

CALL FOR CONSULTANCY

Terms of Reference (ToR)

**Rapid Assessment and Transition Support for the South Sudan Joint Response (SSJR)
Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) System**

Commissioning Agency	Help a Child, on behalf of the SSJR Coordination Unit
Assignment Type	Individual consultant or firm (team approach encouraged)
Geographic Scope	Greater Pibor Administrative Area, Malakal, Abyei or Akobo and Rubkona
Level of Effort	29–36 working days over approximately 6–7 weeks
Application Deadline	30th July 2026
Submission Email	info@hacsouthsudan.org
Email Subject Line	"Consultancy – SSJR Joint AAP System Rapid Assessment/Review"

How to Apply

Interested consultants, individuals, or firms should submit a technical proposal, financial proposal, CV(s), two relevant work samples, and three professional references to info@hacsouthsudan.org by 30 July 2026, using the subject line "Consultancy – SSJR Joint AAP System Rapid Assessment/Review." Full requirements are set out in Section 16 below.



1. Background

The 2024–2026 South Sudan Joint Response (SSJR) is a multi-partner humanitarian programme implemented by seven Dutch Relief Alliance (DRA) partners in collaboration with seven national partners. The programme provides emergency assistance and resilience-building support to conflict- and crisis-affected populations in Abyei Administrative Area, Akobo, Malakal, Mayendit, Melut, Greater Pibor Administrative Area, Rubkona, and Tonj North.

Since 2019, SSJR has maintained a joint Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) architecture comprising community-based complaints and feedback mechanisms (CBCFM), structured community engagement modalities, and field-level information-sharing processes. This system has enabled communities to access safe, accessible, and trusted channels to ask questions, provide feedback, and raise complaints, including sensitive concerns related to safeguarding and sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA).

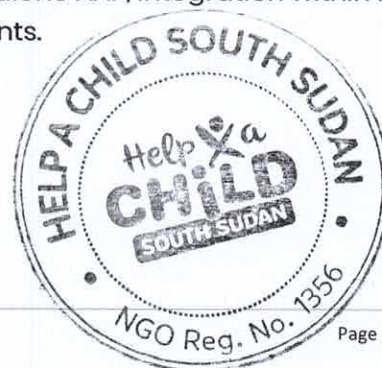
As the programme enters its next phase, the joint AAP arrangement will be phased out due to funding realignment and performance considerations. AAP responsibilities will therefore devolve to individual partners, who will be expected to operationalise AAP independently in line with their organisational structures and operational contexts. Partners may adopt different arrangements, including standalone AAP functions, integration within existing MEAL systems, or hybrid models suited to their needs.

All arrangements must meet minimum AAP standards aligned with IASC commitments and Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS) requirements. This consultancy will support the transition by assessing the performance of the joint system, documenting lessons learned, and providing practical guidance for future partner-managed AAP arrangements.

2. Purpose of the Assignment

The purpose of this consultancy is to:

1. Assess the performance of the joint AAP system across SSJR implementation areas, with particular attention to design, coordination, accessibility, and use of feedback, and provide prioritised recommendations for improvement.
2. Document key lessons learned from the design, coordination, and implementation of the joint AAP system since 2019, for organisational learning by the Lead Agency and SSJR partners.
3. Provide partners with practical and flexible guidance to establish, strengthen, or adapt their own AAP systems, including options for standalone AAP, integration within MEAL systems, or other context-appropriate arrangements.



3. Specific Objectives

The consultancy will aim to:

1. Map existing joint and partner-specific AAP arrangements in selected SSJR locations.
2. Assess community perceptions of the accessibility, safety, confidentiality, and usefulness of feedback and complaint channels, including for sensitive issues.
3. Examine how feedback and complaints are collected, recorded, analysed, referred, and responded to, and how learning is used to adapt programming.
4. Identify barriers and gaps affecting women, men, girls, boys, persons with disabilities, and other vulnerable groups.
5. Provide clear, feasible recommendations to strengthen the design, coordination, and implementation of the joint AAP system, including strategy, tools, roles, and minimum standards.
6. Document key lessons learned from the joint AAP system since 2019, including what worked, what did not, and why.
7. Develop practical, flexible guidance for partners to choose and implement an appropriate AAP model, including standalone, integrated, or hybrid options.
8. Assess each partner's current organisational capacity, resources, and readiness to manage AAP independently, and identify support needs.
9. Identify coordination mechanisms or protocols needed between partners to ensure continuity of AAP for communities served by multiple partners.

