Terms of Reference

External Evaluation

Activity title	External evaluation for the International Humanitarian Law Centre (IHL Centre) program
Sida Program period	2022 – 2024 (Extended until end of 2025)
IHL Program funded period	1 January 2022 – 31 December 2025
Period to be evaluated	1 January 2022 – 31 August 2025
Implementing organization	Diakonia

1. Background and Context

The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) Centre – part of Swedish NGO, Diakonia – is a program committed to promoting respect for and implementation of International Humanitarian Law through capacity-building, research, policy engagement, and technical support to humanitarian, diplomatic, media and civil society actors. Since its inception in 2004, the Centre has implemented projects across conflict-affected regions, generating measurable contributions to changes in knowledge, policy, practice, and institutional capacity. With the current strategy period ending in 2025, this external evaluation – in alignment with Sida's emphasis on accountability, learning, and participation – is commissioned to assess not only the Centre's overall performance but specifically the causal linkages between the Centre's activities and observed changes, examining how its interventions have directly influenced outcomes and how these contributions can be evidenced and measured to inform future programming.

The IHL Centre's Objectives and Activities

The overall objective of the current program is "*for IHL to be utilised as a strategic and relevant tool by key change actors to enhance protection outcomes in all humanitarian contexts of engagement*". This overall objective will contribute to assert that humanity is not lost in conflict, and that obligations to preserve it cannot be eluded. To achieve behavioural change from duty bearers, the operations of the Centre are categorised through two main intervention streams, or 'Pillars'.

Pillar 1 – Protection Response

This pillar of work includes the provision of legal support services to actors working in a humanitarian context, including for the purposes of protection focused negotiation and advocacy, to address specific protection concerns emanating from armed conflict or humanitarian crisis. In practice this means that the Desks receive requests, through the Centre's IHL Advisory Service (formerly known as IHL Help Desk) or through direct engagement with legal advisors, for trainings on specific protection concerns, or more general IHL capacity building. Desks also receive individual requests for which they have to provide rapid response to an emerging crisis or provide legal analysis on different protection concerns. Our protection response approach is the core tenet of our work and a unique, stand-out feature in the sector.

Pillar 2: Change Focus Projects

The second pillar represents the change focus projects, allowing the Centre to design detailed project interventions, based upon identified opportunities for meaningful change and impact. Each Desk has chosen a thematic focus. For the Syria Regional Desk this project is "missing persons", in Mali it is "child soldier recruitment", in Jerusalem the focus is on "children in detention" and the Global Desk is focusing on "disability and armed conflict". This in-depth thematic focus on a specific IHL or protection concern is undertaken to enhance behaviour change among key stakeholders in relation to that issue.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The evaluation aims to:

- Assess the Centre's relevance, effectiveness, impact, sustainability, and efficiency.
- Promote institutional learning and adaptive programming, building upon the Centre's methods approach (Outcome Mapping/Harvesting).
- Fulfil accountability requirements to Sida, as well as other stakeholders.
- Support evidence-based strategic decision-making for the upcoming programming cycle.

3. Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

An independent external evaluation will be carried out during the program final implementation year of the contractual cycle 2022-2024 (extended for an additional 12 months, until December 2025) to evaluate the performance of the program, and the Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) system in place, with a particular focus on the Learning dimension.

The evaluator/evaluation team is expected to examine each of the expected contributions outlined in the Theory of Change of the IHL Centre's Program Strategy 2022-2025, and draw lessons learned and recommendations based on the following evaluative and learning objectives in accordance with OECD-DEC criteria.

Relevance:
- Were the Program's Theory of Change and objectives consistent with the needs of partners and the IHL Centre's policies? Consider:
  - Have there been significant changes (e.g. changes in the contextual needs and priorities of the Centre's partners; adjustments to the Centre's strategic assumptions, target outcomes and delivery mechanisms; adaptations to PMEL frameworks) following the prior evaluation?
  - The alignment between the IHL Centre's objectives with gaps found; alignment of the IHL Centre's objectives with the objectives of partners and donors.
  - Recommendations for the relevance of the new strategy of the IHL Centre.

