

Call for proposals

External review of the International Centre for Asset Recovery (ICAR)

March 2023

Table of contents

1 Technical information	1
2 Background	1
3 Context	2
4 Objectives and key questions	2
5 External review methodology	4
6 Review milestones and reviewer deliverables	4
7 Roles and responsibilities	5
8 Prospective time frame and schedule	5
9 Required profile for reviewer	6
10 Tender evaluation criteria	6
11 How to apply	7

1 Technical information

Contracting authority:	Basel Institute on Governance
Deadline for presentation of EOI:	26 May 2023, 6pm CET
Review scope:	2021 to mid-2023
Implementation of review:	June - November 2023

2 Background

The International Centre for Asset Recovery (ICAR) was established in 2006 by the Basel Institute on Governance as an independent not-for-profit centre of excellence in asset recovery. It is financed through core contributions from the Bailiwick of Jersey, the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad), the Principality of Liechtenstein, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the UK Home Office.

ICAR pursues the mission of supporting and strengthening the capacity of developing and transition partner countries to investigate and prosecute corruption cases with a view to recovering scarcely needed resources and deter future corruption from happening. Its efforts to achieve this mission are guided by multi-year operational strategies (OS) which define ICAR's Theory of Change and the main activity streams designed to operationalise the Theory of Change. As per the OS 2021-24, ICAR operates along four mutually complimentary intervention lines which are case advice and training (40%), legal and policy advice (30%), strengthening regional networks (20%) and global policy and research (10%).

In its 16 years of operation, ICAR has become a world leader in the field of asset recovery with a solid track record. ICAR's previous two external reviews, conducted in 2015/2016 and 2019, confirmed the continued high relevance and effectiveness of ICAR's operational approach, including the value of the embedded expert approach. ICAR has successively refined its ways of working in response to the recommendations of these reviews, such as adjusting the weighting of activity streams, tightening the relationship between technical assistance and program management, and putting more emphasis on legal and policy work both in partner countries and globally. Such changes have been reflected in the two subsequent OS, namely OS 2017-20 and OS 2021-2024.

3 Context

Corruption is a major impediment to economic growth, social stability and poverty reduction. It erodes public trust in government, it leads to sub-standard services and it wastes scarce public resources. The impact of corruption is particularly damaging for developing countries, which lose billions of dollars every year through corruption. With the adoption of the UN Convention against Corruption (UNCAC), the essential role of asset recovery in the international fight against corruption has been widely acknowledged.

Recovery of stolen assets can serve *four distinct purposes*: First, it has the potential to provide additional resources to finance public investments and development goals. Second, it can have a deterring effect on corruption and theft by signalling that there are consequences to corruption and that corrupt money cannot be hidden. Third, when the capacity of key accountability institutions to recover stolen assets is increased this positively affects the quality of the criminal justice system and of the rule of law. Lastly, asset recovery and repatriation can provide justice for victims.

Despite the global agreement by UNCAC signatory states that *stolen assets must be returned to the countries of origin*, asset recovery continues to be an *emerging policy and practice arena* and cases remain few and far apart. Even in highly developed countries the capacity to undertake what is a lengthy and complex process is limited and cases take many years to be resolved. In developing and transition countries this is coupled with lack of access to tools and resources, limited exposure and experience with international cooperation networks and processes, and often uncertain levels of political support. In addition, the whole process involves numerous stakeholders whose activities need to be coordinated in a timely fashion on both domestic and international levels.

4 Objectives and key questions

The key purpose of this external review is to assess the effective implementation of the first two years (2021-2022) of the OS 2021-24 and to ascertain the continued relevance of ICAR's operational approach and organizational structure with a view to informing the development of the next four-year operational strategy and related donor funding commitments. Further, it should reflect on the continued validity of ICAR's work and Theory of Change in view of current global policy debate, emerging trends in other international initiatives to combat financial crime, and efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

In view of this overall objective and purpose, the external review should aim to answer the following questions:

Our operations:

- Asset recovery continues to be a particularly weak area of the international fight against financial crime, as the FATF's consolidated 2022 report finds. Is the mix of ICAR activities/intervention lines and their respective weighting adequate in view of the key asset recovery challenges, primarily in developing and transition countries, and secondly in financial centres and internationally?
- Did ICAR deliver against its strategic priorities and do these remain relevant? What should new strategic priorities be, if any change is suggested?
- Does ICAR effectively communicate its successes to donors and to other stakeholders with a view to ensuring it is positioned as a key actor in global asset recovery efforts, in the Global South and in the Global North? How could ICAR improve in this regard?

Our organisation:

- Is the organisational and funding structure (HQ; country programs) suitable and sufficient in view of the objectives set forth by ICAR in its OS 2021-24? What are some of the growth accelerators and what are some of the paths / measures ICAR can take to achieve financial sustainability?
- Have resources been employed effectively to achieve objectives as set forth in ICAR's Theory of Change?
- What measures are required, if any, to ensure that program management, including reporting and M&E, continues to be adequate and proportionate to the operational objectives of ICAR?

Our context:

- What international dynamics that may influence funding and demand for technical assistance in asset recovery should ICAR and its core donors take into account when formulating the OS 2025-28? What sustainability risks and opportunities can be identified that should inform the formulation of the subsequent OS?
- Does our mix of activities suitably complement the work of other organisations that work on aspects of asset recovery? What (if any) synergies with other actors (in the asset recovery or broader governance/development sphere) should be explored further?
- How can ICAR enhance synergies with other units of the Basel Institute?
- How are shocks (such as COVID-19, economic instability, and/or political turmoil) affecting ICAR's work? How might ICAR adapt its operational strategies to withstand these shocks? What other risks should ICAR seek to address in the subsequent OS?