Objectives 1–4 correspond to the performance assessment (Section 4.1–4.5); objectives 5–9 correspond to the lessons-learned and transition component (Section 4.6–4.7).

4. Key Assessment Questions

The consultant will refine these jointly with the SSJR Coordination Unit, but must address at minimum the following:

4.1 Design and Coverage

- What AAP and community feedback mechanisms currently exist across the SSJR locations, both joint and partner-specific?
- To what extent do these align with IASC AAP commitments, CHS, and cluster AAP guidance?

4.2 Access, Inclusion, and Trust

- Are feedback and complaint channels known, accessible, and acceptable to different groups by sex, age, disability, and other diversity factors?
- How do community members perceive the confidentiality, safety, and fairness of the mechanisms?
- How do community members perceive the transition to partner-managed AAP?
- What communication strategies would be needed to help communities understand and access new partner-specific mechanisms?



4.3 Process and Quality

- How is feedback and complaint data collected, categorised, recorded, and securely stored?
- How are sensitive cases such as SEA and child protection concerns referred and followed up?
- How timely and consistent is the response to feedback and complaints?

4.4 Use of Data and Learning

- How is feedback data analysed and shared among partners?
- How are findings used to adjust programming and improve communication with communities?

4.5 Coordination and Joint Working

- How is the joint AAP system coordinated among SSJR partners, including roles, responsibilities, and information-sharing?
- What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the joint approach compared to individual partner systems?

4.6 Lessons Learned and Transition to Partner-Managed AAP

- What have been the critical success factors and main challenges shaping the joint AAP system since 2019, and what explains them?
- Which elements of the system add the most value and should be preserved, replicated, or adapted?
- What does each partner's current organisational arrangement for AAP look like, and what are the implications for sustainability?
- What are the practical implications for partners that wish to continue AAP as a standalone function or integrate it within existing MEAL systems?
- What are the key capacity gaps in staffing, skills, resources, and systems that partners face?
- What support (technical, financial, or mentoring) would partners need to implement their chosen AAP approach effectively?
- What resourcing, staffing, tools, and skills would each partner realistically need to establish, strengthen, or adapt a functioning AAP system?
- What minimum standards, templates, or shared tools from the joint system could be transferred to partners for reuse?
- What practical, sequenced first steps should partners with limited AAP or MEAL capacity take, versus partners with more developed systems?

4.7 Cost-Effectiveness and Value for Money

- What are the estimated costs and resource implications of the joint AAP system compared to potential partner-managed approaches?
- What economies of scale or efficiencies were achieved through the joint system that partners should consider replicating or adapting?



5. Scope of Work

5.1 Geographic and Organisational Scope

The assessment will focus on selected SSJR locations: Greater Pibor Administrative Area, Malakal, Rubkona, and either Abyei Administrative Area or Akobo, as relevant to implementation coverage and partner presence. It will also include the main SSJR implementing partners and their local partners active in these locations.

The transition component will include structured lessons-learned consultations with the SSJR Lead Agency and all 14 SSJR partners (see Annex A), including those outside the selected field locations. It will also include light mapping of each partner's current AAP arrangements and, where relevant, MEAL systems, to inform realistic transition guidance and identify how partners currently organise AAP.

The light mapping will cover:

- organisational structure and staffing for AAP/MEAL;
- existing AAP/MEAL policies, SOPs, and tools;
- current budget and resource allocation for AAP;
- feedback and complaints data flows and management systems;
- existing partnerships or referral arrangements relevant to AAP;
- staff capacity and training status in AAP/MEAL; and
- current challenges and constraints in managing AAP.

