TERMS OF REFERENCE: ANCP ASIA INNOVATION AWARDS COHORT 1 & 2 EVALUATION

This document provides the Terms of Reference (TOR) for a max. 5-month, evaluation consultancy for Save the Children Australia's (SCA) ANCP Asia innovation awards. SCA is seeking a consultant or consultancy firm to realise the evaluation.

The background, purpose, key questions, methodological guidance, key deliverables, governance, and timeframes for implementation are provided in the sections that follow.

1. BACKGROUND

Save the Children Australia (SCA) and Save the Children International (SCI) have positioned innovation at the centre of their strategic approach through:

- SCA's strategic driver to "accelerate impact by leveraging innovations in digital and data"
- SCI Asia Pacific Strategy's focus on innovation incubators and scaling viable pilots
- ANCP portfolio's emphasis on testing innovative approaches.

The goal is to improve the quality and reach of SCA's programs, enhance the measurement of progress, increase operational efficiency, address inequalities in access to technology, and respond to shifting donor priorities.

In SCA's international programs division, innovation is being trailed through the ANCP portfolio (DFAT-funded annual grants program). During the 2021-2025 ANCP four-year cycle, SCA implemented a distinct programming approach with SCA-funded awards to foster stronger collaboration, experimentation, and informed risk-taking in the Asia-Pacific, focusing on developing new business models that benefit children. This has led to:

i.   Selection of projects via a competitive process, inviting eight Country Offices (COs) under SCI management (four per each 2-year cohort).
ii. Allocation of funding for each award up to two years.
iii. Investment of approximately AUD500,000 per annum per award, totalling AUD1 million over two years.

The first process evaluation (mid-term i.e., 2023) gathered diverse perspectives to understand the approaches, practices, systems, and processes that supported or hindered innovation efforts across four projects. Key findings highlighted the complexity of innovation and challenges related to:

- Project Management
- Partnership development and maintenance
- Resource allocation and use
- Adaptation and learning processes

SCA's approach to innovation and scaling remains a dynamic and evolving practice, making it essential to continually assess the factors that influence success. The initial evaluation was exploratory, identifying the practices and systems that contributed to—or impeded—innovation. It provided guiding principles for systems strengthening, which were intended to be implemented across the program cycle to support SCA's strategic drivers for transformative impact. Overall, the evaluation highlighted the importance of refining and embedding practices that can enable innovation to scale effectively.

This evaluation aims to build on these learnings by stress-testing the ANCP accelerator model, determining what steps are necessary to move from incubation to acceleration over the next four years. The focus will be on:

- Optimizing processes for innovation development and implementation
- Identifying barriers and enablers for scaling
- Developing guidance for transitioning to a scalable and sustainable innovation model
- Contributing to best practices that will accelerate SCA's impact through innovation.

2. PURPOSE

This evaluation has three distinct purposes:

1. **(P1) Aggregate and analyse results from Cohorts 1 and 2:** Systematically assess the results of eight innovation projects across both cohorts to understand their collective contribution to development outcomes. This includes:

   - Collecting and analysing available data on results
   - Identifying patterns of success and challenges across projects
   - Documenting early signs of change and progress towards intended outcomes
   - Capturing unintended results (both positive and negative)
   - Synthesizing evidence of innovation effectiveness across different contexts.

2. **(P2) Examine evolution of innovation and implementation:** Building on the process insights from the first evaluation, analyse how implementation approaches have matured through Cohort 2, with attention to:

   - How process recommendations from Cohort 1 have been incorporated
   - Effectiveness of project management and partnership strategies
   - Improvements in resource allocation and efficiency
   - Refinements in adaptation and learning mechanisms
   - Progress in developing pathways to scale
   - Integration of innovations into existing systems and structures to ensure long-term sustainability and institutionalisation.

3. **(P3) Guide transition to Accelerator Model:** Drawing on the combined results and implementation learnings, provide actionable recommendations for transitioning to an accelerator model over the next four years, including:

   - Establishing evidence-based criteria for selecting innovations with high potential for scale
   - Designing parameters for effective pre-seed and seed funding mechanisms
   - Defining clear progression criteria from incubation to acceleration
   - Identifying strategies for supporting successful innovations through acceleration
   - Defining approaches for strengthening the broader innovation ecosystem.

