

TERMS OF REFERENCE

For the selection of an evaluator to conduct the end-of-project evaluation for: “Consolidating the Consumer Protection Framework in Moldova” project

1. Brief project description

Donor: European Commission and Soros Foundation Moldova

Implementation period: January 2024 – December 2026

Project total budget: EUR 784,285.00

AO Centrul Analitic Independent Expert Grup (further EG), as lead partner, in consortium with the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (further IPRE) and Soros Foundation Moldova, started in January 2024 the implementation of the EU Grant Contract “Consolidating the Consumer Protection Framework in Moldova” (project duration 36 months).

The general objective of the project: overall objective of the Action is that consumer rights are known and enforced in Moldova. It contributes to fulfilment of the global objective of this call for proposals to strengthen CSOs’ capacity in the process of implementation of the Association Agreement, including at local level, considering that consumer protection is a key component of the association agenda and European integration process. Namely, it corresponds to Lot 2 of the call: support implementing rights-based consumer protection through advocacy activities. The Action addressed it through two complementary specific objectives (SOs).

Specific objectives:

1. SO 1. Government of Moldova has increased its capacities to enforce consumer protection legislation approximated with the EU acquis - will follow the top-down approach by targeting the policy makers. It will consist mainly of technical assistance that will allow the Government to speed up the harmonization process with EU acquis in the area of consumer protection.
2. SO 2. Consumers in Moldova increased their knowledge and capacities to promote their rights – will follow the bottom-up approach, by empowering the mass-media and civil society to promote consumer protection and raise the level of information and awareness in the society around this issue.

The main activities of the project are:

- OP 1.1. Comprehensive mapping of institutions in the field of consumer protection;
- OP 1.2. Gap analysis between the current situation in Moldova related to consumer protection framework and EU directives in this field;
- OP 1.3. Set of recommendations for relevant institutions to adjust the legal framework in line with the mentioned gap analysis;
- OP 1.4. Software that allows for quick classification, sorting, and processing of petitions and, at the same time, allows consumers to track the status of their petition;
- OP 2.1. Awareness raising campaign on consumer protection;
- OP 2.2. 5 sub-grants for mass-media;

- OP 2.3. European Consumer Centre established based on the requirements of the EU Acquis and relevant Directives;
- OP 2.4. A subgrant of EUR 60,000 for the setting up of the European Consumer Center (mainly, for hiring of key personnel).

Target groups and final beneficiaries of the project:

The Action will be implemented for 3 key target groups (TGs).

TG1 comprises the Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation its subordinated State Inspectorate for Supervision of Non-Food Products and Consumer Protection, as well as the entire constellation of institutions responsible for consumer protection, given the high fragmentation of the institutional framework in this area (table nr 1).

Table 1. Main public authorities that are dealing with consumer protection

Sector	Main public authority responsible for consumer protection	Subordinated public authority responsible for consumer protection
Non-foodstuffs, services, metrology	Ministry of Economic Development and Digitalisation	State Inspectorate for the Supervision of Non-Food Products and Consumer Protection
Health	Ministry of Health	National Agency for Public Health
Transport	Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development	National Motor Transport Agency National Naval Agency Civil Aeronautic Authority
Constructions	Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development	Agency for Technical Supervision
Telecommunications	Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development	National Agency for Regulation of Electronic Communications and Information Technologies
Tourism	Ministry of Culture	State Inspectorate for the Supervision of Non-Food Products and Consumer Protection
Non-banking financial sector	National Bank of Moldova National Commission for Financial Market	National Commission for Financial Market
Banking financial sector	National Bank of Moldova	National Bank of Moldova
Foodstuffs	Ministry of Agriculture and Food Industry	National Agency for Food Safety
Energy, water and sewage	Ministry of Infrastructure and Regional Development	National Agency for Energy Regulation

Needs & Constraints: low capacities to align the legal and institutional framework to EU Acquis, poor inter-institutional coordination, lack of proper digital tools to manage consumer petitions and low credibility among consumers. The Action will address these needs and constraints through technical assistance in fine-tuning the legal and institutional framework in line with EU Acquis and development

(OP1.1-OP1.3) and implementation of the digital tool/software for management of consumer petitions (OP1.4), under SO1.

