ALNAP is seeking Expressions of Interests (EOI) from highly experienced and qualified consultants to serve as the Research Co-Lead for the next (2022) edition of the ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System Report (SOHS).

The deadline for submission of the EOI is 15th May 2020. ALNAP will review submissions and will be in contact with short-listed candidates soon after. The duration of the contract will be from mid-2021 to mid-2022.

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1. Details of role & person specification

Research Co-Lead Role & Responsibilities

The Research Co-Lead will work with a designated counterpart in the ALNAP Secretariat to undertake the analysis and writing of the 2022 State of the Humanitarian System Report. Working closely with the ALNAP Secretariat lead, this individual will be responsible for the integration and analysis of descriptive data (for Section I of the Report) and the evaluative assessments (for Section II of the Report) and will have involvement in the design and undertaking of all research components. The Research Co-Lead will also be responsible for writing substantial parts, if not the majority, of the final report, and will be expected to contribute to the production of multiple communications products and launch events. The specific authorship approach and team management structure for the report will be agreed with the ALNAP Secretariat during the Inception Phase.
Essential & Desired characteristics

Essential characteristics:

- Previous experience with authorship or significant research contributions to flagship reports in the humanitarian sector or a relevant field
- Experience in designing and using mixed methods research frameworks
- Minimum 5 years’ experience in research on humanitarian aid
- Proven track record of delivering large, complex projects to deadline
- Proven track record of working in/leading research teams and working collaboratively on research outputs

Desired characteristics:

- Significant expertise in a variety of social science methods and in applying these methods to evaluate and understand humanitarian contexts
- Research experience in crisis-affected countries
- Experience with producing short or creative communications products to accompany research reports or communicate research findings

2. How to apply

Expressions of Interests should include:

- CV;
- Examples of previous experience in relation to the essential and desired characteristics;
- A brief description of how the Inception Phase will be approached;
- Outline of timeline (see deliverables & deadlines below for details);
- Indicative budget;

EOIs including the above detail should be submitted no later than 15th May 2020 to Charlotte Skinner (c.skinner@alnap.org).

Background and Objectives

The ALNAP State of the Humanitarian System Report (SOHS) is an independent study that compiles the latest statistics on the size and scope of the humanitarian system and assesses overall performance and progress of global humanitarian response. The report is ALNAP’s flagship publication and is a critical element of ALNAP’s strategic focus on monitoring and reporting on system-wide performance.

A pilot exercise and three subsequent editions (2012, 2015 and 2018) have already provided a base-line and an analysis of performance between 2008 and 2018. The fourth edition is expected to build on this by adopting a similar methodology, based on OEDC DAC criteria. There will be some adaptations undertaken to the research, for example new research components designed to provide a more in-depth understanding of performance on certain criteria.

The main objective however will remain the same: to gather and synthesise evidence to form an overall picture of the global humanitarian system and indicate how well it is serving the needs of peoples affected by conflict and crises. Specifically, the report will provide a description of the shape and composition of the global humanitarian system and an assessment of its progress and performance over time.

Content and key issues

The report is expected to contain two main sections. Section one will provide a definition and description of the architecture of the humanitarian system(s) and section two, an analysis of global humanitarian performance in its totality.

Section One is expected to include:

- **Quantification and mapping of the system’s principal actors;** including technical countries of operation, annual humanitarian expenditure and staffing numbers. As far as possible this is expected to be broken down between different phases of emergency response and other areas including preparedness/risk reduction, resilience, recovery and development. A focus is required on newly acknowledged actors and their engagement with the international system.

- **Financial analysis of global humanitarian funding trends;** including a breakdown of the overall volume of financial resources across donors, agencies, regions, countries and types of crisis; and a differentiation between funding channels such as CERF, CHFs/ERFs, bilateral granting and government to government contributions. Efforts should also be made to assess the contribution made by diaspora groups through remittances.

- **An assessment of the humanitarian case-load;** a description of global coverage including types and locations of international emergencies; types of emergency; sectoral/technical breakdown of responses and identification of gaps.
Section Two should provide:

- **An assessment of Performance:** Questions to be addressed include: how has the Humanitarian system performed on the basis of OECD DAC criteria? How does this period compare with previous SOHS periods, what are emerging key trends and policy issues?

- **An analysis of change:** Questions to be addressed include: what are the major drivers for change and are they external or internal to the humanitarian system? what trends are discernible and what are the implications for future response?