3. OBJECTIVES

The evaluation will focus on the following objectives, aligned with each purpose:

1. **(P1) Innovation Results:**
   1.1. Develop and apply a framework for aggregating results across diverse innovation projects.
   1.2. Analyse project performance with particular attention to integration and impact of cross-cutting themes (e.g. gender, disability inclusion and child protection).
   1.3. Document and analyse patterns of both intended and unintended results.

2. **(P2) Scalability and Sustainability:**
   2.1. Evaluate the effectiveness of implementation processes in supporting innovation scale
   2.2. Assess the evidence base and adaptation of innovation models

2.3. Analyse the development and functioning of the innovation ecosystem.

3. **(P3) Accelerator Model development:**
    3.1. Define success criteria and selection framework for acceleration
    3.2. Identify necessary structural and process changes for effective acceleration
    3.3. Develop guidance and support mechanisms for innovations transitioning to acceleration.

4. **TENTATIVE EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

These tentative evaluation questions will be used to inform evaluation commissioning, scoping workshop design, think pieces and knowledge sharing.

Note: SCA considers these questions to be open to discussion, and the team is permitted to propose adaptations to, prioritisation of, removal of, or addition of questions. The team is not expected to propose any changes to the key questions during the proposal stage. The team will, however, be required to engage with SCA at the inception stage (i.e., scoping workshop) to further refine these questions.

1. **(P1) Innovation Results (Cohorts 1 and 2)**
    1.1 To what extent have projects across Cohorts 1 and 2 effectively achieved their intended outcomes? How can results be meaningfully aggregated across diverse innovation projects?
    1.2 What evidence exists of impact on cross-cutting themes (gender, disability inclusion, child protection)?
    1.3 What unintended results (positive or negative) have emerged from these innovations, and how well have the projects adapted to these impacts?

2. **(P2) Scalability and Sustainability**
    2.1 To what extent have the processes and implementation strategies of Cohorts 1 and 2 laid a foundation for scalability and sustainability?
    2.2 How effective are the new models or approaches developed through these projects in supporting long-term sustainability, and what evidence supports their integration into existing systems and structures?
    2.3 How well is the innovation ecosystem functioning around these projects, including partnerships and resource use, in contributing to project success, scalability, and sustainability?

3. **(P3) Accelerator Model development:**
    3.1 What success indicators and selection criteria should inform the accelerator model? What adjustments are needed to define innovations with high potential for scaling?
    3.2 What structural and process changes are necessary to facilitate an effective transition to the accelerator model, and how can these changes be implemented to support the acceleration of innovations?
    3.3 What specific guidance and support mechanisms are required to help innovations transition from incubation to acceleration?

5. APPROACH[1]

It is envisaged the evaluation will use a targeted, mixed-methods approach that includes both quantitative and qualitative techniques, tailored to each purpose:

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[1] *The selected consultant is expected to familiarize themselves with DFAT's ANCP monitoring, evaluation and learning framework, as the design of the evaluations as well as the deliverables must adhere to these guidelines.*

1. **Document Review and Data Analysis (P1, P2)**
   - Systematic review of project documentation, reports, and existing data
   - Meta-analysis of available results data across both cohorts
   - Review of progress reports and monitoring data
   - Analysis of existing evidence on scaling efforts

2. **Strategic Stakeholder Engagement (All Purposes)**
   - 2-3 focused online workshops combining:
     - Results validation and aggregation (P1)
     - Sustainability and scaling assessment (P2)
     - Accelerator model planning (P3)
   - Key informant interviews with selected stakeholders (12-15 total)
   - One online survey targeting broader stakeholder group

3. **Targeted Case Examples (P2, P3)**
   - 2-3 brief case examples focusing on projects showing strong potential for acceleration
   - Draw primarily from existing documentation and targeted interviews
   - Focus on identifying success factors and acceleration readiness.

The evaluation will emphasize practical recommendations for evolving the innovation program into an accelerator model, providing clear guidance for the next four years.

Note: Further approaches/components may be added by the team during the proposal stage i.e., SCA does not have any further specific expectations as to which approaches, methods or components are used. Consultants are invited to propose an approach at their discretion, which if selected, will be fine-tuned in collaboration with SCA during the inception stage. Innovative or imaginative approaches are welcomed.