TG2: civil society. Needs & Constraints: low information and awareness about consumer rights and mechanisms to promote consumer protection, underfunding and poor organization of civil society that is working in this area. The Action will address these needs and constraints by supporting the creation of the European Consumer Center (OP2.3-2.4), as well as through the awareness campaign (OP2.1) under SO2.

TG3: mass media. Needs & Constraints: like civil society – low awareness, but also capacities to reflect consumer protection issues in their activity. The Action will address these needs and constraints by supporting 5 media CSOs, including through sub-grants (OP2.2), and by providing content for the awareness and visibility campaign (OP2.1) that will be implemented also through mass-media, under SO2.

2. Scope of the assignment and key activities to be conducted by the selected experts

The scope of this assignment is to select an individual expert to conduct the independent final evaluation of the “Consolidating the Consumer Protection Framework in Moldova” project. The evaluation will focus on the project's effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. The evaluator will assess the project's performance against planned results as defined in the project's logical framework and result framework and provide actionable recommendations to strengthen future initiatives aimed at improving the Moldovan consumer protection framework.

The evaluation will review the project's design and the assumptions made during its development. It will examine project management practices, implementation strategies, and activities. Additionally, it will assess the establishment of partnerships, capacity-building efforts, communication efforts, and the integration of cross-cutting issues, including human rights, vulnerable consumers, digital transformation, and behavioral exploitation.

The evaluation will cover the entire implementation period of the project.

3. Evaluation dimensions and Questions

The evaluator will use the following criteria:

Effectiveness:

- To what extent did the project achieve its expected results (outputs and outcomes)?
- What were the identified challenges and to what extent were they overcome?
- To what extent did the Project's M&E mechanism contribute to meeting project results?

- How effective were the strategies and tools used in the implementation of the project?

Efficiency:

- Was the process of achieving results efficient in terms of time, financial and human resources?
- What factors contributed to implementation efficiency?
- What are the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats of the project implementation process?

Impact:

- To what extent did the project achieve its specific objectives and its scope?
- What progress has been made towards achieving the impacts, outcomes, and outputs?
- What changes have occurred as a result of the project?

Sustainability:

- To what extent are the benefits of the project likely to be sustained after the completion of this project?
- What are the key factors that will require attention in order to improve prospects of sustainability of project outcomes?
- What are the recommendations for similar support in the future?

4. Methodology for evaluation

The Evaluator will develop a clear and feasible framework and methodology, tailored to address the key evaluation questions. The proposed methodology must be included in the evaluator's proposal and will serve as a selection criterion for identifying the most suitable evaluator for the assignment. The proposal should clearly justify the chosen methodological approach as the most appropriate for answering the evaluation questions.

The Evaluator shall apply both qualitative and quantitative methods to collect and analyze data effectively. This approach will ensure a thorough response to the evaluation questions.

To gather relevant insights, the Evaluator will conduct interviews with implementing partners, grant beneficiary CSOs, and other stakeholders. Data will be collected through focus groups, individual interviews, and other appropriate methods to comprehensively address the evaluation questions.

The Evaluator shall ensure data triangulation and ethical standards in data collection, including informed consent and confidentiality of respondents.

5. Deliverables and Timeline

The evaluation is expected to take place from **September 2026 to November 2026**.

The evaluator will deliver the following:

- **Inception Report:** Detailing evaluation design, methodology, and work plan. It will be consulted and validated by project team – by September 30, 2026.

- **Report on the results of interviews/surveys:** outlining the key findings of evaluator's discussions with relevant stakeholders about project activities and results - by October 31, 2026.
- **Draft Evaluation Report:** addressing the four key evaluation dimensions (effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability) and providing evidence-based conclusion and recommendations– November 15, 2026.
- **Final Evaluation Report:** Incorporating feedback, including an executive summary, findings, conclusions, and recommendations - November 30, 2026.

All reports shall be submitted in electronic format (Word/PDF).