Effectiveness:

- Where the Program's objectives achieved? Did the Pillars lead to the intended contributions to behavioural change? Consider:
    - How did the program activities contribute to the program objectives?
    - How did the teams manage priorities between pillars 1 & 2?
    - To what extent were the PMEL tools and methodologies efficient and sufficient to deliver on the IHL Centre's programmatic objectives, and what challenges or limitations were encountered in their application (e.g. challenges in data collection, measuring behavioural change, or capturing contribution vs attribution)?

Impact:

Given that the IHL Centre uses Outcome Mapping and Outcome Harvesting for programmatic planning, monitoring and evaluation, the Impact criterion should seek to answer the following list of questions (non-exhaustive):

- What observable changes in behaviour, relationships, practices, and actions have occurred among boundary partners[1] and key stakeholders?
- To what extent, and in what ways, has the program contributed to these changes?
- What strategies or elements of the program have been most effective in influencing behavioural change?
- What unintended positive or negative effects—at any level—did the program contribute to, and what are the implications of these for stakeholders and future programming?

Sustainability:

- What are the contributions made by the IHL Centre, and are they likely to be maintained for an extended period after the current program ends?
- What benefits or contributions made by the IHL Centre would require continuous financial and technical support in the mid- and long-term to ensure they can be maintained? Consider:
    - Which of the Centre's current benefits, outputs, or contributions are most dependent on sustained financial and technical support to remain viable?
    - Based on lessons learned during the evaluation period, what should be done differently or prioritised to strengthen the Centre's role and effectiveness?
    - Which good practices have proven most effective and should be consolidated or scaled up to maximise efficiency and positive outcomes?
    - What major challenges can be foreseen in sustaining or expanding the Centre's contributions, and how could these challenges be addressed or mitigated?
    - What is the IHL Centre's major contribution and overall impact at the global level, and how does it differentiate itself from other actors in the field?

Efficiency:

- Were the technical and logistical resources timely, sufficient, and fit-for-purpose to effectively support the IHL Centre in delivering project activities and results?

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[1] See definition of *boundary partners* in the "Methodological Approach" section, page 5).

- Were the human resources mobilized in fields of expertise that were relevant and sufficient to meet the technical and contextual demands of the intervention, and were they available in a timely and effective manner?

Geographic Coverage

The evaluation will be conducted at the global level, assessing the overall program strategy, governance, and coordination mechanisms, as well as the program's implementation across its global and four geographical focus areas: Israel/Palestine, Levant-Southwest Asia, East and Central Africa, and the Western Sahel. This broader scope will allow the evaluation to capture comparative perspectives across diverse contexts and ensure a comprehensive understanding of the program's global and regional outcomes. The evaluation should therefore examine both global-level contributions and region-specific results, drawing out transferable lessons and recommendations relevant across all regions.

Timeframe

The evaluation will cover the full implementation period of the program from January 1, 2022, to August 31, 2025. This timeframe is intended to capture both the design and delivery of activities, as well as results achieved to date. The consultancy will be carried out within a total duration of 45 working days, inclusive of desk review, data collection, analysis, validation, and reporting. The evaluator is expected to propose a detailed work plan that ensures timely completion of all deliverables within this period.

4. Methodology

The evaluation will adopt a qualitative, utilization-focused approach grounded in Outcome Mapping (OM) and Outcome Harvesting (OH) methodologies, which are particularly suited for complex change processes and adaptive programming. Given the program's focus on influencing and contributing to behavioural change among specific actors (e.g., individuals, organizations, networks), these approaches provide appropriate tools to surface, document, and analyse changes in behaviour, relationships, actions, and activities that are plausibly linked to the program's efforts.

Rationale for the Methodology

Outcome Mapping and Outcome Harvesting are particularly appropriate for this evaluation because:

- The program aims to influence change indirectly, through facilitation, capacity-building, advocacy, and engagement rather than direct service delivery.
- The desired changes are emergent, behavioural, and often non-linear, influenced by multiple actors and external factors.
- Attribution is less feasible; instead, the evaluation focuses on contribution to outcomes within complex systems.

Methodological Approach

Outcome Harvesting

The evaluation shall identify and formulate outcome statements that describe specific behavioural changes in key actors. These outcomes will be collected retrospectively through document review, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups with program staff, partners, and target actors. For each outcome, the evaluation shall analyse and validate the plausible contribution of the program, using triangulated data and stakeholder narratives.

