

Resource type	Example	Date created	2017	Last reviewed	2022
Resource series	Designing donor MEL systems and practices				
Project	Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Toolkit for Grantmakers and Grantees				
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><span style="color: red;">■</span> DEFINE what is to be evaluated</li> <li><span style="color: orange;">■</span> FRAME the boundaries for an evaluation</li> </ul>				

## Terms of reference for Fiscal Governance Program (FGP) close-of-program evaluation

### Overview

Open Society Foundations (OSF) seeks an evaluation team to conduct an evidence-based, consultative and participatory evaluation of the Fiscal Governance Program (FGP) that was active from late 2013 through 2020.<sup>1</sup> We seek an evaluation team to do a comprehensive assessment of the overall work of the Fiscal Governance Program, a detailed outcome analysis in two selected areas, and to capture the lessons of our grant-making practices over the life of the program.

The scope of the evaluator includes a retrospective<sup>2</sup> look across the funding and direct work of the Fiscal Governance Program over its tenure. We envision this will entail reviewing implementation and assessing key outcomes for OSF's FGP (especially in Natural Resource Governance and likely one other field TBC); designing a data collection plan and appropriate tools; collecting and analyzing key data (including documenting internal assumptions and qualitative case studies); and supporting learning by implementers, decision-makers and other key stakeholders within OSF and the wider field.

We are biased toward an evaluation team that has demonstrated the capacity to understand and analyze complex, multi-faceted questions around the political economy of our interventions, make smart use of lean, action- and policy-oriented data, and prioritize effective communication

---

<sup>1</sup> This Close-of-Program Evaluation will be managed by OSF's Economic Justice Program, which is the new program borne out of the merger of the former Fiscal Governance and Economic Advancement Programs

<sup>2</sup> Though this evaluation will be primarily retrospective in nature, it will be important to note that some aspects of the program's legacy work will carry on into EJP's new strategy. In these cases, we are eager for advice on how to ensure a summative understanding of the former program's work and resource distribution that also lends itself to prospective and future planning.

of internal and external learning. We are especially interested in receiving applications for evaluation teams led by women and people of color.

## 1.1 Background

OSF works to build participatory and tolerant democracies whose governments are accountable and open to the participation of all people, with emphasis on addressing inequalities that cut across multiple lines, including race, class, gender, sexual orientation, and citizenship.

FGP was launched in 2013 to promote greater openness, accountability, and equity in the fiscal and economic systems of countries where OSF works. Specifically, FGP was designed to address the ways in which corruption, plutocracy, and populism can undermine public finance management and economic policy-making in ways that hurt society's poorest and most vulnerable.<sup>3</sup> In its earliest days, the program inherited substantial legacy efforts and interests across the foundation on extractives industry transparency and global support for open governance and reform. Thus, the focal areas of the program were mainly natural resource governance, anticorruption, open government reforms, tax, public budgets, and trade governance. Over its seven years of operations, FGP deployed nearly \$140 million in grants to 127 organizations<sup>4</sup> and an additional \$2.6 million in direct contracts<sup>5</sup>, with the majority (55%) of these resources being invested in the field of natural resource governance.

In 2017, FGP updated its final four-year strategy (2018–21), which largely consolidated and focused the program's work from its earliest days for impact along four key long-term aims:

1. Increase in the transparent, accountable, and participatory governance of fiscal and economic systems
2. Make actors and institutions managing public finances and resources more accountable to the public interest
3. Increase adoption of evidence-based fiscal and economic policies that effectively and inclusively address poverty and inequality
4. Improve resilience and health of fiscal governance<sup>6</sup> fields, especially the capacity and leadership of our grantees in their domains

---

<sup>3</sup> This framing of the program represents the language used in its final strategy (i.e. included changes over time to deal with rise of populism) that were not present in the earliest days of program rationale, design, or strategy.

<sup>4</sup> Number includes grants to separate chapters/affiliates.

<sup>5</sup> Final data pending the conclusion of exit decisions and 2020 grantmaking.

