



REVIEW OF INNOVATION PARTNERSHIPS FUNDED BY ELRHA'S HUMANITARIAN INNOVATION FUND

Terms of Reference

Background

Elrha wants to see a world equipped to mitigate the impact of humanitarian crises.

Collaboration is at the heart of Elrha's work to improve humanitarian outcomes. We provide opportunities and expertise to support the humanitarian community, in developing and sustaining effective partnerships for both research and innovation. Through supporting collaboration and partnership, including with crisis-affected people, we aim to improve the quality, impact and uptake of research and innovation.

Elrha works both with *operational* partners, such as UN agencies, INGOs, research institutions, private companies and social enterprises, and *strategic* partners, who include funders, governments, humanitarian clusters, and global humanitarian initiatives.

At the time of Elrha's establishment in 2009, the concept of transformative partnership working was still relatively embryonic, receiving little specific attention in the humanitarian space despite humanitarian response often involving partnerships between different types of organisations, working across different sectors, and frequently across different geographical locations.

Since this time, there has been a rapid increase in the attention given to promoting fair and equitable partnerships for responding to global challenges. The independent Partnership Brokers Association (PBA) was established in 2012 to challenge and change poor partnering practices, promote the critical importance of partnering process management, and ensure those leading partnerships are both skilled and principled in their approach.

With such contributions within the international development space to increasing and promoting learning around effective collaboration and given the maturity of Elrha's grant-funded research and innovation portfolios through its Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC) and Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) programmes, it is timely and appropriate to undertake a review of lessons learned on partnerships in relation to humanitarian research and innovation.



Partnerships and Humanitarian Innovation

Elrha's Humanitarian Innovation Fund (HIF) supports individuals and organisations to identify, develop and scale innovative solutions to the challenges facing effective humanitarian assistance.

The HIF was established in 2011 as one of the first funds to focus specifically on innovation for the humanitarian sector. The HIF has financed and supported over 140 projects since its inception, ranging from early stage innovations to development and implementation and scale. Whilst the majority of these grant-funded projects have involved partnerships of varying types and size, no analysis has been undertaken from a specific partnership perspective on the HIF portfolio to date, although collaboration was explored in relation to a successful innovation process in our [Elrha-ALNAP More Than Just Luck](#) report.

As the HIF programme and its portfolio have matured, it appears that the nature of partnerships often needs to change or be adapted across the innovation lifecycle. This does not fit easily with more traditional concepts of partnerships and partnership working and might be further explored. Additionally, there are some key factors that can influence partnering dynamics and which may influence the quality of outcomes and the scaling potential of the innovations being funded, for example (but not exclusively):

- whether a partnership is new or established
- the global North-South composition of a partnership
- organisational cultural differences between academic institutions, private companies and humanitarian organisations (such as differences in incentive structures, timescales)
- the relationship between INGO headquarters and field level offices

There is a body of literature around humanitarian innovation and a growing focus on humanitarian partnerships, but there has been little so far that examines humanitarian *innovation* partnerships in and of themselves.

Drawing on and analysing data from the HIF's portfolio, we aim to explore any emerging patterns or themes. This will help to develop Elrha's learning on where partnerships for humanitarian innovation are effective, the types of partnerships that produce the best and most appropriate innovations, any commonalities around the challenges faced, and how these might differ from a more traditional partnering approach.

Purpose

The purpose of this assignment is to document a nuanced understanding of the opportunities and challenges to effective partnership working, by reviewing the experiences of a sample of HIF-funded projects within the wider literature and discourse on humanitarian innovation and partnerships. It is anticipated that this qualitative study will document the unique experience of the HIF's funded portfolio of projects, with a view to supporting the development of evidence-informed frameworks for humanitarian innovation partnerships. The review will include identifying opportunities for, and barriers to, fair and equitable participation in collaborations throughout the innovation lifecycle.