The consultancy will also provide recommendations for communicating the transition to communities and for maintaining or adapting referral pathways during and after the transition.

5.2 Core Tasks

The consultant will:

- conduct a desk review of SSJR proposals, AAP/CBCFM guidelines, previous perception or feedback surveys, partner SOPs, anonymised complaints logs/databases, and relevant AAP/MEAL documents (indicative list in Annex B);
- develop a concise assessment framework aligned with AAP standards;
- develop data collection tools, including KII guides, FGD guides, short perception survey tools, and a structured lessons-learned/reflection guide;
- conduct key informant interviews with partner staff, community leaders, and AAP focal points;
- conduct focus group discussions with diverse groups of community members, disaggregated by sex, age, disability, and other relevant criteria;
- observe existing feedback mechanisms such as help desks, suggestion boxes, and hotlines;
- facilitate a structured lessons-learned exercise with the Lead Agency and partners using an adapted After Action Review approach;
- conduct a light mapping of each partner's current AAP and, where relevant, MEAL arrangements;
- analyse and triangulate data across methods, locations, and partners; and
- facilitate a validation session with SSJR partners on preliminary findings, lessons learned, and transition recommendations.

6. Methodology

The consultant is expected to use a mixed-methods, participatory approach that ensures inclusion of diverse age, gender, and other groups, and that adheres to ethical, safeguarding, and cultural standards. The methodology should include desk review, qualitative methods, simple quantitative perception questions where feasible, a structured lessons-learned process, and light mapping of partner arrangements.

The lessons-learned component should use an adapted After Action Review methodology, addressing the following:

- What was expected to happen?
- What actually happened?
- What worked well and why?
- What could have been done better, and how?
- What should be preserved, adapted, or discontinued?

All tools and approaches must respect confidentiality and data protection, avoid raising expectations that cannot be met, be adapted to local language and literacy levels, ensure informed consent and voluntary participation, and align with safeguarding and do-no-harm principles.

The consultant will work with local translators and field guides provided by SSJR partners. Tools will be translated into Arabic, Dinka, Nuer, Shilluk, and Murle, and back-translated for quality assurance where feasible.

Data Quality Assurance

Data quality will be ensured through triangulation across methods, sources, and locations; regular debriefs with the SSJR Coordination Unit; validation of findings with partners before finalisation; and transparent documentation of limitations.

7. Deliverables

The consultant will produce the following deliverables:

7.1 Inception Report

Maximum 10–15 pages, including:

- refined objectives and questions;
- proposed methodology, sampling, and tools, including the lessons-learned approach; and
- workplan and field schedule.

7.2 Data Collection Tools

- KII guides;
- FGD guides;
- short perception survey tools; and
- a structured lessons-learned/reflection guide, in English and adapted where needed.



7.3 Debrief / Preliminary Findings Presentation

A PowerPoint presentation or brief note presented to SSJR partners covering:

- assessment findings;
- emerging lessons; and
- initial options for partner-managed AAP

7.4 Final Assessment Report

Maximum 25 pages, excluding annexes, including:

- executive summary;
- background;
- methodology and limitations;
- findings organised around the key domains of design, access, process, use of data, and coordination;
- anonymised case examples or community quotes; and
- clear, prioritised recommendations, including implications for transition to partner-managed AAP, presented as options rather than prescriptive models.

7.5 Lessons Learned Brief

A standalone document of maximum 8–10 pages covering:

- what worked well and what did not in the joint AAP system since 2019, and why;
- key institutional, coordination, and resourcing lessons; and
- elements of the joint system worth preserving, replicating, or adapting.

7.6 Partner-Level AAP Establishment and Strengthening Package

A practical package including:

- prioritised recommendations and a minimum-standards checklist;
- dual guidance for partners who wish to maintain AAP as a standalone function and for those who wish to integrate AAP within existing MEAL systems;
- reusable tools and templates adapted from the joint system;
- sequenced guidance by priority and feasibility; and
- a user guide for long-term use by partners.