5 External review methodology

The external review is expected to be carried out using primarily qualitative methods. The external review will, at a minimum, consist of the following data collection activities:

- A desk review of relevant documentation such as: ICAR operational strategy 2021-24 and accompanying monitoring & evaluation (M&E) plan; bi-annual and annual reports against work plans, country program operational reports and training evaluation reports; M&E data and stories of change produced in the period; financial statements; and the findings of ICAR's previous external review (2019).
- Interviews with ICAR management team and interviews and/or surveys of ICAR experts (both HQ and stationed in the field);
- 2-3 in-country visits in countries where ICAR has an existing program of work to conduct on-site interviews with ICAR field staff and ICAR partner agencies.
- Interviews with all ICAR core donors (HQ staff and, where applicable, country office staff) and other key stakeholders from ICAR donor countries.
- Interviews with representatives from key (peer) organisations engaged in international asset recovery efforts and global policy debates.

6 Review milestones and reviewer deliverables

The expected milestones for the external review process are as follows:

- (1) Initial orientation meeting with ICAR management and consultations with ICAR donors
- (2) Refined work plan agreed with ICAR management
- (3) Data collection tools agreed with ICAR management
- (4) Periodic check-ins with ICAR management during data collection
- (5) Presentation of draft report & in-person presentation of draft findings to ICAR management and donors
- (6) Presentation of final report

The reviewer will be responsible for the following deliverables:

- Short inception report based on desk review and initial consultations with ICAR management and donors, including revised work plan and agreed survey tools
- Draft report and in-person presentation at ICAR HQs in Switzerland
- Final report (max. 25 p without annexes, in English), containing:
 - Summary of findings / recommendations
 - Description of methodology and work process

- Presentation of results
- Recommendations for all goals of the external review
- The data sets produced during data collection

All deliverables are to be presented in English.

7 Roles and responsibilities

This is a joint external review mandated by all ICAR core donors and coordinated by ICAR. The ICAR core donor group has the lead on the adoption of results. ICAR is responsible for ensuring that all relevant documentation is accessible to the team selected to undertake the review (“reviewer”). ICAR and core donors are jointly responsible to ensure that key persons are available for interviews. ICAR will appoint a focal person who will be the reviewer’s main point of contact. ICAR management will be responsible for approving the deliverables.

Moreover, the reviewer will abide by the Basel Institute’s Code of Ethics and Communications Guidelines. In line with the Basel Institute’s Code of Ethics, the reviewer will be expected to uphold the values of integrity, accountability and transparency; to treat all individuals with whom they interact while delivering this mandate with dignity, which means appreciating diversity, whether that diversity exists because of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation or any other difference. The Basel Institute does not tolerate any forms of bullying, harassment, exploitation, abusive behaviour or intimidation, including sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), and is committed to safeguarding a work environment free from all such behaviour. The Basel Institute expects the review team to demonstrate courtesy and respect in all their dealings with internal and external parties while delivering this mandate. The reviewer is expected to take all reasonable steps to safeguard from SEAH the people with whom they come into contact while delivering this mandate.

Furthermore, the reviewer will protect any confidential information obtained while delivering this mandate and refrain from unauthorized disclosure. Information that is not publicly available is not to be used for any private or professional gain. This responsibility continues after the contract for services at the Basel Institute have ended.

8 Prospective time frame and schedule

What	Who	Until when
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Invitation to tender published	ICAR	24 March 2023
Submission of EOIs by invited tenderers	Tenderers	21 April 2023 (extended to 26 May 2023)
Selection of evaluator	ICAR, donors	31 May 2023 (extended to 06 June 2023)
Signing of contract	ICAR, reviewer	09 June 2023
Inception period, work planning, desk review etc.	ICAR, reviewer, donors	15 July 2023
Data collection & analysis	Reviewer	July-Oct 2023
Draft report and presentation of findings to ICAR and donors	Reviewer	31 Oct 2023
Final report	Reviewer	30 Nov 2023

9 Required profile for reviewer

The successful applicant must meet the following requirements:

- Demonstrated experience (8-10 years) carrying out programme and institutional evaluations in the governance, anti-corruption, (criminal) justice and/or security sector, with past experience evaluating technical assistance programs delivered by small or medium sized non-profit organizations
- Demonstrated knowledge of asset recovery (whole process cycle, including, ideally, specific technicalities of the various phases of the process)
- Familiarity with international corruption and asset recovery policy debate and key players
- Extensive knowledge of development cooperation field and context
- Fluent proficiency in English (written and spoken) is required. Portuguese and/or Spanish may be an advantage to facilitate country programme visits and communication with partner agencies.

10 Tender evaluation criteria

Applications will be assessed in the following manner:

Proposal component	Weight
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Technical proposal (no more than 6 pages, excluding CVs)	80%
Thematic knowledge of asset recovery Technical/legal (15%) Global policy environment (10%)	25%
Technical experience in evaluation of TA programmes in the governance, anti-corruption and/or security sector	15%
Experience evaluating the work of SME sized not-for-profit organisations	15%
Proposed approach/methodology	25%
Financial proposal	20%

11 How to apply

Offers should comprise a technical proposal (no more than six pages) with an overview of how to address the task (approach, methods), a work plan, CVs of the proposed evaluation team members and their respective roles in the evaluation, and a separate financial proposal which, among other, provides indicative work days per team member and split by tasks. Offers are to be presented in English.

Applications are to be submitted to proposal@baselgovernance.org no later than 18:00 CET on 26 May 2023.