6. INFORMATION SOURCES, TOOLS & ANALYSIS

i. Data collection and data analysis processes are expected to be rigorous.
ii. The consultant is responsible for sub-contracting any logistical support required and for procuring equipment and materials.
iii. The consultant is required to source additional external data sources to add value to the evaluations, such as other innovation evaluations.
iv. Data analysis plans should be appropriate to the selected design. The consultant is expected to ensure that data is clean and goes through a quality assurance process before data is analyzed.
v. The consultant is responsible for identifying and procuring the necessary data analysis software.
vi. A range of award and organisational documentation ('information pack') will be made available to the consultant that provides information about the design, implementation, and operation of the awards.
vii. The consultancy team is required to adhere to the [SCA Child Safeguarding; Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse; Anti-Harassment, Intimidation and Bullying; and Data Protection and Privacy policies](#) throughout all project activities.

7. KEY STAKEHOLDERS

Detailed engagement:

1. SCI Asia Regional Office
2. Cambodia, Philippines, Sri Lanka and Vietnam COs
3. SCA
4. SCI Centre for Innovation (Lift Lab)

5. SCI T4D
6. *Social Enterprises where applicable*

Consultation and summary findings:

- DFAT
- Other relevant innovation ecosystem stakeholders

8. DELIVERABLES

The lead consultant and SCA will agree on final deliverables, milestones, and deadlines at the inception stage.

a. Scoping workshop (max. 90 minutes)
b. Digital copy of the Inception report[2] (max. 5 pages)
c. Digital copy of the Process evaluation report[3] (max. 20 pages[4])
d. Digital copy of the Process evaluation summary report (max. 5 pages)
e. Digital copies of the 4 x think pieces (max. 2 pages each)
f. Slide deck summarizing key findings, recommendations, and next steps (max. 8 slides)
g. AI-generated podcast or audio summary of key findings, designed for internal use or external stakeholders
h. 2–3-minute video outlining findings
i. Digital copies of the data collection tools
j. Digital copies of original and clean datasets with the codebook, notes, audio material, transcriptions, if applicable etc.
k. Knowledge-sharing reflection session (max. 90 minutes)

All documents are to be produced in MS Word & PDF format (where applicable) and provided electronically by email to SCA. Copies of all other deliverable types should also be provided to SCA in an editable digital format.

Note: We are happy to negotiate the deliverables and are open to different ideas. We are looking to diversify our product types and welcome recommendations within the proposal, particularly innovative ways to present findings and engage with diverse audiences.

9. TIMEFRAME

Indicative evaluation start date: Mid. Feb. 2025
Indicative evaluation end date: Mid. Jun. 2025

Deliverables timing:

- Scoping workshop: Mid-Feb. 2025
- Inception report: Early-Mar. 2025
- Verbal check-ins: Weekly
- Written progress reports: Monthly i.e., 1 Mar, 1 Apr, 1 May
- Evaluation report: Mid. Jun. 2025
- Evaluation summary report: Mid. Jun. 2025
- Think pieces (x 4):   Mid. Jun. 2025
- Slide deck summarizing findings: Mid. Jun. 2025

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[2] *Outlining details regarding the methodology and evaluation framework such as sampling, refined evaluation questions and sub-questions and a review of program documents.*
[3] *To include conclusions, recommendations, lessons learned/considerations.*
[4] *Excluding references, annexes etc.*

- AI podcast/audio summary: Mid. Jun. 2025
- Reflection session: Mid. Jun. 2025
- Digital copies of tools, data etc.:   Mid. Jun. 2025

10. USER GROUPS

SCA has identified four main evaluation user groups:

1. SCA/SCI senior management, who may use lessons and recommendations to inform the implementation of the strategic plans
2. CO program staff, who may use the results to adjust strategies and processes for scaling
3. Implementation partners, who may use the results to inform their own innovation efforts
4. DFAT, other donors, researchers and innovators working to scale innovation.

11. GOVERNANCE

Primary contact: SCA will appoint a member of staff to be the consultancy project manager. This person will be the primary point of contact for the team.

Oversight: The evaluation process will be governed by an Evaluation Committee, which is responsible for providing direction, reviewing and approval of deliverables, and ensuring timely payment. The Committee is expected to meet every two weeks when evaluation processes are active (from inception discussions to the submission and approval of the final deliverables).

