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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Assignment Title

Terms of Reference (ToR) for Engagement of a Pool of Ten (10) ASPIRE Organizational Capacity Assessment Facilitators for SUCCESS Programme Cohorts 2 and 3

1. Background

Mercy Corps, in partnership with the Institute for Promotion of Civil Society (IPCS), is implementing the **Supporting Civil Society Empowerment in South Sudan (SUCCESS)** Programme, a four-year European Union-funded initiative aimed at strengthening Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) as independent actors of governance and development in South Sudan. The programme supports a diverse range of civil society actors, including community-based organizations, national NGOs, faith-based organizations, women-led organizations, youth-focused organizations, and civil society networks through capacity strengthening, technical assistance, mentorship, and grant support.

A key component of the SUCCESS Programme is the implementation of Mercy Corps' **Appreciative Self-Directed Pathway for Institutional Reflection and Empowerment (ASPIRE)** methodology, a participatory organizational capacity assessment approach that enables CSOs to identify strengths, assess capacity gaps, prioritize institutional development needs, and strengthen ownership of their growth and sustainability processes. The assessment focuses on six core organizational domains: Leadership, Programs, External Relations, Finance, Administration, and Logistics.

Under Activities 1.1.2 and 1.1.3 of the SUCCESS Programme, participating CSOs are required to undertake ASPIRE organizational self-assessments and develop multi-year Capacity Development Plans (CDPs) to guide future capacity strengthening interventions, technical assistance, mentorship, and grant investments. Following the successful completion of the cohorts' selections for capacity building, the programme is preparing to conduct ASPIRE assessments for approximately 80 CSOs under Cohorts 2 and 3 across South Sudan.

Given the scale of the exercise, the geographical spread of participating organizations, and the specialized facilitation required for the ASPIRE process, Mercy Corps seeks to engage a pool of qualified facilitators to support the delivery of organizational assessments, consensus-building workshops, prioritization exercises, and Capacity Development Planning sessions. The engagement of external facilitators will support timely implementation, ensure consistency in the application of the ASPIRE methodology, strengthen the quality of assessment outputs, and enable Mercy Corps and IPCS to focus on technical oversight, quality assurance, and follow-up capacity-strengthening interventions.

2. Purpose of the Assignment

The purpose of this assignment is to engage qualified facilitators to support the implementation of the **Appreciative Self-Directed Pathway for Institutional Reflection and Empowerment (ASPIRE)** organizational capacity assessment process for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) participating in Cohorts 2 and 3 of the **SUCCESS Programme**. Working under the technical guidance of Mercy Corps and IPCS, the facilitators will support the delivery of ASPIRE assessments, facilitate group assessment workshops, guide prioritization exercises, and assist participating CSOs to develop Capacity Development Plans (CDPs). The assignment will generate evidence-based assessment findings to inform organizational strengthening, technical assistance, mentoring, and grant support interventions under the SUCCESS Programme.





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Specifically, the assignment seeks to:

- Facilitate implementation of the ASPIRE organizational capacity assessment methodology.
- Support CSOs to identify organizational strengths, gaps, opportunities, and priority capacity development needs.
- Build consensus among organizational stakeholders on assessment findings and development priorities.
- Support participating CSOs to develop realistic, actionable, and organization-specific multi-year Capacity Development Plans (CDPs).
- Ensure quality documentation of assessment findings, lessons learned, and organizational priorities.
- Strengthen organizational ownership of institutional development through a participatory and self-reflective assessment process.

3. Assignment Objectives

General Objective: To facilitate the implementation of the ASPIRE organizational capacity assessment process for selected CSOs under Cohorts 2 and 3 of the SUCCESS Programme and support the development of evidence-based Capacity Development Plans (CDPs) that guide institutional strengthening interventions.

Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the assignment are to:

1. Facilitate orientation and sensitization sessions on the ASPIRE methodology and assessment process.
2. Facilitate participatory ASPIRE Group Assessment workshops across the six organizational capacity domains (Leadership, Programs, External Relations, Finance, Administration, and Logistics).
3. Support CSOs to identify organizational strengths, weaknesses, risks, opportunities, and priority capacity gaps through evidence-based discussions and consensus scoring.
4. Lead prioritization exercises and support the development of practical, organization-specific Capacity Development Plans (CDPs).
5. Document assessment findings, agreed priorities, lessons learned, and recommendations to support future capacity strengthening interventions.
6. Produce high-quality assessment reports and support documentation in accordance with Mercy Corps and SUCCESS Programme requirements.

4. Scope of Work

The selected facilitator(s) will work under the supervision of Mercy Corps and in close coordination with IPCS to support the implementation of the ASPIRE organizational capacity assessment process for selected CSOs under Cohorts 2 and 3 of the SUCCESS Programme.

During the **Preparation and Inception Phase**, facilitators will participate in orientation and calibration sessions organized by Mercy Corps, review relevant programme and ASPIRE documents, coordinate assessment schedules with assigned CSOs, and prepare the necessary facilitation and documentation materials required for the assessment process.





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During the **Assessment Phase**, facilitators will conduct orientation sessions and facilitate ASPIRE Group Assessment Workshops using the approved ASPIRE tools and methodology. They will guide participants through structured discussions across the six organizational capacity domains, facilitate consensus scoring, encourage inclusive participation, and support organizations in identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, risks, and priority capacity development needs. Facilitators will document key discussions, evidence, scores, and recommendations emerging from the assessment process.

Managing Constructive Reflection: Supporting the teams to dig deeper into the why behind their operational challenges (e.g., if communication or financial visibility is low, prompting them to explore how that affects overall project flexibility)

During the **Capacity Development Planning Phase**, facilitators will support participating organizations to analyze assessment findings, prioritize critical organizational capacity gaps, and develop practical, evidence-based, and organization-specific Capacity Development Plans (CDPs). This process will include defining capacity-strengthening objectives, activities, timelines, responsible people, and indicators for monitoring progress, and securing organizational validation of the final plans.

During the **Reporting and Documentation Phase**, facilitators will prepare and submit assessment reports, completed ASPIRE tools, workshop records, prioritization matrices, and draft and final Capacity Development Plans for assigned CSOs. Facilitators will also participate in debriefing sessions with Mercy Corps and IPCS and contribute to consolidated learning and reporting processes.

Throughout the assignment, facilitators shall apply participatory, inclusive, gender-sensitive, and conflict-sensitive approaches, maintain confidentiality of assessment information, comply with Mercy Corps safeguarding and data protection requirements, and ensure that all assessment findings are informed by organizational self-reflection and consensus-building rather than external evaluation.

5. Expected Deliverables

The selected facilitator(s) shall submit an **Inception Report** outlining their understanding of the assignment, workplan, methodology, and assessment schedule. Each of the 10 facilitators will be assigned 8 CSOs to provide completed Individual Assessment data, Individual Assessment Analysis form, **Group Assessment form with notes**, signed workshop attendance sheets, an **Assessment Narrative Report**, and a completed **ASPIRE Prioritization Matrix** highlighting key organizational strengths, weaknesses, capacity gaps, priorities, and recommendations.

Facilitators shall also support each CSO to develop and finalize an organization-specific **Capacity Development Plan (CDP)** outlining agreed capacity-strengthening priorities, activities, timelines, responsibilities, resource requirements, and performance indicators.

Mentorship & Technical Resource Linkage Map: A brief layout mapping out the exact internal technical expertise or external mentorship networks required to help the CSO fulfill its CDP objectives

Upon completion of all assigned assessments, facilitators shall submit a **Consolidated Assessment Report** summarizing overall findings, common trends, lessons learned, and recommendations, together with a clean **Excel dataset** and all completed assessment tools, reports, and supporting documentation. All deliverables shall be submitted in editable electronic formats and meet Mercy Corps and SUCCESS Programme quality standards.