Outcome Mapping Elements

The evaluation will draw from the OM framework by focusing on:

- Boundary partners: The individuals or groups with whom the program interacts directly and seeks to influence.
- Progress markers: Indicators of behavioural change (expect-to-see, like-to-see, love-to-see), adapted for retrospective analysis.
- Strategy maps and monitoring tools: Where available, these will be used to understand the program's change pathways and learning processes.

Data Collection Methods

- Document review of program reports, monitoring data, partner communications, and prior assessments.
- Key informant interviews with program staff, boundary partners, and relevant stakeholders.
- Focus group discussions with clusters of actors where collective change is relevant.
- Validation workshops to cross-check findings, refine contribution narratives, and build ownership.

Data Analysis

Analysis will focus on identifying patterns of behavioural change, mapping them against program interventions, and assessing contribution using criteria such as consistency, proximity, and stakeholder attribution. The use of rubrics or contribution scoring may support comparative assessments across outcomes. Reflexivity and evaluator positionality will be acknowledged and mitigated through participatory sense-making and transparent documentation.

Limitations

The retrospective nature of Outcome Harvesting may limit completeness or precision of recall; this will be mitigated by triangulation with secondary sources. Behavioural changes can be influenced by multiple programs or external dynamics; the focus will be on contribution, not attribution.

Deliverables

The final report will be submitted in English and will be maximum 25 pages (without the annexes). It must include the following sections:

- Executive summary, highlighting the main findings and recommendations.
- Description of the evaluation objectives, and the methodology used
- Analysis of the main results: relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability
- Lessons learned
- Conclusions and recommendations

Annexes should include, at least:

- A stakeholder map, identifying key actors, their inter-relationships and their interest(s) in the project and its evaluation.
- A synthesis of harvested outcomes with validated contribution stories.
- A behavioural change map or matrix aligned with the program's strategic goals.
- Strategic recommendations for program adaptation, scaling, and learning.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

The successful execution of the program evaluation relies on the active and coordinated participation of various stakeholders. This section defines the roles and responsibilities of each group involved, with clear distinctions between those who advise, recommend, and decide during the evaluation process.

Evaluation Steering Committee (ESC)

The Evaluation Steering Committee, composed by the Centre's Director and Program Manager will provide oversight and strategic guidance throughout the evaluation process. The ESC will:

- Advise on the evaluation design, methodology, and tools to ensure relevance and alignment with program objectives.
- Review key deliverables (e.g., inception report, draft findings, final report) and provide detailed feedback.
- Recommend adjustments to the scope, focus, or timeline of the evaluation based on evolving needs or constraints.
- Decide on the final approval of key evaluation outputs, including the inception report, final evaluation report, and dissemination approach.

Program Management Team

The Program Management Team, composed by the Desk Managers and Senior Legal Advisers will play a facilitative and coordination role. Their responsibilities include:

- Advise on logistical and contextual aspects of the evaluation.
- Support access to data, stakeholders, and relevant documentation.
- Coordinate between the evaluation team, ESC, and other stakeholders.
- Ensure timely provision of inputs, responses, and resources required for the evaluation.

Evaluation Team (Independent Evaluators or Consultants)

The Evaluation Team is responsible for designing and conducting the evaluation. Their key responsibilities are:

- Lead the development of the evaluation methodology, tools, and work plan.
- Conduct data collection, analysis, and reporting in a professional and ethical manner.
- Incorporate feedback from stakeholders where appropriate while maintaining independence.
- Present findings, conclusions, and recommendations objectively and clearly.

Key Stakeholders (e.g., Implementing Partners, Beneficiaries, Other Donors)

Stakeholders may be consulted at various stages of the evaluation. Their involvement includes:

- Advise through participation in interviews, focus groups, or surveys to inform the evaluation findings.
- Review and comment on preliminary findings or draft reports where appropriate.
- Support dissemination and utilization of findings within their respective spheres of influence.

Decision-Making and Escalation

Final decisions regarding major changes in the scope or methodology of the evaluation, as well as acceptance of final deliverables, lie with the Evaluation Steering Committee in consultation with the Program Management Team. In case of disagreement, the issue shall be escalated to Head of Sida's Humanitarian Unit (or their delegate) for resolution.