<sup>6</sup> We recognize that 'Fiscal Governance' is not necessarily a readily or widely used concept outside of our program (and when it is, it may be defined differently). For this TOR, the scope of 'Fiscal Governance Fields' should be considered natural resource governance, open governance, equitable and accountable fiscal systems (tax and public budgets), anticorruption, and trade governance.

## 1.2 Guiding principles

The following are the guiding principles for EJP (former FGP)'s monitoring, evaluation, and learning<sup>7</sup> practices. We share these at the outset to help interested evaluation teams understand our expectations around what 'good practice' looks like for us and to set the stage for our engagement. Importantly, as this is an evaluation of our practices and contributions *as a funder* (and *not* as an implementer) to field-facing (and field-owned) outcomes, we think these are crucial to keep in mind. It is essential that the evaluators, long-time partners, and grantees, know that *this is NOT an evaluation of the efficacy and success of individual grantee work.*

- **Demand-driven** | Respond to clear demands from staff, grantees, and the broader field and answer real questions of practical use and import.
- **Rigorous, participatory, and method-agnostic** | Consider a wide spectrum of methods and voices as valid sources of reflection, learning, and evidence.
- **Fit for purpose** | Emphasize the importance of adapting to context, power dynamics (acting as a donor/investor), and differing levels of capacity.
- **Externally relevant** | Prioritize external knowledge building, creation, and sharing beyond our own narrow uses.
- **Patient** | Our program is working towards long-term, systemic change. Our understanding and expectations around moving towards these changes need to be reflective of the messy, long-term, and complex realities.
- **Befriend failure** | Excitedly embrace the value and role of failure in iterating interventions, policies, and programs.
- **No Christopher Columbing** | We will strive to thank and recognize those who have paved the trails before us and always note that as the donor/investor, we are usually not doing the actual work. Thus, we aim to humbly recognize EJP's primary role (vis-a-vis grantees and investees) in the field is as a grant-maker and/or investor and not take credit that is undue and unearned.
- **Share what we learn and know** | Recognizing that perennial problem of the Philanthropic "Black Box", where information comes in, but rarely comes back out, we aim to proactively share lessons learned and MEL data with partners, grantees, investees, and the wider public.
- **Resource conscious** | Consider, build off, and leverage existing knowledge and research.

---

<sup>7</sup> MEL for FGP was an active component for much of the program's history, but how, when, why, and with how much evolved substantially alongside the strategy.

## Evaluation

### 2.1 Purpose

As the Open Society Foundation evolves aspects of this work (in the form of the new Economic Justice Program) and proceeds to conclude engagements in other areas, we seek an evaluation team to do a comprehensive assessment of the overall work of the Fiscal Governance Program, a detailed outcome analysis in two selected areas, and to capture the lessons of our grant making practices over the life of the program. These lessons will inform our continuing work and the work of other funders and organizations that are engaged with fiscal governance issues, especially (we hope) in the fields we are leaving. We will count on the advice of the evaluation partners to refine (and likely reduce) the evaluation questions articulated in section 2.4

The goals of the proposed evaluation are:

- To conduct a retrospective analysis on FGP grantmaking (how, where, and with whom funds were spent and whom they reached);
- To assess the effectiveness of FGP's strategy implementation, document successes, and failures;
- To identify key outcomes across the program (expected or unexpected, positive and negative) and its contributions to these outcomes, with a detailed assessment of two selected areas of implementation (natural resource governance and one other field TBC—likely public budgets and accountability);
- To assess the relevance of FGP strategic inputs to the field (financial and non-financial), sustainability of results, and contributions to impact;
- To convey useful lessons to donors and recipients in the fiscal governance field, including a mapping of ongoing challenges and open questions in the field.

### 2.2 Timeline

The EJP team aims to have an evaluation team on board by late October 2020, data collection happening in late 2020 and early 2021, and a final report and subsequent communication pieces by March 2021.