6. Deliverable Schedule





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The assignment will be implemented over **Eight (8) working days**, from **28 October 2026 to 6th November 2026**.

This includes:

- Two (2) days of detailed facilitator orientation and calibration session
- One (1) day for introductory/onboarding session for the CSOs
- One (1) day facilitation of individual assessment
- One (1) day for group discussion and CDP development (1 day per CSO *80 CSOs by 10 facilitators) = 8days
- Two (2) days for Report writing and 1 day for debriefing.
- One (1) day for debrief.

Facilitators will participate in a two-days training and briefing session organized by Mercy Corps and IPCS, followed by an assessment of approximately one CSO per day over an eight-day period. During the assessments, facilitators will conduct group assessment workshops, facilitate consensus scoring and prioritization exercises, support the development of Capacity Development Plans (CDPs), and document findings and recommendations. On the final day, facilitators will consolidate and submit all completed ASPIRE tools, assessment reports, attendance records, CDPs, datasets, and supporting documentation.

All deliverables shall be submitted to Mercy Corps and IPCS in accordance with the agreed schedule and no later than the final day of the assignment unless otherwise approved by Mercy Corps in writing.

Assignment Duration: 8 Working Days (**Expected Start Date:** 28 October 2026 - **Expected End Date:** 6 November 2026)

7. Methodology

The assignment will be implemented using Mercy Corps **ASPIRE (Appreciative Self-Directed Pathway for Institutional Reflection and Empowerment)** methodology and guided by the ASPIRE User Guide and Group Assessment Tool. The assigned Facilitators will coordinate the Individual Assessment process and provide preliminary assessment data for participating CSOs.

Facilitators will lead participatory Group Assessment workshops, present assessment findings, facilitate evidence-based discussions across the six ASPIRE domains, and support participants to reach consensus on organizational capacity scores. Facilitators will also guide organizations through prioritization exercises, identify key capacity gaps, and support the development of practical and organization-specific Capacity Development Plans (CDPs).

All findings, priorities, and draft CDPs will be reviewed and validated with Mercy Corps, IPCS, and participating organizations to ensure accuracy, consistency, and alignment with the objectives of the SUCCESS Programme. Final assessment reports and output will be submitted following completion of each assessment.

8. Geographic Coverage and Approach for Reach to all CSO

The assignment will support Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) participating in Cohorts 2 and 3 of the SUCCESS Programme, which operates across the ten states of South Sudan and the three Administrative Areas. Participating organizations are located in various counties and states across the country and include community-based organizations, national NGOs, faith-based organizations, women-led organizations, youth-focused organizations, and civil society networks and coalitions. The SUCCESS Programme is implemented in Central Equatoria, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria, Jonglei, Unity, Upper Nile, Lakes,





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Warrap, Western Bahr el Ghazal, Northern Bahr el Ghazal States, Abyei Administrative Area, Ruweng Administrative Area, and Greater Pibor Administrative Area.

Given the geographical spread of participating organizations and the need for cost-effective implementation, the majority of ASPIRE Group Assessment and Capacity Development Planning sessions will be conducted virtually through online platforms, while selected assessments will be conducted in-person in Juba where organizations are based in or able to travel to Juba. Facilitators are therefore expected to be capable of effectively facilitating both virtual and face-to-face assessment sessions while ensuring full participation, quality discussions, and adherence to the ASPIRE methodology.

The final allocation of organizations and assessment modalities will be determined by Mercy Corps and IPCS and communicated to the selected facilitators during the assignment inception phase.

9. Required Qualifications and Competencies

The assignment requires experienced facilitators with expertise in organizational capacity assessment, institutional strengthening, partnerships and civil society development. Applicants should possess a minimum of a **bachelor's degree in organizational development**, Development Studies, Social Sciences, Business Administration, Public Administration, Governance, Monitoring and Evaluation, or a related field. Postgraduate qualifications will be an added advantage.

