relevant in meeting the short and long-term objectives of the National development/poverty-reduction plans and UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework?

2) Efficiency

- Are the chosen implementation mechanisms (incl. choice of implementation modalities, entities and contractual arrangements) conducive for achieving the expected results?
- Do partner government and other partners in the country effectively steer the action?
- Do the resources funded by the action and actually made available correspond to the needs of the action? To what degree are other resources which are not EU funded made available?
- If there are delays, how important are they and what are the consequences? What are the reasons for these delays and to what extent have appropriate corrective measures been implemented? To what extent has the planning been revised accordingly?
- Have the outputs been produced/ delivered in a cost-efficient manner?
- Is the action adequately monitored by implementing partners, partner government(s) and other key stakeholders?
- Are the management arrangements for the Initiative at national level adequate and appropriate? Are the National Steering Committees functioning efficiently and in line with Spotlight principles?
- How effectively is the Programme managed? Is the Initiative's management results-based and innovative?
- Are the chosen implementation and coordination mechanisms (a "new way of working" contributing to greater efficiency?

2) Effectiveness

- Is the progress of each output conforming to plan?
- Is the quality of outputs (including those of Capacity Development support) satisfactory?
- Are the outputs (including Capacity Development) still likely to lead to the expected outcomes?
- Does the action effectively support the partner's policy and actions?
- Have the necessary consultations taken place with key stakeholders?
- Has the absorption capacity of the Government, recipient UN agencies, national/regional stakeholders (particularly civil society partners) been an obstacle/bottleneck to ensuring that implementation is going according to plan?
- Has the Initiative's implementation and results achievement gone according to plan, or are there any obstacles/bottlenecks/outstanding issues on the partner or government side that are limiting the successful implementation and results achievement of the Initiative?
- Has the Initiative's implementation and results achievement gone according to plan, or are there any obstacles/bottlenecks/outstanding issues on the UN side that are limiting the successful implementation and results achievement of the Initiative?

4) Sustainability

- Has the government been involved to ensure the sustainability of the action?

- Is the programme identifying and disseminating good practices in the country, between countries?
- Is sufficient capacity being built so that local actors (particularly CSOs, the women’s movement and groups representing women and girls that face intersecting forms of discrimination) will be able to manage the process by the end of the Initiative without continued dependence on international expertise? Are the necessary steps owned and driven by the people?

In addition to assessing the questions above, the team should analyze any other pertinent issues that need addressing or which may or should influence future project direction and partners’ engagement in the country.

● **Reporting phase**

At the latest 14 days after the end of the field phase, a draft report will be submitted to the Secretariat (one per individual programme). This report will include:

- a concise overview of the programme’s intervention logic (project or programme synopsis)
- the analysis and findings on the basis of the answers to the monitoring questions. Both quantitative and qualitative methodologies should be used to analyze data. Regarding quantitative analysis, measuring the percentage of achievement of an output versus plans is useful to provide sound items of evidence of how close one is to achieving what was initially planned. Experts are also expected to elaborate on deviations in terms of implementation schedule, programme costs and beneficiaries/agents of changed effectively reached. The interpretation of qualitative data will focus on the relevance of the project or programme, the expected ownership and leading role of partners in its management, the nature and level of capacities developed by partners, and its potential sustainability.
- a summary of conclusions and recommendations. Recommendations must be realistic, feasible and drafted in a way that the stakeholders to whom they relate are clearly identified.

Consolidated comments will be provided by the Secretariat at the latest 21 days after and will be incorporated into the final version of the report, to be submitted at the latest 14 days after receipt of the comments.

The MTA for all programmes will be undertaken in coordination with the programmes’ civil society reference groups.

5. Management arrangement

The selected entity will work in close collaboration and consultation with the Spotlight Secretariat and UN Country Teams in country as per the table below:

Who: Actors and accountability	What: Roles and responsibilities
Commissioner of the MTA (Operational Steering Committee)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safeguard the independence of the MTA exercise and ensure quality^[SEP] • In consultation with RCs (or other Programme Coordination entity) and RUNOs, present a management response to the MTA and ensure the implementation of committed actions in the management response^[SEP]

<p>MTA Task Manager (Spotlight Secretariat)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide inputs from the programme perspective • Responsible for internal quality control: participate in the review of the MTA methodology and provide comments to the MTA team. Draft final products will be shared with the MTA Task Manager and, based upon the comments received, the MTA team will revise the draft until it meets Spotlight Secretariat M&E Team quality standards. • Oversee the process of the MTA • Facilitate the MTA by providing relevant documents and contacts at global level • Facilitate and ensure the preparation and implementation of relevant management responses at global level • Facilitate and ensure knowledge sharing and use of MTA information
<p>RUNOs and Programme Coordinating entity (RC or other)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support and participate in the process of the MTA • Facilitate MTA by providing relevant documents and contacts • Facilitate and ensure the preparation and implementation of relevant management responses • Facilitate and ensure knowledge sharing and use of MTA information • Coordinate and arrange travels for field visits of the MTA expert/team.
<p>Reference Groups (CSO Reference Group at global and programme level)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide inputs from the programme perspective • Participate in the review of the MTA methodology and provide comments to the MTA team.
<p>MTA Expert</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lead the whole MTA process • Manage the MTA process in timely manner • Communicate with the Spotlight Secretariat and RUNOs whenever it is needed • Conduct field visits to the Programme sites identified and collect data. • Report to the Spotlight Secretariat and Programme Teams when required • Produce the inception report • Produce subsequent draft reports as per agreements • Produce the final report • Participate in dissemination workshops organized by the Spotlight Initiative and present findings of the reports (can be done through Webinar).

6. Required skills and competencies



The Spotlight Initiative is looking for an experienced and renowned Results-based Assessment/Evaluation/Research entity.

The lead MTA Expert is expected to have the following education, experience and skills:

- Advanced degree in relevant discipline (e.g., gender, development and social studies, sociology, political science, etc)
- Advanced degree in evaluation is an asset.
- At least 10 years' experience in global programme evaluation and/or ROM assessments in a development context and proven accomplishment in undertaking evaluations, including leading assessments and evaluations of multi-stakeholder programmes for multilateral organizations.
- Significant experience conducting MTAs and using the ROM methodology.
- Knowledge in results-based programming
- Proven expertise in assessing and evaluating programmes focusing on human rights and/or gender equality;
- Extensive knowledge of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods
- Excellent written and spoken English and presentational capacities. Availability of French, Spanish and Russian speakers in the team would be an asset.
- Excellent inter-personal skills and communication skills
- Knowledge of the UN system would be a strong asset.
- Knowledge of the development context in the regions covered by the Initiative.

Important: The entity responsible for the MTA and lead MTA Expert have to explicitly declare independence from any organizations that have been involved in designing, executing or advising any aspect of the particular programme that is the subject of the MTA.

MTA ethics: Assessments and evaluations in the UN will be conducted in accordance with the principles outlined in the UNEG Norms and Standards for Evaluation in the UN System, by the UNEG 'Ethical Guidelines for Evaluation' and in the EU Results-Oriented Monitoring Handbook.

These documents will be attached to the contract. The entity responsible for the MTA is required to read the Norms and Standards and the guidelines and ensure a strict adherence to it, including establishing protocols to safeguard confidentiality of information obtained during the MTA.