## 2.3 Evaluation uses and users

OSF is the main client for this project. As a primary consumer, OSF<sup>8</sup> aims to use the findings from this evaluation to assess its effectiveness as a funder, and better inform future programming and funding decisions. OSF also commits to sharing learning at key moments with external stakeholders including other funders, grantees, and other actors working in fiscal governance and issues of public resource management to support overarching learning in the field.<sup>9</sup> We also plan to engage grantees (especially those in the selected sub-fields of focus) as key stakeholders in this evaluation [methods and engagement plan expected from consultant].

## 2.4 Preliminary evaluation questions

As a starting point for the evaluation, we identified the following set of questions. It is expected that the evaluation team will review and refine (and likely reduce/reprioritize) these questions during the inception phase.

### Primary questions

Overarching:

- What are the key outcomes (expected and unexpected; positive and negative) for FGP's work across portfolios? How were these outcomes achieved? [*We have some ideas on starting points*]
- Within identified, field-facing outcomes (positive and negative) in Natural Resources Governance and the second selected field (like public budgets and accountability), to what extent did FGP support and funding contribute to and/or hinder outcomes in these respective fields? What were the enablers and bottlenecks of FGP's contributions?
- To what extent elements of gender equality, racial justice, and inclusivity are visible in FGP's results?<sup>10</sup> Which groups benefitted the most from realized outcomes and FGP grantmaking practice and where are these groups located? What signals should we have been taking note of to improve effectiveness in these areas?
- What do these lessons around outcomes mean for our grantmaking practice in the future?

---

<sup>8</sup> Primarily the now EJP, but also potentially OSF central leadership alongside other large programmatic decisions including to establish or wind down other OSF programs.

<sup>9</sup> We are hopeful that some of these lessons apply more broadly to other funders outside of fiscal governance and transparency, accountability, and participation including across and within OSF's large grantmaking apparatus

<sup>10</sup> Given that this lens was added later in the programmatic phases (if at all), we are anticipating this is a place where recommendations on future actions will be especially valuable and needed

---

Relevance:

- What has been the added value (if any) of FGP to its focal fields and key stakeholders, especially in cases where it was an early contributor/actor?
- How frequently were we “off-strategy” (intentionally or unintentionally), and how did it impact our programming? What signals should we have been taking note of to help us adjust (either strategy or grantmaking practice)?<sup>11</sup>
- To what extent were strategies and our implementation of them informed by previous learning experiences, external evidence, and the voice/perspective of grantees? Conversely, to what extent did we intentionally or unintentionally shape grantee and wider field priorities?
- To what extent FGP strategy and grant-making practices are aligned with the grant-making values and culture EJP aims to uphold?
- To what extent were FGP strategic priorities aligned with grantee priorities (from the perspective of grantees and other key field actors)? To what extent has any alignment contributed to effectiveness, and what were the consequences of possible misalignments?
- To what extent did FGP’s contributions and efforts align with wider views on what strategic progress should and needed to look like in key fields? [particularly interested in both what FGP prioritized, how priorities were implemented, and the extent to which any aspirations around field-building and grantee resilience were met]

Effectiveness:

- Which features of the grant-making and technical assistance provided seem to have been most effective? And least effective? And why? What can we learn from the characteristics of impactful grant-making?
- Where have we fallen short? What could we have asked/known before our interventions that might have improved our effectiveness?
- What primary contextual factors enabled or inhibited progress toward our strategic objectives? How well were these taken into account of in different iterations of strategy? [particularly interested in exploring the presence/role of other funders and foreseeable and unforeseeable events outside of our control]

---

<sup>11</sup> Note that FGP’s strategies were often a mix of institutional priorities, program officer and director expertise, grantee opportunities and insights, and strategic decision-making. FGP, for instance, inherited and oversaw key foundation ‘legacy’ issues and relationships including those related to Natural Resource Governance

**Sustainability:**

- To what extent have we considered and prepared for grantee organizations to continue advancing their fiscal governance aims after the end of OSF FGP support?<sup>12</sup> To what extent did we introduce or open new funding and support opportunities for grantees including within other OSF programs and foundations (especially in areas we plan to exit)?
- To what extent are the positive outcomes observed likely to be sustainable? What conditions (financial and non-financial) will OSF need to monitor to sustain these results in areas where we will continue to work? What might other donors and organizations need to monitor to sustain results in areas where we are leaving the field?

