

# Terms of Reference

## Strategic Evaluation of Plan International Australia's Resilience Programming

### Background

Resilience is critical in advancing children's rights and equality for girls. Today's risk landscape is more complex than ever, with different factors interplaying to create more humanitarian crises which are also lasting longer. Climate change is a significant driver of these crises, due to increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events often leading to economic hardship, displacement or localised conflict. Further, conflicts are becoming increasingly complex and protracted, often resulting from and contributing to fragility. Crises can undermine development, trap communities in cycles of poverty, reverse progress on gender equality and permanently impacting girls' rights.

In times of shocks or stresses (eg. epidemics, tsunamis, cyclones, conflict, or economic hardship) people may be forced to employ negative coping strategies which often affect girls the most. Strengthened resilience can safeguard development gains and protect girls' rights from the effects of shocks and stresses. Resilience is also one of the key strategies to overcome the effects of the global climate crisis.

Plan International Australia (PIA) is exploring how our work can support individuals, communities and governments to increase their resilience to the effects of climate change and other potential sources of shocks and stresses. As part of this, PIA is setting up a new Pacific regional program, focused on climate change and resilience; and improving linkages between our climate-focused programming, advocacy and influencing work. Additionally, PIA is seeking to improve the integration of resilience across our program portfolio, by applying Plan International's [Pathways to Resilience](#) framework ("Resilience Framework"). The Resilience Framework outlines five "pathways to resilience" (outcome areas) as well as "building blocks" (activity areas) for each pathway:

- Pathway 1: Risk knowledge
- Pathway 2: Planning and basic services
- Pathway 3: Healthy environment
- Pathway 4: Social and economic safety nets
- Pathway 5: Policy frameworks

The Resilience Framework is intended for use at the Country Strategy and program/project levels. It recognises that, while resilience may not always be the ultimate objective of many projects, including resilience pathways can help achieve project objectives in a sustainable way; while considering resilience in core strategic choices in country strategies assists in dealing with increasing climate, environment and other risks to safeguard development gains.

As a starting point for PIA's targeted efforts to strengthen our resilience work, PIA is seeking to evaluate our current resilience practice across our programming portfolio, through the lens of the Plan International Resilience Framework. The evaluation also reflects PIA's commitment to improve learning and reflection across the organisation (embodied in the PIA Effectiveness Framework, which consolidates monitoring, evaluation, learning and research activities at the organisational level) to improve the impact of our programming and influencing work.

## **Purpose and objectives**

The purpose of the strategic evaluation is to understand the extent to which Plan International's Resilience Framework is currently applied in PIA's program portfolio and identify potential approaches to improving its use.

The specific objectives are to:

- Assess the extent and effectiveness of the Resilience Framework's application in PIA's program portfolio
- Identify patterns in the application of the Resilience Framework in PIA's program portfolio
- Identify any alignment (or potential alignment) of PIA's advocacy work with program work linked to the Resilience Framework
- Provide recommendations to improve PIA's application of the Resilience Framework

## **Scope**

The evaluation will include all five pathways in the Resilience Framework and PIA's program portfolio as a whole, although some specific aspects of the evaluation may focus on selected resilience pathways, projects or thematic areas.

## **Key Evaluation Questions**

The following inquiry questions outline what PIA would like to learn from this strategic evaluation and will guide data collection, analysis and reporting:

- How and to what extent are the pathways and building blocks from the Resilience Framework evident in the programs portfolio currently and in planned changes to the portfolio?
  - What pathways are the most and least common?
  - What are the patterns in programs' thematic areas and the types of resilience pathways they integrate?