**Methods**

The methodology is expected to use mixed methods and draw on the pilot study and the two earlier editions. There are some components of the methodology that will remain fixed in order to allow for meaningful comparison to the baseline data of the previous SOHS iterations. However, ALNAP is open to adding components to the methodology or adapting existing components that add robustness to the overall study and welcomes proposals that outline how this might be done. It is expected that the consultants/consortium will discuss the methods in detail with the ALNAP Secretariat and SOHS advisory group. Methods will include:

1. **An evaluation Synthesis.** The consultants/consortium are expected to develop criteria from which to choose a sample of evaluations for review. This may include categories of intervention, types of evaluations, scope, and level of focus and funder. Additional substantive criteria may also be used such as focus on particular issues, methods and key conclusions. The findings from the synthesis is expected to be weighted for ‘level of confidence’, which may include a review of the frequency and relative importance of key issues, using a scale for scoring. A precise method for this is expected to be submitted as part of the inception report.

2. **Literature review.** This is expected to be a qualitative exercise to examine key issues and emerging trends.

3. **Global Practitioner & Government Survey.** The survey instruments will be based upon previous SOHS iterations and will be tailored to specific groups including INGOs/IOs, local NGOs, Red Cross/Crescent Movement, UN and host government/regional organisations. The survey questions should focus on eliciting information from respondents relating to the OEDC DAC criteria and their own experience of change over the previous three-year period. The survey should be in multiple languages. The survey instrument should also be pilot tested and reviewed by specialist peer reviewers.

4. **Key Informant Interviews.** A target of 50 key information interviews with senior humanitarian decision-makers should be undertaken using a semi-structured approach based on key questions. The latter is expected to be developed by the consultants/consortium in cooperation with the ALNAP Secretariat. The final list is expected to be categorised and weighted according to key stakeholder groups including cluster leads (both global and national), humanitarian coordinators, key NGOs (both international and national), UN agencies (at HQ and field level), NDMAs, the private sector, donors and academics. Transcriptions of the interviews are expected to be made available.

5. **Field studies.** This is expected to complement the Global survey and build on the experience from the first edition. Data should be gathered first hand from aid providers and recipients of humanitarian aid in a sample of locations yet to be decided. Data should consist of qualitative information from focus group discussions and quantitative data from questionnaire surveys. The consultants/consortium, in close consultation with the Secretariat and the AG, will identify partner agencies to work with.

6. **Aid recipient surveys.** Surveys of aid recipients, remote and/or in situ, will be conducted in four emergency locations with the aim of giving a stronger voice to ‘end users’ in the humanitarian system. The locations will be chosen in consultation with the SAG. In difficult access situations consideration should be given to using cell phone networks using text messaging or inter-active voice response (IVR).
7. **Thematic studies.** This is a new research component and will be designed to address gaps in the existing literature and understanding of performance. These thematic studies will undertake original empirical research to examine issues pertaining to effectiveness (e.g. the role of innovation and technology in shaping performance in the humanitarian sector), connectedness (e.g. the influence of nexus policy and programme approaches on humanitarian performance), accountability/participation, efficiency, and impact.

**Analysis**

1. **A review of OECD Criteria.** The analysis of performance should be made on the basis of OECD DAC criteria. The consultants/consortium is expected to review the assumptions and indicators underlying the current interpretation of the criteria (as in previous reports). If appropriate, revisions should be made.

2. **Level of analysis.** The 2015 edition defined four broad humanitarian functions to help provide a more precise assessment of performance. They were based on responses to natural disasters, chronic conflict, resilience and advocacy. This categorisation should be reviewed and modified if necessary.

3. **Scoring of the OECD criteria.** Using the weighted data from the evaluation synthesis and both quantitative and qualitative data from the surveys and studies, an indicative score should be given to each of the OECD DAC criteria. Consideration should be given to giving two scores – one overall score and one for degree of consistency. The sections of the report that focus on this should also include a logic model for each of the criteria (see point above).

4. **Analysis using new research components.** The consultants/consortium is expected to review recent work on humanitarian performance for the World Humanitarian Summit to identify additional criteria or commitments that can be used to assess the performance of the system. It is anticipated that the potential list for these will be quite long, and there will need to be some prioritisation and a rationale provided.

5. **Commentary on policy developments /major issues and recommendations.** The report should highlight the major issues emerging. On the basis of feedback from the SOHS expert reference group, the report should not present specific recommendations but an indication should be given as to the broad areas for improvement.

