Call for Proposals

Neutrality, Access, and Making Localisation Work: Invitation to Tender

1. Purpose

The Global Interagency Security Forum (GISF) is looking to develop a research paper exploring how current understandings of neutrality impact humanitarian access and acceptance-based security strategies. The paper will also examine how neutrality intersects with the localisation of aid to impact the selection, management, security, and access of aid workers and aid programmes operating within partnerships. For the purposes of this research, 'humanitarian' is understood as not-for-profit activities that seek to improve lives and reduce suffering.

The research paper will address three research questions:

1. How has the role of neutrality in acceptance-based security strategies evolved in recent years, has it increased or decreased in significance? (25% of paper)
2. How does the principle of neutrality intersect with the localisation of aid? What are the implications of the intersection between the localisation of aid and the principle of neutrality on the selection and management of partnerships between international and local actors, and how does this impact the security and access of aid workers and aid programmes? (60% of paper)
3. What practical recommendations can be offered to organisations involved in security or partnerships to effectively navigate the interplay between the principles of neutrality, localisation, and aid worker security? (15% of paper)

2. Background

GISF is an independent network of security focal points representing humanitarian, development, and human rights NGOs operating internationally (from now on, referred to as NGOs or humanitarian organisations). GISF is committed to improving the safety and security of operations and staff and strengthening humanitarian security risk management (SRM) to allow greater access for crisis-affected populations. GISF acts as a global reference point for good practice and collective knowledge on humanitarian security risk management and, as such, strives to produce inclusive, collaborative, and innovative research for the whole humanitarian community. The GISF Secretariat is hosted by one of GISF's member organisations: the Mines Advisory Group (MAG).

3. Project Description and Scope

GISF is seeking to produce a research paper exploring how conceptions and realities surrounding the humanitarian principle of neutrality inform and are informed by shifts towards localisation and the implications of these shifts on aid worker security, access, and security management within partnerships.

GISF is seeking a consultant to research and produce a paper (30-40 pages) exploring these issues and providing some practical recommendations for readers on navigating the challenges the paper explores. The research is expected to use desk research and key informant interviews (KIIs) to produce its findings.

Objectives:

The paper will answer three research questions, following the below suggested structure:

1. How has the role of neutrality in acceptance-based security strategies evolved in recent years, has it increased or decreased in significance? (25% of paper)

Included in this section will be:
- Consideration of how current understandings of neutrality impact the acceptance-based security strategies of NGOs.
- An exploration of neutrality's role in shaping access constraints and risks towards aid workers.
- An exploration of if/how neutrality has shifted in importance relative to the other core humanitarian principles (humanity, independence, impartiality), including a comparison of attitudes between international and national/local level actors.
- Consideration of whether neutrality is employed more as a principle or is operationalised as a tool.
- Identification of the key drivers changing perceptions and interpretations of neutrality in aid.

2. How does the principle of neutrality intersect with the localisation of aid? What are the implications of this intersection on the selection and management of partnerships between international and local actors, and how does this impact the security and access of aid workers and aid programmes? (60% of paper)

Included in this section will be:
- An examination of how shifts in understandings of neutrality intersect with the localisation of aid.
- An exploration of how important neutrality is in the partnership selection and management process, including identifying the role of security teams in the partner selection process and examining how security staff and other staff involved in the selection process consider neutrality a factor in their decision-making.
- Identification of the factors relating to neutrality that may be taken into consideration when selecting local partners. This could include, but is not limited to, donor restrictions, counter-terrorism legislation and sanctions, INGO risk management methodologies (risk-sharing v risk-transfer), the assessment of risk arising from the perception of L/NNGOs' neutrality, the operational context and if/how the value of neutrality varies across different contexts, and how local staff experience risk transfer or barriers in accessing security funding or support from their partners.
- An exploration of how the factors explored above impact the security and access of aid workers and aid programmes.

3. What practical recommendations can be offered to organisations involved in security or partnerships to effectively navigate the interplay between the principles of neutrality, localisation, and aid worker security? (15% of paper)

Target Audience:

The target audience for this paper is, most directly, staff with responsibilities for staff security, who are responsible for selecting and advising on the security of national partner organisations, and broader organisational security strategies. The paper is also targeted at staff with responsibilities for partnerships with L/NNGOs, who require an understanding of the

impact of these discourses on localisation, as well as the realities of operationalising neutrality for implementing partners.

