

**Request For Proposals For Conducting Endline Evaluation Of Defenddefenders’ Strategy 2021-2025 And Baseline Study For The New Strategy 2026-2030***.*

Client: DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)

**July 2025**

**Request for Proposals**

The DefendDefenders,requests for proposals/bids for Conducting **Evaluation of DefendDefenders’ Strategy 2021-2025 and Baseline Study for the new Strategy 2026-2030.**

The request for proposal document is attached to this call.

In response to this request, the bidder must submit a technical and financial proposal.

Both the technical and financial proposals should be addressed to and sent to:

**Head of Procurement**

**DefendDefenders**

**Arie Towers, Plot 16 Mackinnnon Road, Nakasero.**

**Email:** [procurement@defenddefenders.org](mailto:procurement@defenddefenders.org)

Proposals/bids should be submitted before **11:00am** (Ugandan local time) **on Monday August 11, 2025.**

***Late submissions shall not be accepted***.

Thank you.

**………………………**

**Head Procurement**

**1.0 Instructions for Proposers**

The bidder is to read carefully the instructions set out below. No claim will be entertained on the grounds of failure either to read or comply neither with the instructions nor for any alleged misunderstanding of their meaning.

* 1. **Request for Clarifications**

For any inquiries regarding this request write to the Procurement Team on email address [stanleyw@defenddefenders.org](mailto:stanleyw@defenddefenders.org) , [procurement@defenddefenders.org](mailto:procurement@defenddefenders.org), provided your request does not concern the prices for these services. This request must be sent prior to 12.00hrs on **Wednesday August 06, 2025.**

Should there be any doubt or obscurity as to the meaning of any word or phrase or terms or conditions in the request for proposals document or anything to be done or not to be done by the eventual contractor, or to these instructions, or as to any other matter or anything pertaining to the eventual contract, the bidder must submit such doubt or obscurity in writing. Any clarification so issued will form part of the contract documents.

DefendDefenders are not obliged to provide explanations regarding requests made after the closing date. Results will not be made public. **Any lobbying will lead to automatic disqualification.**

* 1. **Cost of Preparing the Proposals**

The proposer shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of his/her proposal and DefendDefenders will in no case be responsible or liable for these costs regardless of the conduct or outcome of the proposal’s solicitation process.

**1.3 Taxes and Duties**

DefendDefenders will withhold 6% tax for Ugandan based consultants or 15% for foreign consultants except for those with WHT exemption from Uganda Revenue Authority. Your offer should, therefore, be inclusive of all taxes and any other levies.

* 1. **Format and Signing of Proposals**

The proposer shall prepare the **Technical Proposal** and the **Financial Proposal**. The proposals shall be typed and signed by the person or persons duly authorised to bind the bidder to the eventual contract. The **Proposal** shall be signed as per the prescribed **Proposal Submission Form** without alterations, except those in accordance with instructions issued by DefendDefenders.

* 1. **Examination and Evaluation of Proposals**

Information relating to the examination, clarification, evaluation and comparison of proposals and recommendations for award shall not be disclosed to bidders or any other persons not officially concerned with such processes until the award to the successful proposer has been announced. Any effort by the proposer to influence DefendDefenders’ processing of the proposals or award decisions will result in automatic rejection of his proposal.

To assist in the examination, evaluation and comparison of the proposals, DefendDefenders may, at its discretion, ask any proposer for clarification of their proposal including breakdown of the unit rates. The request for clarification and the response shall be in writing, but no change in the price or substance of the proposal shall be sought, offered or permitted except as required to confirm the correction of arithmetic errors discovered by DefendDefenders in the evaluation of the proposals.

**1.6 Evaluation Methodology**

The evaluation methodology to be used for the evaluation of bids received shall be the Quality and Cost Based selection (QCBS) methodology. The Quality and Cost Based selection methodology recommends the highest scoring bid, which is substantially responsive to the technical and financial requirements of the Bidding Document where Technical Shall be 75% and financial 25%. The evaluation shall be conducted in two sequential stages-

a) The technical quality of bids against set criteria on a merit point system, to determine the technical score of each technical bid.

b) A financial comparison to determine the financial score of each financial bid, and to determine the total score of each bid.

c) For any financial proposals that shall not be in Ugandan Shillings the Prevailing info Euro rate for the deadline day shall be used to convert the proposal for purposes of evaluation.

d) The **minimum technical score** required to pass the technical evaluation is: 50 points. ***Bids scoring less than this will be rejected.***

**1.6.1 Determination of Best Evaluated Bidders**

That bid achieving the highest combined technical and financial score shall be the Best Evaluated Bid.