6. Outputs and deliverables

Table of Deliverables and Timeline

Deliverable	Description	Format	Indicative Submission Date
Kick-off Meeting	Initial meeting with commissioning team and key stakeholders to clarify objectives, scope, expectations, and logistics.	Meeting minutes	Day 1
Inception Report	Includes evaluation design, refined evaluation questions, methodology, data collection tools, sampling strategy, stakeholder list, risks/limitations, and work plan.	Word/PDF (10–15 pages)	Day 7
Desk Review Summary	Summary of key documents reviewed, preliminary outcome ideas, and initial actor map based on existing data.	Internal memo	Day 10 (overlaps with Inception Report preparation)
Data Collection and Outcome Harvesting	Fieldwork and interviews (remote or in-person), outcome identification and formulation, and contribution analysis.	N/A (Field notes)	Day 11 to 25

Stakeholder Validation Workshop	Workshop with key actors to validate harvested outcomes, refine contribution stories, and sense-make emerging findings.	Presentation & minutes	Day 26
Draft Evaluation Report	Maximum 25 pages (excluding annexes). Includes: · Executive summary · Evaluation objectives & methodology · Analysis of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability · Lessons learned · Conclusions and recommendations	Word/PDF	Day 35
Draft Annexes	Includes: · Stakeholder map · Synthesis of harvested outcomes · Behavioural change map/matrix · Strategic recommendations	Word/PDF	Day 36
Feedback Session on Draft Report	Meeting with commissioners and stakeholders to review and provide feedback on the draft report and annexes.	Meeting notes	Day 38
Final Evaluation Report (with Annexes)	Final report revised based on feedback. To be submitted in English. Includes all required sections and annexes.	Word/PDF	Day 44
Presentation of Findings	Final debrief and presentation of findings, conclusions, and recommendations to stakeholders (if requested).	Slide deck	Day 45

Ownership and Confidentiality

The evaluation will be conducted in full compliance with the principles of transparency, accountability, and respect for confidentiality, in alignment with the Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability (CHS). The evaluation shall conform to OECD/DAC's Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. The evaluators shall use the Sida OECD/DAC Glossary of Key Terms in Evaluation.

Ownership of Data and Findings

All data collected during the evaluation – whether qualitative or quantitative, including interview transcripts, outcome stories, notes, recordings, stakeholder lists, and any derived analytical materials – shall remain the exclusive property of the IHL Centre. The evaluator(s) will act as custodians of the data solely for the purpose of this evaluation and will not use, share, reproduce, or publish any part of the data or findings without prior written consent from the IHL Centre.

Confidentiality and Informed Consent

The evaluation team will take all necessary measures to ensure that:

- Confidentiality and anonymity of all respondents are maintained, unless explicit and informed consent has been obtained to share names or attributive information.
- Data is securely stored, with access strictly limited to authorised evaluation team members, and deleted or transferred in accordance with the data retention policy agreed upon with the commissioning organisation.
- Stakeholders and respondents are informed about the purpose of the evaluation, how their information will be used, and their right to decline participation or withdraw consent at any time without consequence.

Use and Dissemination

The final report, including all annexes, will be submitted to the IHL Centre. The IHL Centre retains the sole right to publish, disseminate, or use the findings, either in whole or in part. The evaluator will not publish or publicly present findings without express written permission.

Ethical Considerations

The evaluation will adhere to ethical research standards, ensuring respect, dignity, and safety for all participants, particularly those from vulnerable or at-risk groups. These practices are consistent with CHS commitments to accountability to affected populations, and OECD-DAC standards for impartiality and integrity in evaluation

7. Timeframe and Work Plan

The evaluation will be conducted over a 45 working-day period, allowing for a thorough yet concise assessment of the program. Given the limited travel and preference for online engagements, the evaluation will primarily rely on desk research, virtual interviews, and online workshops, rather than extended field visits. While the evaluation is designed to provide a comprehensive snapshot of program performance, it will not include multiple revisits over time; instead, the methodology will incorporate outcome harvesting and stakeholder validation workshops to capture both recent and evolving results within the evaluation period.