**Secondary questions:**

- What are the remaining challenges and open questions within the field of fiscal governance that can inform OSF and other donors' continuing work? What are these questions, challenges and opportunities for the two selected fields?
- How sensitive to the grantees' practical context (e.g. closing civic space) was FGP's grantmaking practices and support, and are there lessons for OSF's grantmaking process and/or the programs of other funders?
- Can the program/strategy approach or early results be replicated or scaled up? What would support their replication and scaling up?

**2.5 Methodology**

The evaluation will be primarily summative in nature with some formative components (especially for areas where work will continue into OSF 2020-2024 strategy). The evaluator is expected to employ a variety of data collection and analysis techniques for both quantitative and qualitative data. This will likely include, at a minimum:

---

<sup>12</sup> On this question, the evaluation may be too early to tell. FGP's phase-out and exit grants started in late 2019 and will continue through 2021. In a few exceptional cases, the 'exit' trajectory continues with funding through 2024 (the end of EJP's first strategy cycle)

- **Desk review:** Review of existing program documents, including program strategies, grantee reports, theories of change, monitoring and evaluation frameworks. Also includes grey literature and research on the theme to support analysis.
- **Key informant interviews:** Consultations with key project stakeholders, including program officers, field leaders, and grantee and partner staff.
- **Retrospective of funds spent and other support offered:** Review of FGP budgetary allocation (i.e. grants and contracts) across geographies, types of organization, and other relevant categories. Ideally this will include a look across other types of activities including direct advocacy, organizational advising, and technical assistance.
- **Data analysis:** Analysis of monitoring and evaluation data, including outcomes and indicators, and grantee and contract reports, where available and relevant.

## Scope

This evaluation should be primarily a summative assessment of the program with some formative components, providing an evaluation of outcomes as well as some forward-looking assessments and actionable recommendations for continuing work.

### 3.1 Scope of Work

We expect the selected consultant(s) to work deeply and proactively with OSF in regular and open communication and reporting with the OSF team, including:

- Regular progress reporting to OSF evaluation management team,<sup>13</sup> including responding to any comments or technical inputs wherever reasonable;
- Production of deliverables within agreed timeline and by quality requirements of OSF evaluation management team;
- Seeking comments and feedback from OSF evaluation steering committee<sup>14</sup> on the main deliverables, in sufficient time to discuss and incorporate these into the final products.

Consultants are also expected to make their own arrangements for data collection (i.e., subscription for web-based video conferencing tools, data package, and adequate equipment).

---

<sup>13</sup> OSF evaluation management team is responsible for the management of the consultancy contract, approving deliverables, and serving as the main point of contact for consultants during the evaluation.

<sup>14</sup> OSF Evaluation Steering Committee is comprised of members of the Economic Justice Program with the responsibility of supporting the evaluation team and consultants with thematic steering for the evaluation, and inputs in key moments of the evaluation process.



Given the uncertainties of COVID-19, the consultant(s) should prepare to conduct the majority (if not all) of their inquiry virtually.

### 3.2 Deliverables

The following deliverables are anticipated from the evaluation:

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Scope</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Timeframe<sup>15</sup></b>
Inception report	<p>Consultations with relevant internal and external stakeholders</p> <p>Review of secondary sources (documentation provided, grey literature, academic literature)</p>	A detailed report (10 pages max) on the proposed approach to the evaluation, providing preliminary understandings of the program theory of change, rationale of methodology and tools, review of evaluation questions, analytical methods, an evaluation matrix, suggested final report outline and suggested learning products, budget with a breakdown of costs and detailed work plan for the entire exercise	4 to 6 weeks after launch
Data collection and data analysis	<p>Conduct online interviews with internal and external stakeholders</p> <p>Compile information from internal OSF sources (e.g. grant reports, contracts) and external sources (e.g. external databases)</p> <p>Conduct a mixed-method analysis</p> <p>Give regular updates on data collection to OSF evaluation management team and reach out for problem-solving</p>	Testing of interview questionnaires, refining data collection tools and administering data collection, analysis of data and reporting in a clear and accessible format	6 to 8 weeks after launch

<sup>15</sup> Due to COVID-19, we are aware delays and shifts might happen and we are adopting a flexible posture to accommodate reasonable adjustments in these timelines as needed, in discussion with the evaluation management team.