* + 1. **Determination of responsiveness**

Prior to the detailed evaluation of the proposals, DefendDefenders will determine whether each proposal is substantially responsive to the requirements of the request for proposals. A substantially responsive proposal is the one, which conforms to all the terms, conditions and terms of reference of the request for proposals without material deviation or reservation. A material deviation or reservation is one:

1. Which affects in any substantial way the scope, quality or performance of the services.
2. Which limits in any substantial way, inconsistent with the request for proposals, DefendDefenders rights or the proposer’s obligation under the eventual contract
3. Whose rectification would affect unfairly the competitive position of other proposers presenting substantially responsive proposals.

If a proposal is not substantially responsive, DefendDefenders will reject it.

* 1. **Correction of Errors**

Proposals determined to be substantially responsive will be checked by DefendDefenders for any arithmetic errors in computation and summation. Errors will be corrected as follows: The corrected errors, with the concurrence of the proposer, shall be binding upon the proposer. If the proposer does not accept the corrections made of the proposal, his/her proposal will be rejected.

* 1. **Technical and Financial Proposals**

The technical proposals shall be submitted guided by the Terms of Reference and Application Format for the technical Proposal in the RFP. The financial proposal shall be submitted guided by the budget format.

DefendDefenders reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal and to annul the solicitation process without incurring any liability to the affected bidders or any obligation to inform them of the grounds for DefendDefenders’ action.

* 1. **Signing of the Contract**

After DefendDefenders notifying a successful proposer that his/her proposal has been accepted, DefendDefenders will send a copy of the contract to the successful bidder and within **five days** of receipt of the contract, the bidder shall sign and date the contract and return it to DefendDefenders.

* 1. **Proposal Validity**

The proposals shall remain valid and open for acceptance for a period of 3**0 days** from the date of closing.

**1.11 CURRENCY OF PROPOSAL**

Offers are to be made in **Uganda Shillings.**

Please note that the prospected contract will be in Uganda Shillings, any proposals or offers that shall be made is a currency other than the one specified shall be converted to Uganda shillings using the info Euro exchange rate on the Date of Bid closing.

**1.12 Summary of the Procurement Timelines**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **No** | **Description** | **Timeline** |
| **1** | **Issuing of a Request for Proposal** | **22/07/2025** |
| **2** | **Bid Closing Date** | **11/08/2025** |
| **3** | **Evaluation Deadline and communication to the Best Evaluated Bidder** | **19/08/2025** |
| **5** | **Contract Signature** | **01/09/2025** |

**Proposals Submission Form**

We understand and agree to the request for proposal with all the terms and conditions as stipulated in the instructions to bidders, the terms and conditions of the contract and the Annexes.

We undertake that if our proposal is accepted, and the contract is awarded to us, we shall start offering the services immediately in accordance with the contract commencement date and shall render the whole services required in this contract.

We understand that DefendDefenders is not bound to accept the lowest financial proposal or any proposal you may receive and DefendDefenders shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by us in the preparation of these proposals.

We agree that the prices we have quoted are to be fixed and valid from the date of submission of the proposals and not subject to variation throughout the eventual contract period.

We further agree that we shall follow all the security and other DefendDefenders requirements as will be directed by DefendDefenders in the implementation of the contract.

Signed: ………………………………………………………….

Name: ………………………………..………………………….

Title……………………………………………………………….

For and on behalf of……….……..……………….…………….

(Name of Proposing Firm).

Dated this …………………….…day of ………………………..2025.

(Affix Company seal or official stamp)

**Terms of Reference for the Endline Evaluation of DefendDefenders’ Strategy 2021-2025 and Baseline Study for the new Strategy 2026-2030.**

# 1.0 Introduction

DefendDefenders has been implementing a strategy that runs from 2021 to 2025. The Strategy focuses on enhancing the safety and capacity of human rights defenders (HRDs) for greater resilience and effective fulfillment of their mandates. The 5th year of implementation of this strategy will end in December 2025 and a new Strategy will commence in January 2026. Based on this, DefendDefenders is seeking the services of a consultant to conduct an endline evaluation for the 2021 to 2025 Strategy and a baseline for the successor Strategy 2026-2030. These Terms of Reference (TOR) have been developed to guide the process of solicitation of a consultant to conduct the endline evaluation for the Strategy and baseline for the new Strategy.