Evaluators' time will be structured across key phases to maximize efficiency: approximately 20% on desk research to review program documents, reports, and secondary sources; 40% on field research and interviews, conducted virtually with an indicative 15–20 individual stakeholders and 3–5 group discussions representing program staff, partners, and beneficiaries; and 40% on analysis, drafting, and reporting. Site selection for any limited in-person visits will focus on locations that are critical to understanding program implementation and impact. Throughout the evaluation, online meetings and workshops with key stakeholders will be prioritized to ensure timely feedback and validation of findings while minimizing logistical constraints.

8. Evaluation team

The evaluation will be conducted by a lean, gender-balanced, multilingual team with English, French, and Arabic language capacity. It will be led by a **Team Leader/Senior Evaluator** responsible for overall design, quality assurance, and reporting. Supporting them, **1–2 Evaluation Specialists/Thematic Experts**, including _at least one IHL expert_, will lead desk review, outcome harvesting, analysis, and report drafting.

Optatively, the team could also include a Data Analyst/Research Associate will manage data and visualization, and a Stakeholder Engagement/Logistics Coordinator to organize online interviews, virtual workshops, and validation sessions, ensuring smooth stakeholder engagement and documentation.

9. Budget

As part of the selection process, potential evaluators are expected to provide a clear and detailed budget proposal that demonstrates transparency and alignment with the evaluation's scope and methodology. At a minimum, the proposal should include itemized personnel costs (daily or monthly rates and number of days allocated per team member), any anticipated travel and per diem costs, fees for professional services or specialized support, and any applicable overheads or administrative costs. The budget should be presented in a simple, clear table format, with assumptions and justifications for each cost category, specifying currency and whether taxes are included. This will allow the IHL Centre to assess cost reasonableness, compare proposals effectively, and ensure that resources are allocated appropriately across the evaluation phases.

A *maximum budget of SEK 500,000* has been established for this evaluation to provide guidance to potential consultants; however, final fees will be subject to negotiation and approval. In the selection process, methodological relevance and quality of the proposal will be the primary criteria, but cost-efficiency will also be considered. Consultants are therefore encouraged to submit realistic, itemized budgets that reflect a low-cost approach without compromising the quality and rigor of the evaluation, ensuring optimal use of available resources.

10. Terms and conditions

The Evaluator(s) shall be responsible for their own income tax, as well as any travel, health, or other insurance required during the assignment. In addition, the consultant shall be required to sign and adhere to Diakonia's Code of Conduct, ensuring compliance with the organization's ethical and professional standards throughout the evaluation. Any further terms and conditions of service, including specific deliverables, timelines, and reporting requirements, will be clearly outlined in the formal contract between the consultant and Diakonia.

11. Mode of Application

Applications should be submitted in soft copy, including the consultant's CV, testimonials, and a sample of previous work. Submissions must be sent via email to Diakonia (juan.posadaburbano@diakonia.se, SUBJECT: *External evaluation-IHL Centre* [Name + Last Name]) on, or before, **December 23, 2025**. All applications should include the following components: (i) a cover letter of maximum one page, and (ii) a technical proposal of up to eight pages. The technical proposal should provide: a brief description of the consultant or firm, highlighting relevant experience in similar evaluations; the profile of the consultant(s) proposed for this assignment; the consultant's understanding of the Terms of Reference and the tasks to be accomplished; and a draft evaluation framework and work plan demonstrating the proposed approach.

12. Procurement Guidelines

The evaluation will be conducted under a procurement process in which the IHL Centre will decide on the consultant and provide the payment for the service conducted. Sida will provide funding for the consultancy service to the IHL Centre. The IHL Centre will oversee the evaluation, providing technical guidance, support, and advice to the evaluation team throughout the assignment, including methodological input, quality assurance, and validation of deliverables. This arrangement ensures that the evaluation is both independently managed and technically robust, while maintaining transparency in funding and accountability.

Procurement Timeline:

Step	Activity	Duration	Dates
1	ToR Publication	1 day	Dec 2, 2025
2	Q and A Period	5 days	Dec 2 to 8, 2025
3	Proposal Submission	3 weeks	Dec 2 to 23, 2025
4	Review and Scoring	1 week	Jan 5 to 9, 2026
5	Interviews	1 week	Jan 12 to 16, 2026
6	Selection and contracting	1 week	Jan 19 to 23, 2026
7	Kickoff	1 day	Jan 26, 2026