Reporting: Regular reporting and quality review processes will be used. The consultant is to report against the evaluation plan (provided in the inception report). While the evaluation is active:

a. Weekly verbal check-ins with the SCA consultancy project manager outlining progress
b. Monthly written Progress Report (max. 1 page) by email to the Evaluation Committee, documenting progress, emerging issues, blockages, and planned activities.

Management: The consultant will carry out the work remotely. No office space will be provided by Save the Children.

Financing: Payments to the consultant for each milestone will be made according to the following schedule agreed upon before the contract signature:

i. Submission and acceptance of final inception report including annexes and appendices:	50%
ii. Submission and acceptance of final evaluation report, summary report, 4 think pieces, digital copies of tools, data etc., and facilitation of reflection session:	50%

12. TEAM PROFILE

SCA is seeking a consultant/consultancy team that can fulfil the TOR deliverables over the course of four-five months. Save the Children reserves the right to terminate the contract if the consultant(s) fail to meet the terms of the contract regarding timelines and quality standards.

Required experience: To be considered, the consultant or the consultancy team will need to demonstrate the ability to communicate technical and/ or complex findings to non-specialist audiences (especially report writing and presentation) and an open, collaborative approach to stakeholder engagement. In addition, must have the following skills and experience:

- Designing and conducting evaluations or research in the field of disruption, innovation, social enterprise, social impact, and/or alternative financing e.g., impact investing
- Designing and conducting evaluations for complex, multi-sector projects
- Analysing and interpreting quantitative data
- Analysing and interpreting qualitative data
- Leading evaluations or research in Asia or other low-income contexts

There is a high expectation that:

- Members (or a proportion) of the consultancy team have a track record of being data and evidence change agents, disrupting common-held practices and the ability to advance an innovation stack.
- Members (or a proportion) of the consultancy team have a track record of working together.
- A team leader will be appointed who has relevant post-graduate qualifications, seniority, and experience in leading evaluations, and who has the ability and standing to lead a team toward a common goal.
- The team can commit to the terms of the evaluation and has adequate and available skilled resources to dedicate to this consultancy over a period of 4 months.
- The team has a strong track record of working flexibly to accommodate changes as an evaluation is implemented.

Required language skills:

- Deliverables and communication with SCA will be in English.

13. HOW TO APPLY

Proposal package: Interested candidates are invited to submit a technical and financial proposal using the Invitation to Tender form included in this package by January 10, 2025. Interested candidates may also reach out to cory.steinhauer@savethechildren.org.au with any questions. The proposal package should include two files' responses completed in the Invitation to Tender document with attachments as required:

1. A technical proposal containing:
   a. A cover letter detailing your relevant competence to undertake this consultancy, past experience in relation to the objectives and scope of this consultancy, and [optional] any additional relevant detail that may demonstrate your availability/readiness for a four-month consultancy.
   b. A description of your technical understanding of the task, with proposed top-line methodologies including the justification for the proposed designs.
   c. Resumes of key professionals who will work on the evaluation. Please include a table describing the role of each team member in the evaluation.
   d. Two samples of previous similar assignments completed in whole or in large part by the lead consultant.
   e. Details of three reference clients/supervisors for whom you have provided services similar to the deliverables requested. References will only be contacted for shortlisted applicants.

2. A financial proposal containing:
   a. An Excel file outlining the proposed budget for the consultancy

Note: The total maximum budget allotted for this consultancy is **AUD80,000**. The financial proposal should be inclusive of all related expenses necessary to undertake the assignment, including travel,

accommodation, equipment, materials, and sub-contracting logistics needs. Proposals should also include an estimated personnel allocation, as well as estimations of other applicable costs.

Save the Children seeks value for money in its work. This does not necessarily mean "lowest cost", but the quality of the service and reasonableness of the proposed costs.

Selection criteria: Consultants will be short-listed according to the following criteria:

1. Submission of all required proposal components (Required)
2. Relevance and quality of the technical proposal, including
   a. Relevance of the consultant's profile, experience, and stated capacity (30%)
   b. Relevance and quality of the proposed methodology and technical understanding of the task (35%)
   c. Relevance and quality of the submitted sample works (20%)
3. Financial proposal does not exceed stated budget (Required)
4. Suitability of the financial proposal (15%)

Short-listed candidates will be interviewed and engaged in a discussion process with SCA to ensure that all parties have a similar understanding of the scope and purpose of the consultancy. References may be checked at this stage, after which SCA will make a final decision and begin the contracting process.

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END