## 1.1 Background

DefendDefenders was established in 2005 as the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project and registered as a foreign Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in Uganda. DefendDefenders exists to strengthen the work of Human Rights Defenders in the sub-region by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution and by enhancing their capacity to effectively defend human rights. To achieve this, DefendDefenders’ work has to date focused on protection and security management, capacity building, technology development, as well as advocacy, research, and communications. DefendDefenders establishes and supports national coalitions of HRDs in various countries through which HRDs can come together and claim their rights at the national level.

DefendDefenders serves as the Secretariat of the East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRD-Net) representing thousands of HRDs and their organisations. DefendDefenders draws its membership from Burundi, Djibouti, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia (together with Somaliland), South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Uganda. DefendDefenders also serves as the secretariat for AfricanDefenders (Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network.)

# Our identity

#### Our Vision

*A region in which the human rights of every individual as stipulated in the International Bill of Human Rights[[1]](#footnote-1), are respected and upheld.*

#### Our Mission

*To enhance the safety and capacities of HRDs in the region for greater resilience and effective fulfilment of their mandates.*

#### Organizational Values:

We are individually and collectively guided by the following ideals:

***Integrity*:** We are dedicated to the highest standards of honesty, transparency, and diligence.

***Solidarity and inclusion***: We passionately stand with and promote the safety and wellbeing of HRDs; We champion gender equality and social justice by supporting women, disability rights and other HRDs to catalyze change.

***Excellence***: We commit to the highest degree of professionalism and ethical conduct in all we do.

***Confidentiality****:* We handle confidential information with utmost care and discretion, applying the ’do no harm’ principle in all circumstances.

***Respect*:** We fervently champion respect for fundamental human rights and diversity in humanity.

#### The Philosophy of Our Work

DefendDefenders believes that universal respect for human rights can be achieved. We acknowledge that HRDs play a critical role in promoting and upholding human rights and building a just society. We are however conscious that threats to the safety, security, freedoms, and wellbeing of HRDs; deliberate attempts to delegitimize their work; as well as constraints around resources and capacities hamper the work of HRDs. These circumstances call for solidarity with, and support to such HRDs, especially given that their own rights are violated in such circumstances.

We therefore invest our resources and capabilities towards protecting HRDs, in addition to amplifying their voices, promoting their wellbeing, and building their resilience and capacities to ensure greater effectiveness and sustainability. All our undertakings are guided by universal human rights principles and protocols.

# 2.0 About DefendDefenders Strategy 2021-2025 and 2026-2030

## 2.1 About the Strategy 2021- 2025

DefendDefenders Strategy 2021-2025 *“Enhancing the safety and capacity of HRDs in the region for greater resilience and effective fulfillment of their mandates”* is focusing on three (3) programme objectives and one (1) institutional objective corresponding to: *Protection and Security Management; Advocacy and policy influencing; capacity building for HRDs; and organizational effectiveness*. The strategic objectives that are summarized below:

***Objective 1****: Enhance the availability, accessibility, and utilisation of emergency and medium-term protection services to HRDs at risk.*

1. Enhanced HRD security, resilience and continued operation.

1.1 Improved access to protection support for HRDs at risk.

***Objective 2****: Strengthen policy influence and advocacy engagements at the global, African, sub-regional, and national level for HRD safety.*

2.1 Better policy reform and advocacy engagements with international and African human rights systems, sub-regional economic blocks, national institutions and other relevant stakeholders for HRD safety.

2.2 HRD work, visibility and protection amplified.

2.3 Strengthened strategic impact litigation in order to achieve effective reforms, formulation and implementation of international standards.

***Objective 3****: Improve the capacity of sub-regional networks and national coalitions, organisations and individual HRDs to effectively do their work, and respond and mitigate imminent risks and threats.*

3.1 Strengthened technical and organisational capacity of the sub-regional networks and national coalitions.

3.2 Increased capacity of HRDs and their organisations to effectively respond and mitigate imminent risk.

***Objective 4****: Strengthen DefendDefenders institutional capacity to effectively deliver on its mandate*.

4.1 Increased compliance, efficiency, and effectiveness resulting from consistent application, consolidation of systems, and processes.