More broadly, this paper touches on a range of issues (humanitarian principles, access, localisation, security) that are relevant to an extensive range of stakeholders. These may include country directors, programme staff, NGO senior leadership, donors, and other individuals/organisations involved in discussions on the topics this paper aims to address.

Publication format:

The publication will be a research paper, following the below suggested format:
1. Executive summary
2. Introduction
3. Methodology
4. Presentation of Findings According to Research Questions:
    1. How has the role of neutrality in acceptance-based security strategies evolved in recent years, has it increased or decreased in significance? (25% of paper)
    2. How does the principle of neutrality intersect with the localisation of aid? What are the implications of the intersection between the localisation of aid and the principle of neutrality on the selection and management of partnerships between international and local actors, and how does this impact the security and access of aid workers and aid programmes? (60% of paper)
    3. What practical recommendations can be offered to organisations involved in security or partnerships to effectively navigate the interplay between the principles of neutrality, localisation, and aid worker security? (15% of paper)
5. Conclusion
6. Bibliography

The consultant will also produce a summary brief of the research.

4. Deliverables and Timeframe

The following are the deliverables for this project:	Timeline (by COB)
Inception Meeting	07 August
Background research, literature review, and methodology (including a list of proposed KIIs and interview questions)	21 August
Comments and edits by GISF	25 August
Completion of KIIs	15 September
First draft	05 October
Comments and edits on the first draft by GISF and the working group	16 October
Second draft	30 October
Comments and edits on the second draft by GISF and the working group	13 November
Final draft	27 November

During this period, GISF and the chosen consultant will have regular feedback sessions to monitor progress and make amendments where necessary. The consultant is also expected to have two meetings with the working group and GISF to incorporate feedback and ideas.

5. Tender Submission

If you are interested in submitting a research proposal for this project, please submit the following documents to gisf-ra@gisf.ngo to express your interest:

- A cover letter (max. one page) stating your interest and qualifications.
- CV(s) of the proposed research team members and/or introduction of institute, company, and primary investigators.
- Links to one or two sample research works.
- A proposal based on the project description and guidance provided above, including a detailed plan outlining how you propose to meet the stated timeframe and milestones.

All costs must be included in the offer. The costs are to be specified in pound sterling, excluding VAT. If VAT is applicable, indicate the VAT % to be charged separately (i.e., not included in the price of the services). Costs associated with the preparation of the tender will not be reimbursed.

All tender offers must be valid for at least 90 days from the tender submission deadline.

Please send your application to gisf-ra@gisf.ngo no later than COB 21 July 2023.

6. Tender Analysis and Evaluation

GISF will consider several factors when analysing suitable proposals, including:

- Understanding of the project requirements.
- Relevant experience of the researcher/research team.
- Timeframe for completion.
- Value for money.
- Communication with GISF.

Once received, submissions will be evaluated by a Tender Committee. The scoring and weighting used to assess each application are outlined in the following table.

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Marks
Tender Documents	10%
Understanding of Project Requirements	30%
Proposed Implementation Plan, Timeline, and Price	20%
Proposed Researcher/Research Team's Expertise	40%

At the discretion of GISF, selected applicants may be invited to supply additional information on the contents of their proposal during the evaluation period. If no suitable tender is identified, the invitation for tender may be reopened and advertised on a broader level.

Upon identification of the preferred tender, the selected application will meet GISF to finalise the requirements and agree on contract terms.

7. Contract Conditions and Payment Terms

Upon confirmation of success, the chosen vendor with sign MAG's Contract for the Procurement of Services and must comply with MAG's Terms and Conditions and MAG's Policies.

The provision of this work will be undertaken in accordance with MAG's standard payment terms, which is 30 days upon receipt of an invoice. Payment will be made in pound sterling. The maximum budget is £12,000.

Payment for services will be in instalments dependent upon the successful completion of specific milestones:

- 20% upon completion of an inception meeting between GISF and the chosen vendor
- 65% upon submission of the second draft
- 15% upon approval of the final draft

Ownership of the final product will reside with GISF. This includes copyrights and patents associated with the product.

Email any questions regarding GISF's requirements or the tendering process to gisf-ra@gisf.ngo.