Knowledge Platform Security & Rule of Law

Programmatic Learning Instrument

Collaborative Study - Terms of Reference

1. Project background information

The Knowledge Platform Security and Rule of Law (KPSRL) was established by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) in 2012 to strengthen the evidence base for security and rule of law (SRoL) policies and programmes. A Consortium comprised of the Clingendael Institute's Conflict Research Unit, Saferworld, and the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) manages the current contract and provides oversight and financial accountability. The project is supported by an Advisory Committee that serves as a representation of the KPSRL network. The KPSRL network includes all people and organisations that actively engage in our activities.

The primary objective of the KPSRL is to improve the quality and impact of SRoL policy and programmes. This is contingent upon the ability of those who shape SRoL policy and programmes to generate and incorporate new evidence, insights, and solutions into their work and decisions. Strengthening learning to inform policy and programming is, thus, the primary goal that the KPSRL seeks to achieve. To fulfil its stated role in enhancing learning, the Secretariat of the KPSRL explicitly extends its focus to understanding how learning and 'knowledge uptake' happens within the network and pursues a strategy of 'knowledge brokering' as a practical and applied activity.

2. Purpose and scope of this collaborative study

This study is being commissioned to support the refinement of the Programmatic Learning Instrument (henceforth PLI) as well as to support the role of the KPSRL in providing advice on options available for learning interventions to policymakers and programming partners.

The PLI is a funding instrument (EUR 700,000 over four years), whose overarching goal is to enable SRoL stakeholders to enhance the quality and impact of their policymaking, programming, implementation, and MEAL through improved approaches to programmatic learning. This project is intended to gather, discuss, and make sense of insights, implications, and recommendations on improved approaches to programmatic learning, focusing on those based on co-creation.

1. **In practical terms, this project contributes to the goals of the PLI** since it aims to understand what has worked, what has not, and why in implementing innovative programmatic learning

approaches, especially but not only co-creation.[1] In this respect, the project adds a comparative / benchmarking research that aims to learn from the experiences of other learning programmes, learning components of large programmes, or learning networks to other PLI interventions that are directly trying to implement innovative programmatic learning approaches.

2. **This project will also inform the further re-design of the PLI itself.** After 2024, the PLI is up for being re-designed for the possible next phase of the KPSRL. Since the PLI is an intervention aimed at supporting learning, it will directly benefit from the insights emerging from this project.

3. **Finally, this project will support the KPSRL as advisor to policymakers and programming partners on learning methods and approaches**. The KPSRL Secretariat is involved in supporting the learning components of processes and programmes of the Dutch MFA and its programming partners. Policymakers and programming partners look at times to the KPSRL Secretariat for guidance on the options they have for learning, including shaping tender for the procurement of learning services, terms of reference of evaluations, and guidance on what is meant by evidence in programming contexts.

A definition of co-creation of knowledge from "Brokering in Practice" (The Broker, 2023, available on demand).

Knowledge co-creation is defined as: "the combined process of setting the agenda, identifying knowledge questions and jointly carrying out research and other activities to generate new knowledges" (Lammers & de Winter, 2017). Knowledge co-creation is seen as having three key constitutive elements:

1.Collaboration — knowledge co-creation requires multi-stakeholder collaboration, geared towards solving a common problem. Such collaboration transcends academia to include a range of actors, such as citizens, the private sector, the government, and civil society (Van Veen, 2013)

2. Interaction — as a process, knowledge co-creation is not merely focused on the development of new knowledges, but also on facilitating fruitful interaction among engaged stakeholders (Regeer & Bunders, 2009). In that regard, Communities of Practice (CoPs) are seen as an instrumental tool to facilitate multi-stakeholder interaction (Triste et al., 2018).

3. Multiplicity of knowledges—the involvement of diverse stakeholders in knowledge co-creation means that the process involves an array of knowledges, from scientific knowledge to societal knowledge and experiential expertise. As these forms of knowledges can often be contradictory, effective knowledge co-creation processes require that all be valued equally and employed strategically when appropriate (Regeer & Bunders, 2009).