Facilitators should have at least **five (5) years of relevant professional experience** in organizational assessments, institutional strengthening, governance, capacity building, or civil society development, with demonstrated experience working with NGOs, CSOs, CBOs, or development partners. Experience facilitating participatory workshops, consensus-building processes, strategic planning, and capacity assessments is highly desirable. Previous experience in South Sudan or similar fragile and conflict-affected contexts, as well as familiarity with ASPIRE or similar organizational assessment tools, will be an asset.

Applicants must demonstrate strong facilitation, analytical, communication, report-writing, stakeholder engagement, and problem-solving skills. They should be able to manage diverse groups, support participatory decision-making, and translate assessment findings into practical Capacity Development Plans. Facilitators must also demonstrate professionalism, integrity, confidentiality, and commitment to safeguarding, gender equality, social inclusion, and conflict-sensitive programming throughout the assignment.

10. Reporting and Supervision

The selected facilitator(s) will report directly to the **SUCCESS Program Manager** and will be responsible for delivering all assignment outputs in accordance with Mercy Corps' quality standards and programme requirements.

Throughout the assignment, facilitators will work closely with the **Systems Strengthening Manager, MEL Team, and IPCS project manager & Capacity Building Officer** to ensure consistent application of the ASPIRE methodology, quality assurance of assessment findings, and effective development of Capacity Development Plans (CDPs).

The SUCCESS Program Manager will provide overall oversight and approve deliverables, while the Systems Strengthening Manager, MEL Team, and IPCS staff will provide technical guidance, data management support, quality review, coordination, and technical inputs throughout the assessment process.

All reports, assessment tools, Capacity Development Plans, datasets, and related outputs shall be submitted through the SUCCESS Program Manager for review and approval before final acceptance.





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11. Budget and Payment Arrangements

The Facilitation will be delivered within a period of Eight (8) working days. Facilitators will be engaged and compensated in accordance with Mercy Corps procurement and consultancy policies. The approved budget for this assignment will be determined and managed separately through Mercy Corps internal financial approval processes.

12. Ethical Considerations, Safeguarding and Confidentiality

Facilitators shall comply with all Mercy Corps safeguarding, PSEA, child safeguarding, data protection, and code of conduct requirements throughout the assignment. All information and data obtained during the assessment process shall be treated as confidential and used solely for purposes of the assignment. Facilitators shall conduct all activities in a professional, participatory, inclusive, gender-sensitive, conflict-sensitive, and culturally appropriate manner that promotes safe, respectful, and equitable participation while upholding the principles and objectives of the SUCCESS Programme.

All reports, assessment tools, Capacity Development Plans (CDPs), datasets, and materials produced under this assignment shall remain the property of Mercy Corps. Facilitators shall not reproduce, distribute, publish, or use any assignment-related information without prior written approval from Mercy Corps. All deliverables must be submitted in editable electronic formats upon completion of the assignment.

13. Selection Criteria and Application Requirements

Mercy Corps seeks to engage a **pool of ten (10) qualified facilitators** to support ASPIRE organizational capacity assessments and Capacity Development Planning for Cohorts 2 and 3 of the SUCCESS Programme. Applications will be evaluated based on relevant academic qualifications, experience in organizational capacity assessment and institutional strengthening, facilitation of participatory workshops and adult learning processes, understanding of civil society development and governance, experience working with NGOs, CSOs, and donor-funded programmes, knowledge of the South Sudan context, and demonstrated facilitation, analytical, communication, and report-writing skills. Experience using ASPIRE or similar assessment methodologies will be an added advantage.

Interested applicants should submit an updated **Curriculum Vitae (CV)**, a **Cover Letter** (maximum two pages) to **ss-csomerccorps.org** **not later than 16th October 2026**, outlining their suitability and availability, and contact details for at least **two professional referees**. Copies of academic and professional qualifications may be requested. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis, and only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