The package will include:

- decision-making framework for choosing an AAP approach;
- standalone AAP option guidance, tools, and resource requirements;
- integrated AAP–MEAL option guidance, tools, and resource requirements;
- minimum standards and indicators;
- sample tools, templates, and SOPs;
- capacity-building and resourcing requirements for each option; and
- step-by-step action plan template.

7.7 Action Plan Matrix

A structured matrix by partner showing:

- recommended action;
- organisational option chosen by the partner;
- responsible unit or role;
- suggested timeline; and
- priority level.

8. Duration and Level of Effort

The assignment is expected to take approximately 29–36 working days over 5–7 weeks, including:

Phase	Level of Effort
Desk review and inception	5 days
Field data collection	15–18 days
Lessons-learned consultations and light mapping	2–3 days
Analysis, validation, and reporting	7–10 days

Exact timing will be agreed during contracting. Applicants should note this in their proposed workplan and flag any scheduling constraints (e.g. rainy-season access, national holidays) that could affect the timeline above.

9. Payment Terms and Schedule

Payments will be made in USD, in line with Help a Child's standard consultancy payment terms, against submission and written approval of the corresponding deliverable(s) by the SSJR Coordination Unit. The indicative schedule below is a starting point for the financial proposal; consultants may propose an alternative structure provided it remains linked to deliverables rather than time elapsed.

Tranche	Trigger	Share of Contract Value
1	Signed contract and submission of an approved Inception Report (Section 7.1)	30%
2	Submission of an approved Final Assessment Report and Lessons Learned Brief (Sections 7.4–7.5), including an approved Partner-Level AAP Package and Action Plan Matrix (Sections 7.6–7.7)	70%

Applicable withholding tax will be deducted at source in accordance with South Sudanese tax regulations and Help a Child's finance policy.

10. Management and Coordination

The consultant will be contracted by Help a Child. Overall technical oversight will be provided by the SSJR Coordination Unit. Field-level coordination and logistical support will be provided by SSJR partners in each location. The Lead Agency will facilitate consultant access to the selected

locations, including AAP/MEAL focal points for the lessons-learned and partner-level transition components.

The consultant will provide:

- weekly progress updates via email;
- a brief oral update to the Coordination Unit every 3–5 days during fieldwork; and
- immediate notification of any significant issues or delays.

A transition steering group comprising the Lead Agency, Help a Child, and 2–3 partner representatives will be established to guide the consultancy and review key deliverables.

11. Required Profile of the Consultant

The consultant or consulting team should have:

- an advanced degree in social sciences, humanitarian studies, development, MEAL, or a related field;
- 5–7 years of experience in MEAL, AAP, or protection in humanitarian contexts;
- demonstrated experience in AAP, CBCFM, or community perception assessments;
- strong qualitative and mixed-methods research skills;
- knowledge of AAP frameworks, including IASC AAP, CHS, PSEA, and safeguarding;
- experience in organisational learning or after-action reviews;
- experience in organisational capacity assessment or systems strengthening;
- experience supporting flexible AAP arrangements;
- excellent writing and communication skills in English; and
- Arabic or relevant local language skills as an asset.

Strong facilitation skills and experience managing sensitive discussions are also required.

12. Team Composition

A team approach is encouraged, for example, a lead consultant supported by field supervisors and research assistants. The financial proposal should clearly indicate the roles and daily rates of all team members.

13. Ethical and Safeguarding Considerations

The consultant must:

- comply with relevant ethical and safeguarding standards, including PSEA and child safeguarding policies;
- obtain informed consent and ensure voluntary participation;
- access only anonymised complaints data and not identify complainants;
- follow agreed data protection protocols;

- not initiate new investigations into specific complaints;
- maintain confidentiality and apply do-no-harm principles;
- assess transition-related risks to communities and recommend mitigation measures;
- immediately report any serious protection or SEAH concerns through agreed referral pathways; and
- establish a simple feedback mechanism for partners to provide input on the consultancy process and interim findings.