Co-creation can be a property of other processes beyond knowledge creation. The above is an indicative definition that will need to be adapted to the contexts touched by the study.

The scope of the study includes the experiences with innovative approaches to programmatic learning of programmes, projects, and learning components of multi-country, multi-million, multi-component

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[1] By MEL paradigm, we mean the approach to learning based on the reflection on what happened in the programme using result-based frameworks, theories of change, and indicators with the purpose to check that that the programme is on track to achieve its objectives.

programmes. We have a strong preference for learning from programmes, projects, or learning components (hereby referred to as "interventions") in the development, peacebuilding, humanitarian, or triple nexus sectors that have an international dimension and whose primary objective is to enable learning and / or inform policies and programme practices.

Nevertheless, the study can include examples from programmes or projects outside of these sectors, or without an international component, or whose primary focus is not learning if it cannot find enough examples that fit the criteria outlined above or if a particularly innovative experience with programmatic learning does not fit them but is particularly clear in outlining benefits and downsides of new approaches of programmatic learning.

Preference will be placed on case studies that capture both process and outcomes of programmatic learning (including co-creation).

- Process includes the design, facilitation/management of programmatic learning processes (co-creation included).
- Outcomes includes whether the innovation succeeded or failed in reaching the learning objectives, whether it led to new partnerships and partnership models, or whether it led the partners to capture and share learning to the benefit of a wider range of actors.

It will also include the KPSRL's own experience using new approaches for programmatic learning, especially co-creation, in the PLI for comparative purposes. The KPSRL internally reviews and evaluates its PLI projects and will share the findings with the research partners.

The study is guided by the following questions:

Conceptualisation

1. How did the intervention conceptualise programmatic learning (including co-creation)? This might include the purpose of learning (and co-creation), and connections to processes such as adaptive management, partnership building, advocacy, MEAL, etc...

Practical implementation

1. What allowed the intervention to introduce an innovative approach to programmatic learning rather than a traditional one?
2. What learning / co-creation steps and methodologies were followed? For example, was co-creation applied at any point in a project cycle, from broad strategic planning before projects are conceived, to building and refining activities and solutions, to lessons learned during project closedown? Or was it just used to conceptualize activities and creating a learning framework at the beginning of a specific trajectory?
3. What type of learning activities and outputs did the intervention create or co-create?

Roles and participation

4. Which stakeholders did the intervention engage during programmatic learning (and co-creation if relevant) and how?

5. What roles, coordination structures and processes, and division of responsibilities were established to support programmatic learning (and co-creation if relevant)? And did they work well in enabling programmatic learning (and co-creation if relevant)?

6. What capacity and time was needed by the different stakeholders for learning? How were capacity and time gaps filled?

7. Was the learning process (including co-creation) truly participatory? The research partner will propose a framework that defines what makes an initiative "truly participatory", using widely accepted models to understand participation, such as Arnstein's ladder of participation (1969), Jules Pretty's typology of participation (1995) or Sarah White's typology of interests in participation.[2]

8. Did the level of participation make the process noncolonial? The research partner will propose a framework that defines what makes a learning initiative "noncolonial". This could contain elements such as critical reflexivity by participants, reciprocity and respect for self-determination, co-existence of other(ed) ways of knowing, or transformative goal.[3]

9. Was the stakeholders' interest programmatic learning maintained until the end of the project? What barriers had to be overcome? What were the key motivating factors?

10. What role did the donor take in creating a space for and encouraging learning or posing barriers to it?

Outcomes

11. What outcomes in terms of learning and changes in practice did the intervention achieve through their innovative approaches to programmatic learning? Which of these outcomes could not have conceivably been produced without such innovative approaches?

12. Were the lessons learned identified also applied and how? Did the stakeholders have the required resources to do so?

13. For the case of multi-country, multi-component, multi-consortium programmes, how was learning shared, made relevant, and used throughout the entire programme?