4.2 Improved financial management systems and practices, better financial stewardship, and operational efficiency.

4.3 Improved risk management systems, and timely risk detection and mitigation.

4.4 Strengthened governance, leadership, and organisational oversight.

4.5 A motivated, engaged, and performing workforce.

4.6 A diversified and sustainable resource envelop.

4.7 Strong M&E system with better programme quality, efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, learning, and innovation.

4.8 Improved profiling, visibility as a major player in the HRD sphere, innovative communication, and collaboration with stakeholders.

4.9 Better organisational management.

## 2.2 About the Strategy 2026-2030

DefendDefenders 2026-2030 Strategy “***Beyond Resilience***” is a successor strategy to the “*“Enhancing the safety and capacity of HRDs in the region for greater resilience and effective fulfillment of their mandates”.* TheStrategyis focusing on 4 programmatic areas and one institutional development and sustainability. objective. These include: HRD Protection and Safety, Advocacy and Policy Influence, Technology for HRDs, Partnership, Networking & Coalition Building, and Strengthening Institutional Resilience. The strategy objectives and outcomes include:

**Strategic Objective 1:** *To strengthen HRD protection mechanisms and proactive safety strategies to mitigate risks*.

4.1.1 Enhanced HRD safety and security

4.1.2 Strengthened access to emergency and medium-term protection support

4.1.3 Enhanced HRD wellbeing and mental health for HRD resilience and continued operations

4.1.4 Strengthened capacity in physical security and risk management.

**Strategic Objective 2:** *Strengthen advocacy and policy influence to expand civic space, reform restrictive frameworks, and institutionalize proactive protections for HRDs in Africa.*

4.2.1 Strengthened research, evidence collection and documentation on civic space changes for the protection of HRDs

4.2.2 Bolstered advocacy engagements at ACHPR, UNHRC, and the African Union, for HRD protection and safety.

4.2.3 Enhanced visibility, voices and participation of HRDs policy and diplomatic spaces for their safety and protection

4.2.4 Strengthened strategic litigation efforts for effective policy reforms, formulation and implementation of international standards

4.2.5 Enhanced capacity of HRDs in advocacy and policy engagement for protection of civic space and HRD safety

**Strategic Objective 3:** *Strengthen HRDs digital safety and security and leverage technology for advocacy and online safety.*

* + 1. Strengthened digital security capacity of HRDs to safely navigate and continue their engaging in human rights work.
    2. Enhanced access to digital security audits and fix-up support for HRD safety and security.
    3. Increased access to digital security tools and strategies for continued operations
    4. Enhanced digital safety response helpline for accelerated HRD online protection and safety.

**Strategic Objective 4:** *Strengthen and sustain HRD-led partnerships, networks and coalitions for HRD safety.*

* + 1. Strengthened capacity for HRD organisations, coalitions and sub-regional networks to deliver HRD-led protection interventions.
    2. Enhanced HRD access to human rights mechanisms and inter-mechanism dialogues for mentorship of the HRDs.
    3. Augmented regional coordination mechanisms, linking HRD coalitions & networks across the Africa region for greater cross-border collaboration and response capacity.
    4. Strengthened institutional capacity and linkages to resources for human rights organisations and safety of HRDs.

1. **Strategic Objective 5:** *Sustain DefendDefenders as a resilient and adaptive organization to effectively deliver on its mandate.*
   * 1. Better governance, leadership and organizational oversight.
     2. Sustained compliance and effective application of systems and processes.
     3. Improved financial management systems and operational efficiency.
     4. Strengthened risk management systems, timely risk detection and mitigation.
     5. A skilled and motivated workforce delivering efficient protection and safety programs for HRDs.
     6. A diversified and sustainable resource envelop.
     7. A Strong M&E system with better program quality, efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, learning and innovation.
     8. Improved visibility and stakeholder collaboration of DefendDefenders as a major player in the protection of HRD on the Africa continent.

## Purpose of the Evaluation, Evaluation Criteria and objectives.

#### 3.1 Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess progress made in attaining the strategic objectives for the 2021-2025 Strategy based on the OECD/DAC evaluation criteria, and document key lessons learnt for both the Strategy and the baseline point for the 2026-2030 Strategy. The evaluation will identify any challenges that have inhibited progress and recommendations for program sustainability. As an endline focused exercise, the evaluation’s purpose is intended to provide an opportunity for learning and improvement by identifying factors contributing to (or inhibiting) successful delivery of the strategic results and to inform the next strategy.