**Deliverables**

For all deliverables, the Research Co-Lead is expected to work in partnership with a counterpart in the ALNAP Secretariat. The Expression of Interest should outline how the Research Co-Lead would approach the undertaking of this work, in collaboration with the ALNAP Secretariat and with the consultants contracted to carry out the work on the individual research components. This approach should bear in mind the current inability to hold in-person meetings, owing to COVID-19 restrictions.

**Consultancy inception plan**

Initially, the Co-Lead will work with the ALNAP Secretariat to agree an approach to management of the research components, the data collection and analysis processes, and the planned authorship approach, with clearly designated responsibilities. This should be completed within the first 4 weeks of the consultancy.

**SOHS 2022 Inception report**

The Inception Report is expected to include a detailed methodology designed to provide the best possible evidence from which to measure performance. This should include a description of data sources, data collection and analysis methods/tools, indicators, a triangulation/validation plan, a financial overview, and importantly the best methods for incorporating the views of affected people.
The inception report will also provide a detailed stakeholder analysis and account of how national organisations/groups and affected communities will be engaged. It will also describe how the study will reach vulnerable groups and what techniques will be used, such as use of SMS, focus groups etc. The advantages and limitations of these methods should be clearly explained.

In addition, adherence to a code of ethics in gathering, treatment and use of data collected should be made explicit, and a plan for safely and responsibly storing and sharing raw data with the ALNAP Secretariat should be provided. A time line and fieldwork plan should also be included.

The report should also include an initial template for the final report, and initial ideas for dissemination based on discussions with the ALNAP Communications team.

The Research Co-Lead will be expected to provide substantial inputs to all aspects of the Inception Report, including the development of an analysis template and coding frame for use by the consultants undertaking the research components.

**Key informant interviews**
The Research Co-Lead will undertake a minimum of 50 KIIIs over the research period with humanitarian decision-makers at both operational and policy levels, as well as experts outside the humanitarian sector. KIIIs will either be recorded, or will draw on detailed notes, which will serve as a deliverable from the Consultant. The Research Co-Lead will be responsible for drafting a list of targeted KIIIs, informed by the overall research framework.

**Data collection & analysis meetings with consultants**
Throughout the contract, the Research Co-Lead will participate in regular updates with research component leads on their data collection, and will also co-design the agenda and approach to two in-depth analysis meetings with the consultants over the research period.

**Draft chapter outlines**
Before drafting the report, the Research Co-Lead will produce draft chapter outlines. These outlines will be constructed in discussion with the research component leads and the ALNAP Secretariat counterpart. Some chapter outlines may be undertaken by the ALNAP Secretariat, in discussion and prior agreement with the Research Co-Lead.

**Draft report**
This should be a clean draft of the report. It will be reviewed by the AG and the Secretariat. All comments will be captured in a comment matrix and an explanation of how the comments have been responded to should be provided. The authors' independence will be respected.

**Report Critique/Peer Review**
The modified draft report should be peer reviewed by a high level academic/humanitarian scholar and an external specialist who has experience of assessing performance of a particular sector.

**Final report**
The design and formatting of the report will be carried out in conjunction with the ALNAP Communications team. The final report is expected to be delivered by June 2022.
Communications products & Launch events
The Research Co-Lead will work with the ALNAP Communications team and ALNAP Secretariat SOHS Lead to produce a range of smaller communications products connected to the Report and will be expected to advise on the content of these products throughout the research process. The State of the Humanitarian System Report is launched in multiple countries worldwide and it is expected that the Research Co-Lead will participate in launch event preparation and delivery, including potential travel if appropriate.

Deadlines for deliverables

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Management arrangements

ALNAP Secretariat
The consultant will primarily work with a SOHS Lead counterpart in the ALNAP Secretariat. S/he may also be asked to provide occasional updates to the ALNAP Director, and be expected to liaise with ALNAP Operations and Communications teams on relevant issues.

Support and advisory group (SAG)
The report will benefit from the support of a SAG who will sign off on the inception report, provide comments on drafts and provide contacts and advise on specific elements of the work. The SAG may also help facilitate field studies though their contact networks. Communications with the AG will be made through the ALNAP Director.

An expert reference group will also be on hand to assist with methodological issues that may arise.

Reporting
The consultant will provide regular updates and monthly verbal performance reports throughout the reporting period. ALNAP expects a close working relationship in this process.