Deliverable	Scope	Description	Timeframe <sup>15</sup>
Preliminary Report and sense-making session	Preparation of presentation with inputs from OSF evaluation management team  Follow-up on any outstanding issues raised during the sense-making session (e.g. complementary data collection and/or data analysis)	Presenting and moderating a sense-making session with internal and multiple different external stakeholders based on preliminary findings, including a draft set of recommendations and lessons learned	Three months after launch
Final report	Preparation of presentation with inputs from OSF evaluation management team  Answering to feedback received by OSF Steering Committee and relevant external stakeholders	A detailed report (20 pages max) and presentation of the overall findings with specific, with recommendations tailored to implementers and to guide improvements in delivery and future interventions and learning points from program design, implementation and achievements.  Include an Executive Summary (no more than five pages), and annexes (evaluation matrix, data collection tools, any support analysis, extended methodological note). The final feedback matrix should also be delivered with the final report.	Five months after launch
Advice for the EJP MEL team	Recommendations on additional data sources and information the program <i>should</i> have collected on the basis of these questions and interests in its on-going and regular MEL processes	On the basis of the evaluation and subsequent data collection exercises, what information should FGP have been collecting at key moments that it did not?	Five months after launch (if not sooner)
Public-facing evaluation and learning products	Consultations with OSF Evaluation Steering Committee	Develop key findings into at least 1 useful and relatable learning product (e.g. externally-focused webinar, learning handout, etc.) and about 2 public-facing evaluation products for external stakeholders (e.g. blog posts, infographics, videos, podcasts, etc.)	Six months after launch

### 3.3 OSF will provide:

- Access to relevant project documents (e.g. internal reports, grantee reports, contracts, internal mappings, relevant references—including sensitive information)
- Guidance and technical support as required throughout the evaluation
- Introductory meetings with grantee and partner staff as needed
- Comments and feedback on, and approval of, all deliverables within the agreed timeline

## Proposal

### 4.1 Desired profile

- Demonstrated experience conducting formative, summative, and outcome evaluations of strategies, systems, or other complex programs or interventions using rigorous qualitative methods with quantitative data where relevant as well, experience working with Foundations is a plus
- Experience leading interactive and meaningful learning and reflection moments that enable decision-makers and implementers to make changes that improve the impact and efficacy of their work over time
- Knowledge about evidence, tactics, and approaches related to government reform, capacity building and knowledge transfer, and technical assistance is a must; strong plus for evaluator(s) to have exposure to and understanding of fiscal governance
- Ability to work on a tight timeline, in dynamic consultation with OSF and any partners, and resourcefully drawing on additional outside expertise as needed to complete the work
- Commitment to and experience employing OSF core values working to build vibrant and inclusive societies, respect for human rights and the rule of law, free exchange of thoughts and ideas, participation and inclusion in governance, accountability for power holders, and a belief in the fundamental, dynamic role of civil society and independent media in advancing these values

We are open to candidates from any location, and actively champion applications from teams led by women, people of color, and applicants from the Global South. Given the uncertainties of COVID-19, the consultant(s) should prepare to conduct the majority (if not all) of their inquiry virtually.

## 4.2 Proposal submission requirements

Interested candidates and teams should send a brief proposal with:

- 1-page cover letter describing their interest in the work,
- 1-2 pages CV for each team member describing qualifications and experience,
- Up to 2 pages of a technical proposal describing methods/approaches envisioned for this work
- 1 page an initial budget quote for the consultancy within timeline and deliverable asks
- Proposals under \$200,000 encouraged

Proposal submissions should be sent to CONTACT no later than **Friday, September 25**. You may direct questions on this ToR to CONTACT by Friday, September 4, and expect responses by Monday, September 14. Anticipated evaluation start date: late October.