14. How was learning shared outside the programme?

Approach and methodology

Approach

The Partner(s) is/are expected to follow a collaborative and participatory approach, ensuring close engagement with the KPSRL Secretariat and all entities that will agree to be partners of this research project.

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[2] For more information see:
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/31091334_Unpacking_'Participation'_Models_meanings_and_practices.

[3] See for example: https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1609406921014766.

The partner(s) will not be considered a consultant for the purposes of this research. Instead, they will be considered an equal partner of the KPSRL. We strongly prefer research partners who have implemented themselves innovative programmatic learning approaches, including co-creation, and therefore bring practical experience for exchange.

The partner will seek to include interventions by other entities in the study and will treat the entities that will participate in this study as equal partners as well.[4] Once the list of participating interventions will be finalised, the terms of reference might be revisited together to ensure that the study is of value to all participants.

The Partner(s) is/are welcome to propose any analytical framework and methodology they deem relevant for this research but should explain their choices and update them during the assignment.

The Partner should use mixed methods as much as possible (qualitative, quantitative, and participatory), even though the quantitative data available to this research might be limited.

The Partner(s) is/are expected to begin the study by reviewing publicly available information, such as theoretical frameworks and empirical studies on the concept of programmatic learning (and similar concepts, especially co-creation).

Later, they will present the initial insights of their review to the Reference Group and discuss initial insights and a range of options of case studies to delve deeper in the most interesting insights through primary data collection on the experiences of other programmes and organisations. Some cases will emerge from background knowledge of the research partner, some cases through the review of publicly available information, and others from knowledges of members of the Reference Group.

Inception

The Partner will hold an inception meeting to clarify the TOR. The Research Partner can propose to refine the questions outlined in the scope of the assignment.

Data collection

Below are suggestions for the study. Applicants can propose other methods and instruments, explaining why they fit this exercise better.

Preliminary desk review - The Partner(s) shall review all publicly available and relevant sources of information on the concepts of programmatic learning (especially co-creation) and provide a short presentation to the KPSRL Secretariat and the Reference Group that attempts to give a first answer to as many of the questions included in the scope of the research as possible.

Stakeholder engagement – Based on the preliminary desk review as well as any contacts that the Partner(s) has or the KPSRL Secretariat and the Reference Group can provide, the Research Partner(s) will reach out to interventions fitting the scope of the research. The Research Partner(s) will offer them the

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[4] "Participate in this research project" means here that agreeing to set an interview(s), sharing internal documents, providing access to their stakeholders, and/or participating to sense-making workshops.

opportunity to become partners of this research assignment, including sharing and encouraging comments to the research framework, approach, methodology, and timeline.

Data collection -The Partner(s) shall collect primary data through engagement with the interventions who agreed to become partners of this research projects. A case study approach is strongly recommended. They might collect written data from these partner interventions as well as oral perspectives of staff and stakeholders through interviews or focus group discussions. It is possible that the other entities participating in the study express preference to conduct research on their case studies directly. In this case, the partners will discuss how to redistribute the budget of this assignment to allow for that option. It is expected that the research partner will conduct at least six or seven case studies through a mix of online consultations and in person visits.

Data analysis and sense-making

The Partner(s) are expected to involve the Secretariat staff, the Reference Group, as well as the staff of partner interventions in a sense-making process to reflect on the insights emerging from the research and shape the recommendations.

The Partner(s) are expected to hold at least one in person workshop with the participation of KPSRL Secretariat staff, partner interventions, and partners involved in the implementation of the PLI pilot projects as part of this sense-making.

The Partner(s) are expected to produce a short final deliverable, outlining the findings, conclusion, and the recommendations for the refinement and strengthening of the PLI design and general advice to the KPSRL network on best practices for doing co-creation. The partners will discuss with the RG what deliverable(s) might feed needs and ambitions better, ranging from a conventional report, over guidelines, to short policy briefs. It is expected, however, that the deliverable will be fit for broad publication.

3. Organisation and governance

The KPSRL Learning Officer will be the manager of this process and consulted on all design choices.