All tools and processes must be culturally appropriate and adapted to local languages and literacy levels.

14. Key Risks and Mitigation Measures

#	Major Risk	Mitigation Measures
1	Access constraints (insecurity, seasonal road/river conditions)	Coordinate with partners for security clearances and timing; use remote data collection alternatives where necessary; build schedule buffers into the workplan.
2	Sensitive transition conversations	Ensure confidentiality and psychological safety; use skilled, experienced facilitators; conduct sensitive sessions in smaller, trusted settings.
3	Community expectations	Clearly communicate the purpose, scope, and limitations of the assessment before data collection begins.
4	Data quality	Triangulate findings, use multiple methods, and validate results with partners before finalisation.
5	Partner availability during a busy transition period	Agree consultation windows with the Coordination Unit at the contracting stage; confirm focal points in advance.

15. Intellectual Property and Data Ownership

All data, tools, and deliverables produced under this consultancy will remain the property of SSJR/Help a Child and may be used and adapted by SSJR partners without restriction. The consultant may use anonymised findings for professional publications only with prior written permission.

16. Application Process

Interested consultants, individuals, or firms are invited to submit:

Technical Proposal

Maximum 10 pages, outlining:

- understanding of the assignment, including the flexible, options-based approach to partner-managed AAP;



- proposed methodology, including the lessons-learned approach and partner-level AAP establishment/strengthening component;
- work plan; and
- team composition.

Financial Proposal

Including:

- daily rate;
- estimated field costs such as transport, accommodation, and translation/interpretation; and
- estimated total cost, clearly itemised.

Additional Documents

- CV(s) of the lead consultant and key team members;
- two relevant samples of previous work, such as AAP/CFM assessments or reviews and/or MEAL system reviews; and
- contact details of three professional references.

Evaluation Criteria

Criterion	Weight
Understanding of the assignment and context	25%
Methodological approach and feasibility	30%
Team qualifications and experience	20%
Value for money	15%
Samples of previous work	10%
Total	100%

SUBMIT APPLICATIONS BY 30 JULY 2026

info@hacsouthsudan.org

Subject line: "Consultancy – SSJR Joint AAP System Rapid Assessment/Review"

The selection will consider the overall quality of the proposal relative to cost, with an emphasis on the consultant's understanding of the transition challenge and the practical utility of the proposed deliverables.



Annex A: SSJR Partner Organisations

#	Partners	DRA/National	Location
1	Help a Child	DRA Partner	Tonj North and Greater Pibor Administrative Area
2	ACROSS	National Partner for Help a Child	Greater Pibor Administrative Area
3	ZoA Dorcas	DRA Partner	Tonj North and Greater Pibor Administrative Area
4	WDG	National Partner for ZoA Dorcas	Tonj North
5	Plan International	DRA Partner	Malakal and Melut
6	TearFund	DRA Partner	Rubkona and Mayendit
7	Coalition for Humanity	National Partner for Plan International in Malakal and Melut. National partner for TearFund in Rubkona	Malakal, Melut and Rubkona
8	War Child Holland	DRA Partner	Malakal and Melut
9	WOCO	National partner for War Child Holland	Malakal and Melut
10	CARE International	DRA Partner	Greater Pibor Administrative Area
11	UNIDOR	National partner for CARE International	Rubkona
12	Save the Children	DRA Partner	Abyei and Akobo
13	CEF	National Partner for Save the Children	Abyei
14	ALO	National Partner for Save the Children	Akobo



Annex B: Indicative List of Documents for Desk Review

- SSJR programme proposal and logframe(s)
- Joint AAP/CBCFM strategy, guidelines, and SOPs
- Previous AAP/CBCFM perception or feedback surveys
- Partner-specific AAP/MEAL SOPs, where available
- Anonymised complaints and feedback logs/databases
- Prior AAP or CBCFM assessments/reviews (SSJR or partner-level)
- Relevant cluster or IASC AAP guidance referenced by the programme

[To be finalised and shared with the selected consultant at the contracting stage, alongside access arrangements for anonymised data.]