***3.2 Specific objectives of the Evaluation***

* + 1. *To ascertain the performance on the strategic objectives based on OECD/DAC evaluation criteria.*
    2. *To identify factors that enabled/limited the progress towards attainment of the strategic objectives and results, including emerging opportunities and risks to our existence and programming.*
    3. *To document important lessons learnt so far and recommendations that can be integrated in the implementation of the new Strategy.*
    4. *To establish the starting point (baseline) for the new strategy 2026-2030, “Beyond Resilience”.*

## Methodology

The evaluation methodology/ approach should be gender responsive and integrate the DAC/OECD evaluation criteria. The evaluation shall follow a participatory approach and engage a range of DefendDefenders’ stakeholders in the process. Where feasible, the methodology needs to build on DefendDefenders’ existing MEL practices and the strategy MTR . The evaluation methodology should enable collection of both qualitative and quantitative data to minimize limitations arising from a single sided design. The consultant should propose an appropriate evaluation design, sampling and data collection methodology, data analysis and feedback methodology in line with human-rights and human rights defenders programming context.

## Deliverables

* + An inception report detailing a comprehensive process of the endline and baseline evaluations, feasible time frames and team accreditations.
  + Progress reports
  + Draft Endline Evaluation report for 2021-2025 Strategy and a Draft Baseline Report for the 2026-2030 Strategy
  + Presentation of the findings
  + Final Strategy (2021-2025) Evaluation report and Final Strategy (2026-2030) Baseline Report

## Evaluation team composition and competencies

The evaluators should meet the following requirements:

### Individually:

* The Team leader should possess a master’s degree in M&E, project planning, Social Sciences or development Studies with experience in human rights programming.
* Proven experience of conducting similar assignments, including in human rights/human rights defenders’ contexts.
* Expertise and affinity with gender-responsive evaluations.
* Proficiency in quantitative and qualitative methods of data collection, analysis and presentation.
* Excellent report writing and analytical skills, including proven ability to form concise, actionable recommendations
* Cultural sensitivity and good communication skills.
* Strong remote facilitation and coordination skills.

### Collectively:

* Knowledge of and experience in human rights and human rights defender’s work.
* Understanding of the sub-regional, regional and international human rights/ human rights defenders’ mechanisms and systems.
* Multi-lingual team with capabilities in English and French. Kiswahili and Arabic will be an added advantage.
* A diverse team composition with experience in institutional development, fundraising, governance, finance and risk management, and human resources management.

# Evaluation responsibilities and management arrangements

The overall leadership for the evaluation will be on the Director of Program and Administration. However, the consultant will directly work with the Senior M&E Expert as the evaluation Manager for the assignment. DefendDefenders’ management team will work as a reference team for the exercise.

# Consultant Selection Process

DefendDefenders is requesting competitive proposals from qualified firms or institutions interested in conducting the evaluations for the Strategy 2021-2025 evaluation and baseline for the Strategy 2026-2030. A contract between DefendDefenders and the consultant will stipulate the general terms of cooperation for the evaluation.

The evaluators’ proposal should contain:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proposal | Points allocated (%) |
| **Technical understanding and Methodology** | **50** |
| * Understanding and interpretation of the TORs. * A proposed (gender-responsive, utilization focused) methodology and approach for the evaluation. * Clear understanding of the scope of the assignment | 25 |
| * Clear identification of the main risks and corporate risk management approach associated with the successful completion of the evaluation. * Corporate system of quality control & safeguarding evaluation quality standards. | 15 |
| * Feasibility of the workplan and deliverables | 10 |
| **Team qualifications and experience** | **25** |
| * Academic qualifications of team members and team leader * Team leader’s experience in conducting strategy evaluations including design and implementation. | 8 |
| * Team’s evaluation experience and expertise in relevant thematic   areas HRs, HRD protection & security management and advocacy  with regional and international mechanisms. | 10 |
| * Team’s experience and expertise in regional programmes and countries * Team’s professional experience and expertise in statistical analysis and sampling, development of quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, data collection management, data analysis and visualization, report writing and remote facilitation of evaluations. * Team’s intercultural communication and languages especially English and French | 7 |
| **Fees and costs** | **25** |
| * Lump sum budgets for the evaluation * Detailed budget (fees and estimated costs) for the evaluation * Concise budget narrative | 25 |

1. **Reference documents**
   * DefendDefenders Strategy 2021-2025
   * DefendDefenders Strategy 2026-2030
   * DefendDefenders 2021-2025 Strategy MTR

1. International Bill of Human Rights is a collective encompassing: the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)