One representative of the KPSRL Secretariat, three from stakeholders involved in the implementation of the PLI pilots or from the other participating interventions in this study, and one from the MFA will form the Reference Group of this research. This group will provide guidance to the Research Partner(s) and validate the findings through an appropriately inclusive process. The final product will be shared with the KPSRL network and beyond.

4. Expected deliverables

The following deliverables will be expected:

- A short inception note, potentially including refined research question, and including at least methodology, work plan and timetable.
- A short presentation of findings from the review of publicly available information.

- An in-person workshop with short presentation of findings, conclusions, and recommendations for sense-making.
- A draft final one or more learning products, which will be validated through an appropriately inclusive process to be agreed by the Reference Group and the Partner(s). The format for this final learning product will be agreed together with the Reference Group during inception. Current expectations is that it contains a practical guide that breaks down the most interesting new approaches to programmatic learning (and co-creation) into components and steps and provides an easy-to-use reference to help Secretariat staff (and network members) make better decisions about which learning approaches to select in which contexts and for which learning purpose, and improve the preparatory and facilitation work of the Secretariat in implementing these approaches.

The total budget available for project is EUR 70,000 excluding VAT.

5. Expected timeline

Main tasks/activities	Suggested timeline
Deadline for the submission of proposals	25th June 2023 at 23:59 CEST
Invitation for interview to maximum three applicants[5]	Invitations will be sent out in the week of June 26th, and interviews will take place on 3rd, 4th, and 5th July 2023
Research award	July 10th, 2023
Contract signatures	July 18th, 2023
Inception phase and note	July 18th, 2023 – September 25th 2023
Preliminary desk review	September 25th, 2023 – October 27th
Presentation of the preliminary desk review	Week of November 6th 2023

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[5] Interviews will be conducted by the evaluation manager, Head of Secretariat, and one Consortium Partner.

Stakeholder engagement	At the same time as the desk review: September 25th, 2023 – October 27th
Data collection.	November 6th, 2024 – January 12th, 2024
Present and discuss preliminary findings and recommendation in a joint in person workshop.	Week of January 15th, 2024
Prepare the draft report according to the TOR and updated methodology from inception report.	By February 9th 2024
Receive feedback and comments from the Reference Group, as well as selected peer reviewers.	February 23rd 2024
Revise the draft product based on comments and feedback received, and prepare a final consolidated version of the report	March 6th 2024

6. Application process

The application process is composed of a proposal, and interview. The KPSRL Secretariat will select a maximum of three applicants based on the proposal and invite them to a short interview. During the interview, the applicants will present their approach, answer any clarification questions, and can ask any questions they have.

The main criteria that will be used to evaluate the Research Partner(s)'s background are:

1. Experience with research or implementation projects on the concept of programmatic learning, especially co-creation).
2. Experience with participatory research projects.
3. Size and breadth of personal networks with interventions that could become partners for this research project.

The main criteria for evaluating the proposed approach and methods are:

4. Fitness of the research and engagement approach to the purpose, scope, and timeline of this project.
5. Quality of the analytical frameworks already identified to make sense of the concepts of co-creation, co-implementation, and non-MEL programmatic learning.

6. Likely effectiveness of the approach to reach out to potential partners of this research project and bring them on board.

7. Ability to draw useful implications for the design of the PLI through participatory sense-making.

In the proposal (max ten pages), please include:

a. Team composition and why the proposed team fit the criteria 1 to 4 above.

b. Key elements of the proposed research, engagement, and sense-making approach and methodology, and why they fit the main criteria from 5 to 8 above.

c. The division of responsibilities in the Study Partner team.

d. A budget (not exceeding EURO 70,000 excluding VAT).

e. In an annex, two samples of written reports (it can be a link to published reports), two references for similar assignments, and professional CV(s) for all the proposed Research Partners (no more than three pages, tailored with only the essential information for this project).

Please submit clarification questions to G.Ferrari@kpsrl.org on a rolling base.

Please submit all documents to G.Ferrari@kpsrl.org. The deadline for submission is 23:59 CEST on 25th of June 2023.