- What are the main initiatives (“building blocks”) from the pathways that are included in the programs?
- What is the level of investment in these programs, compared to programs that do not integrate (or do not significantly integrate) pathways from the Resilience Framework? And how does the level of funding for resilience pathways compare between donor determined grant funding and flexible/ unrestricted funding sources?
- What evidence is there that these resilience pathways were included as part of intentional application of the Resilience Framework?
- What evidence is there of the programs’ effectiveness in implementing the resilience pathways and what were the outcomes achieved through the pathways?
- Where/ how do different resilience pathways in PIA’s programs intersect with/ support gender transformative change and localisation?
- What are the main challenges to wider implementation of the Resilience Framework across the current programs portfolio?
- What factors would support implementation of the Resilience Framework across the PIA portfolio?
  - How can the Framework be better incorporated at the project/ program level and beyond (across the whole programming portfolio, at the thematic portfolio level, in PIA’s advocacy work)?
    - What processes are recommended?
    - What pathways and building blocks in particular are most relevant to PIA’s work?
- Where are PIA’s programming and advocacy work currently aligning or integrating in relation to the Resilience Framework pathways and where might there be opportunities to further alignment/ integration?
- How do the pathways and building blocks of the Resilience Framework align with the current funding context for PIA programs?

## **Methodology and sampling**

The final methodology and sampling approach will be agreed between the consultant and PIA; however, the following guidance is provided:

- The evaluation will involve both secondary data sources and primary data collection.
- Secondary data sources will include project monitoring reports and evaluations; project proposals and design documents; and relevant documents related to our advocacy work.
- Primary data collection will be conducted remotely and may involve interviews with relevant PIA and Plan country office staff.

- If practicable, the methodology may include an online reflection or sense-making session with PIA and Plan country office staff, to facilitate discussion for input to the final evaluation report.
- Some KEQs will require high-level data and analysis across the whole programming portfolio, while others will focus on a sample of projects, in order to allow in-depth analysis and insights.

## Ethics and safeguarding

Plan International is committed to ensuring that the rights of those participating in data collection or analysis are respected and protected, in accordance with Ethical MERL Framework and our Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People. The consultant will be required to ensure appropriate, safe, non-discriminatory participation of all stakeholders and pay special attention to the needs of children and other vulnerable groups (where relevant). The consultant must also ensure confidentiality and anonymity of participants in the data collection/ analysis/ management processes and reporting processes.

## Deliverables

As part of the evaluation, the consultant is expected to deliver the following:

- Draft and final evaluation plan, including evaluation matrix, methodology and data collection tools
- Online reflection or sense-making session (to be confirmed)
- Draft and final evaluation report
- 1 page visual document summarising results

## Milestones and timeframes

The work will commence in early June 2024 and be completed by 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024. The table below outlines the number of consultant days for key activities.

Activity	Number of consultant days
Document review (Resilience Framework, project documents) and inception meeting with PIA	2
Develop evaluation plan and data collection tools (including finalisation based on PIA feedback)	3
Primary data collection	3
Online reflection or sense-making session (preparation and delivery)	1
Data analysis and draft report	8
Finalisation of report and visual summary	3
<b>Total days</b>	<b>20</b>

## Skills and qualifications

PIA is seeking an independent consultant to undertake the assignment outlined in this ToR, and with the following skills and experience:

- 5+ years of evaluation experience, preferably in international development.
- Experience in conducting strategic evaluations, thematic evaluations and/ or meta-evaluations.
- Expertise in climate change, resilience or other relevant thematic areas, in an international development context.
- Familiarity with work around localisation in aid/ development in the Australian aid sector and international contexts.
- Understanding of the core concepts of gender transformative change in the context of international development programming.
- Excellent qualitative data analysis skills and ability to triangulate qualitative and quantitative data sources
- Skilled in delivering clear and succinct evaluation reports and presenting data in visually interesting ways.

## Application process

Applicants are asked to email the following to Kimberley Buss (PIA Senior DMEL Advisor) at [kimberley.buss@plan.org.au](mailto:kimberley.buss@plan.org.au), by **5pm on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> May** (AEST):

- A 1-2 page summary of a proposed approach to the strategic evaluation, as well as an indication of the consultant's day rate (in Australian dollars, inclusive of GST).
- The consultant's CV
- A relevant sample of work (strategic evaluation, thematic evaluation, meta-evaluation etc.)

Please contact Kimberley Buss ([kimberley.buss@plan.org.au](mailto:kimberley.buss@plan.org.au)) with any inquiries.