

Better Value Together

Terms of Reference: mapping commonly bought support services for Geneva-based NGOs

Commissioned by CHS Alliance, as part of the Geneva Humanitarian Hub's work on collective services

1. Background and intent

NGOs in Geneva often buy the same support services, and there is little sharing of information on cost or quality. This assignment finds out what they buy, from whom and at what cost, so that plans for buying together can move forward.

This is one assignment within a larger effort to develop a **collective services platform**: shared support services that any organisation can draw on, whatever its size or mandate. Buying together is one of the platform's four ways of working. The aim is not only a lower price. It is also to:

- **Get better terms** than any single organisation can negotiate.
- **Build sector values into the deal**, such as data protection, safeguarding and humanitarian principles, which no one organisation can demand on its own.
- **Share what we know about suppliers**: who delivers, and who shares the sector's values.
- **Keep expertise and free up resources**. The aim is to strengthen in-house teams with better terms and shared know-how, not to replace them, and to free up money for other activities.

Geneva is a practical place to start. Many organisations sit close together, use the same firms, and face the same Swiss rules. What we learn here will help test the approach elsewhere.

2. Purpose and objectives

The purpose is to give Geneva-based organisations a shared, evidence-based picture of where buying together would make a difference, and to recommend two or three services to start with.

The objectives are to:

1. **Map current spend**: which support services organisations buy from the private sector, how much is spent each year, and with which firms.
2. **Find the patterns**: where many organisations use the same firms or buy similar services, where contracts renew around the same time, and where prices or terms vary widely.
3. **Understand needs and frustrations**: what works, what doesn't, and what organisations would want from a shared arrangement (price, quality, values, less admin).
4. **Assess the opportunities**: rank services by potential savings, number of interested organisations, ease of joint buying and fit with sector values.
5. **Recommend next steps**: two or three priority services, with a suggested buying model for each and the steps to set it up.

3. Scope

The mapping covers support services that Geneva-based humanitarian and development organisations buy from external firms. **Audit, payroll and legal services** are the likely starting point; the consultant will test which others matter most.

Organisations. NGOs, networks and other not-for-profit organisations with an office in the Geneva area, of all sizes. The consultant will agree a target list with the steering group during inception. The consultant should note each organisation's legal status (for example a Swiss association, a foundation, or an organisation with a host-state agreement), as this affects which services it needs and which rules apply.

Other services could include accounting and fiduciary services, insurance (health, pension, liability, travel), IT support and software licences, recruitment agencies, translation and interpretation, event venues and services, relocation and permit support, and training providers.

Out of scope: programme goods and services, field-level procurement outside Geneva, and negotiating with suppliers.

4. Approach

Applicants should propose their approach and work plan. Taking part should be light for organisations, and their information must be handled with care.

We expect the approach to include:

- an inception phase agreed with the steering group;
- outreach through existing networks and the Geneva Humanitarian Hub;
- a short data template followed by a conversation with each organisation;
- analysis that starts as data comes in;
- a validation meeting with participating organisations before the final report.

Confidentiality. Supplier prices and contract terms are sensitive. The consultant will sign a confidentiality agreement, keep raw data secure, and report findings only in combined form, so that no organisation can be identified without its consent. **They will not share one organisation's prices with another, or contact suppliers about pricing.** The consultant should also flag legal points to check before joint buying goes ahead, such as donor procurement rules.

5. Deliverables and timeline

The assignment runs over 10 weeks and produces four deliverables.



Deliverable	What it contains	Due
D1 Inception report	Final method, list of organisations, data template and interview guide, work plan	End of week 2
D2 Progress note	Organisations reached so far, early patterns, any changes to scope	End of week 5
D3 Draft findings	Spend map and first ranking of opportunities, presented at a validation meeting with participating organisations	End of week 8
D4 Final report	Report of no more than 20 pages plus annexes, with priority services and buying models; the combined dataset; a short summary participants can share	End of week 10

The final report should, for each priority service, set out the combined spend and number of organisations, the main firms used, the likely benefits (savings, better terms, values in the contract), a suggested buying model (for example a framework agreement, a lead organisation buying for others, or a list of vetted suppliers) and the practical steps to set it up.

6. Consultant profile

We are looking for someone who understands both procurement and how not-for-profit organisations run, and who can earn the trust of finance and operations staff quickly. An individual or a small team can apply.

Essential:

- At least 8 years' experience in procurement, shared services, finance or operations, with some of it in NGOs or international organisations.
- Experience of spend analysis or category management: turning messy cost data into clear patterns.
- Good knowledge of the Swiss context, including how audit, payroll, social insurance and employment law work for organisations in Geneva.
- Strong interviewing and relationship skills, and a track record of handling confidential information.
- Fluent English and good working French.

Desirable:

- Experience setting up joint purchasing, framework agreements or shared service arrangements.
- An existing network among Geneva-based NGOs and international organisations.
- Understanding of donor procurement rules and of ethical sourcing.

Independence. The consultant must have no commercial link with firms that could later bid to provide the services mapped. Any potential conflict of interest must be declared in the application.

7. Management and level of effort

Level of effort. 25 to 30 working days over 10 weeks. Most of the time goes on outreach and conversations.

Management. The consultant reports to the Executive Director of CHS Alliance. A small steering group from the Geneva Humanitarian Hub will review the inception report and draft findings. Short check-ins every two weeks.

Location. Geneva-based, or able to meet organisations in person in Geneva for most interviews and the validation meeting.

Timing. We aim to contract the consultant by early December 2026 and to complete the assignment by March 2027 latest.

8. How to apply

Email your application to recruitment@chsalliance.org by **18 November 2026** (end of day, Geneva time), with "Better Value Together" in the subject line. Please send:

1. **CV(s).** One per consultant; for a team, say who would lead.
2. **A short proposal** of no more than three pages, covering your relevant experience, your proposed approach and a rough work plan for the 10 weeks, and how you would get organisations to share sensitive cost and contract data.
3. **Financial offer.** Your daily rate in CHF, the number of days you propose, and your availability over the next four months.
4. **Conflict of interest declaration.** Any current or recent links to audit, payroll, legal or other firms that could bid to provide these services.
5. **Two references** we can contact about similar work you have done.

Shortlisted applicants will be invited to a short interview. Questions about the assignment can be sent to the same address.