There are three main objectives:

1. **To contribute to broader understanding within the humanitarian innovation community of the factors that contribute to and inhibit effective innovation partnerships in humanitarian contexts.** This will include identifying emerging trends within the humanitarian innovation community - such as the establishment of innovation labs/hubs and the increased focus of donors on innovation in the humanitarian sector - and the implications of this for advancing the agenda of collaborative innovation in humanitarian contexts.
2. **To provide guidance to Elrha in terms of informing future partnership-strengthening activities based on the identification of the latest evidence of partnership effectiveness for innovation.**
3. **To contribute to a wider piece of work Elrha is conducting that aims to progress global learning around the value of research and innovation partnerships in humanitarian contexts,** with a view to increasing the wider evidence base on how collaborative approaches increase the quality and impact of operational research and innovation.

Methodology

1. A **literature review** will be conducted to identify the latest developments, research and discourse on partnering and innovation within humanitarian and international development contexts.
2. Within the framework of the Partnership Brokers Association [key principles for effective partnership working](#), a **desk-based review and analysis will be conducted to examine existing data and documented lessons learned** on partnerships from current and past HIF funded projects to identify and analyse opportunities and challenges, and develop recommendations for future partnerships strengthening support to funded innovation teams.
3. **The desk review will be supplemented by semi-structured interviews with HIF grantees**, from approximately 10 different innovation teams, to gather additional information on partnership experiences, that will contribute to the content of a number of case studies, building on the findings of the literature and desk review.
4. In collaboration with the consultant identified to conduct a parallel review of Research for Health in Humanitarian Crises (R2HC) partnerships, **discuss and contribute to the drafting of a summary of key synergies and differences between learning from research and innovation partnerships.**



Deliverables

The following outputs will be the key deliverables:

1. **An article will be drafted and submitted to a reputable journal¹** documenting the outcomes of the literature review and analysis and describing emerging trends and latest learning around humanitarian innovation partnerships. The article will be illustrated by case studies from the HIF-funded innovation portfolio, as appropriate.
2. **A short report documenting key findings from analysis of HIF funded partnerships** and recommendations on additional partnership strengthening support that the HIF might offer to future or existing grantees.
3. **A summary document on key synergies and differences between partnering challenges relating to Elrha's research and innovation portfolios**, including suggestions on opportunities for Elrha to add to the wider evidence base on how collaborative approaches increase the quality and impact of operational research and innovation. This will be a joint output produced by the two Consultants working on the research and innovation portfolios.

Timeframe

It is anticipated that the assignment will take 25 - 30 working days between 14 January and 25 March 2019.

The proposed time line is below:

Activity	Date
Research start date	14 January 2018
Draft report submitted to Elrha	25 February 2019
Elrha feedback provided	4 March 2019
Report finalised	25 March 2019

Workbase

The desk review will be conducted at the research consultant's workplace. Communication with the Elrha team is expected to take place in person, by telephone and/or Skype.

¹ Journal/s to be discussed with Elrha before submission



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Reporting Lines

The consultant(s) will work closely with Elrha's Effective Partnerships Manager and be accountable to, and guided by, the HIF Programme Manager. They will also liaise and collaborate with the consultant working on Elrha's research portfolio with R2HC to produce output 3 above.

Person specification

- Knowledge of, preferably accreditation with, the Partnership Broker's Association
- Post-graduate qualification (PhD strongly preferred) in a field related to international development or humanitarian response.
- Demonstrated experience of working in a collaborative innovation environment, preferably in humanitarian crisis settings.
- Knowledge of the latest literature on innovation and effective partnering preferably in the fields of international development or humanitarian response.
- Established connections within the humanitarian, innovation and practitioner communities.
- Experience of conducting reviews and preparing guidance notes

Please submit your CV and a short proposal describing how you meet the foreseen requirements to undertake this work, along with your proposed fee, to info@elrha.org for the attention of Anna Skeels by **31 December 2018**.