6. Required Qualifications

The evaluator should possess:

- Professional experience in evaluating similar projects, financed by international institutions (at least 5 years of experience);
- In-depth understanding of Moldovan civil society ecosystem and challenges;
- Knowledge on the context in which the public authorities are operating in the Republic of Moldova;
- Strong analytical, and reporting skills;
- Knowledge and expertise in collecting and analyzing qualitative and quantitative data, including conducting interviews, elaborating monitoring indicators, and using data for formulating causal links;

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The Evaluator will interact with the project implementation teams from Expert-Grup and IPRE.

Key responsibilities of the Evaluator:

- to elaborate a detailed methodology for evaluation;
- to arrange the logistics of travel, interviews and focus groups;
- to collect and analyze the data;
- to participate in interviews and focus groups;
- to elaborate the draft and final report;
- to present the findings of evaluation to the project team.

Key responsibilities of the project team:

- to facilitate the access of the Evaluator to relevant data and documents;
- to manage the contract/evaluation process and serve as a liaison with the Consultant;
- to comment and approve final products on time.

8. Application Procedure

Interested evaluators are invited to submit:

- A technical proposal, including: CV of the evaluator

- Motivation letter with the description of the relevant experience, including previous experience in evaluating similar projects;
- The proposed methodology and a detailed timeline of activities, indicating the deadlines for completing the tasks and submitting the expected deliverables, according to this ToR;
- References and recommendations.

2) A financial proposal with a breakdown of costs. The financial offer will be presented in EUR and will include all taxes.

The estimated effort is 30 days.

9. Submission Deadline

The application set will be presented in Romanian or English and will contain the technical and financial proposals at the email address: procurari@expert-grup.org by April 5, 2026, 19.00, extended up to 24 April 2026, 19.00. Only complete applications will be considered.

10. Evaluation process of candidates

The evaluation process will follow a two-stage approach, with a total of 100 points available.

Stage 1: In the first stage, all submitted technical proposals will be evaluated against the specified criteria listed in the table below, with a total of maximum 100 points distributed across the 5 evaluation criteria. To qualify for further consideration, a proposal must achieve a minimum score of 75 points.

Table 2: Technical offer evaluation grid

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Score	Scoring Guidelines
Relevant Professional Experience Minimum of 5 years' experience in evaluating projects funded by international institutions (CV and Motivation letter)	30 points	5 years: 10 points 6 – 8 years: 20 points 9+ years: 30 points
Methodological approach Proven ability to plan the evaluation, collect and analyze both qualitative and quantitative data. (Methodology)	40 points	Limited or generic description of methodological approach: 0 – 15 points Adequate methodological approach with partial coverage of requirements: 16-30 points Strong methodological approach: 31 – 40 points
Thematic Expertise Demonstrated understanding of civil society ecosystem and of the operational environment of the civil society and public authorities in the Republic of Moldova (Motivation letter and CV)	15 points	Limited or general knowledge; lacks relevant examples or practical experience: 0 – 5 points Moderate understanding of 1–2 areas; some relevant experience provided: 6 – 10 points In-depth expertise in all three areas, experience clearly linked to evaluation work: 11 – 15 points

Analytical, and Reporting Skills Clarity, coherence, and quality of previous deliverables. (references and recommendations+ motivation letter)	15 points	Basic evidence of relevant skills: 0 – 10 points High-quality deliverables and impactful reporting shown: 11 – 15 points
---	-------------------------	---

Stage 2: Applicants that meet or exceed the minimum qualifying score for the technical offer will proceed to the second stage of evaluation.

Upon completion of the technical evaluation, the financial offers for tenders that scored an average of 75 points, or more are opened. Weighted technical score would be calculated as average technical score of the offer in question / average technical score of the best technical offer x 100.

The evaluation committee will check that the financial offers contain no obvious arithmetical errors. Any obvious arithmetical errors are corrected without penalty to the tenderer.

The tender with the lowest total fees + lump sums receives 100 points. The others are awarded points by means of the following formula: Financial score = (lowest total fees + lump sums / total fees + lump sums of the tender being considered) x 100. When evaluating financial offers, the evaluation committee compares only the total fees and lump sums.

The final selection will be based on the combined score for both: i) the technical, and ii) financial evaluations. The final combined score will be calculated as a weighted sum, where the technical proposal will contribute up to 70% (70 points) to the final core, and the financial proposal will contribute up to 30% (30 points) of the total score.