

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### FINAL EVALUATION FOR THE “EMPOWERED CITIZENS ENHANCING ACCOUNTABILITY OF THE EDUCATION REFORM AND QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN MOLDOVA” PROJECT

#### A. About the project

**The Independent Analytical Centre „Expert-Grup”,** from its lead partner position in the consortium with Konrad Adenauer Stiftung (KAS, Germany), the Eastern European Studies Centre (CSEE, Lithuania) and the Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE, Moldova) is implementing, as of February 2019, the EU grant project “Inform, Empower, Act! Civil Society for good budgetary governance in Moldova”. For additional details on the project, please access the Expert-Grup webpage at: <https://www.expert-grup.org/en/activitate/proiecte/item/1751-informeaza-abiliteaza-si-actioneaza-societatea-civila-pentru-o-buna-guvernanta-in-procesul-bugetar/1751-informeaza-abiliteaza-si-actioneaza-societatea-civila-pentru-o-buna-guvernanta-in-procesul-bugetar?category=6>

**The general objective of the project** seeks to enhance civil society contribution to a higher level of transparency, efficiency and effectiveness of overall budget creation and execution at the local level through society participation and oversight.

Specific objectives:

1. To increase the level of information, awareness and motivation among the population and civil society at the local level about the budgetary process: importance of analysing the local budgets, discussing spending priorities, monitoring the budgetary execution, with emphasis on procurements for large investment projects;
2. To empower the population and civil society at the local level with appropriate knowledge, tools and frameworks to take a more active role in consultations, contribution and oversight of the local public policies and budgets;
3. To enhance involvement of the population and civil society in public policy development, budgetary processes monitoring and oversight activities of the public spending.

**The main project activities** are as follows:

- Creating the local coalitions (25 local coalitions in 25 localities from across the territory of the Republic of Moldova (please see Annex 1 for the list of localities)  
Launching the information, awareness and visibility campaign  
Developing the instruments for participatory budgeting
- Capacity building for 5 local implementing partners and the members of the local coalitions for participatory budgeting
- Promoting the improvement of the budgetary process at the local level  
Stimulating the participation of local coalitions in the budgetary process

- Promoting changes in the budgetary processes at the central level
- Analysing the political clientelism phenomenon in what concerns the financial allocations
- Organising annual forums dedicated to budgetary transparency

### **Target groups and project final beneficiaries**

The main target group of the project is the civil society organizations active at local level as well as the local activists. Particularly, the project targets the members of local coalitions from 25 LPAs, created and led by 5 regional CSOs acting as key local implementing partners in North, Centre, South, Gagauzia and Transnistria regions (on average, 5 municipalities (urban/rural) per implementing partner). It is estimated that each local coalition will include around 30 members (CSOs and local activists, as well as representatives of the local public authorities), making a total of 750 persons that are direct beneficiaries of the project. The entire population of beneficiary localities will be the final beneficiaries of the action reaching about 400 – 500 thousand persons.

**Annex 1** reflects the list of all local public authorities that are project partners.

## **B. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT**

The main goal of this consultancy is to carry out the final evaluation of the “Inform, Empower, Act! Civil Society for good budgetary governance in Moldova” project, focusing on its effectiveness and sustainability, taking into account context and processes.

The specific goals of the final evaluation are to:

- Assess impact of the project per project activity and in various regions
- Generate learning and knowledge about the conditions and circumstances (*such as but not limited to political climate, pandemic situation, budgetary reality*) in which the project achievements may sustain its results. The goal draw conclusions on how to further improve in participatory budgeting, budgetary process, strategies, programs and projects by key project stakeholders.
- Show the results and social return on investment made in the project. This should be done in a credible and transparent way.

## **C. KEY ACTIVITIES AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS**

During the evaluation process, the following activities will be undertaken: at first stage the evaluator will become familiarized with the project documents and the project implementation structure. As well, during this stage, the questions that need to be answered will be drafted and the evaluation methodology will be presented. After the preliminary stage, the evaluator will start the evaluation activities at objectives’ achievement level. In this regard, he/she will seek to answer the following questions:

**Objective no. 1:** *To increase the level of information, awareness and motivation among the population and civil society at the local level about the budgetary process: importance of analysing the local budgets, discussing spending priorities, monitoring the budgetary execution, with emphasis on procurements for large investment projects*

- How much has the level of information, awareness and motivation of the population and the civil society at local level increased in regard to the budgetary process and its components?
- What were the specific topics for which the level of information of the population, civil society and business representatives has increased?
- What were the specific topics for which the level of information of the population, civil society and business representatives has not increased, but it should increase?
- What were the most efficient communication means?
- Information on which topics were most embraced by the LPAs?
- What are the information constraints of the LPAs in regards to the budgetary processes?

**Objective no. 2:** *To empower the population and civil society at the local level with appropriate knowledge, tools and frameworks to take a more active role in consultations, contribution and oversight of the local public policies and budgets*

- What were the results of the capacity building activities for the local coalitions and local public authorities members on improving their understanding, knowledge and skills in what concerns their participation in the budgetary process?
- How, in practice, have these knowledge and skills helped the local coalitions and local public authorities' members in enhancing the level of information and participation in the budgetary process?
- What are the current constraints in enhancing the level of participation and involvement of the citizens in the budgetary processes?
- What were the most useful topics and instruments discussed and presented during the training program for involving the citizens and the civil society and business representatives in the budgetary processes?
- What role does the project webpage play in the process of empowering the local population and civil society?
- What were the actors involved in the empowering process and how is their role appreciated?

**Objective no. 3:** *To enhance involvement of the population and civil society in public policy development, budgetary processes monitoring and oversight activities of the public spending.*

- How is the need to participate in the budgetary process perceived by the citizens and representatives of the civil society and the business environment?
- How do the local public authorities perceive the need to have citizens, civil society and business representatives participate in the budgetary process?
- How do the local public authorities evaluate the level of participation in the budgetary process in the year 2021, compared to the previous years?
- How do the citizens, the civil society and business representatives evaluate the participation level in the budgetary processes in the year 2021, compared to the previous years?
- What are the best participation forms, in the citizens' and local public authorities' opinions?
- What are the constraints (including material and financial ones) of the local public authorities in enhancing the participation level in the budgetary process?
- What are the constraints of the citizens, civil society and business representatives in enhancing the participation level in the budgetary process?

In the final stage, the evaluator will present a report with the findings and recommendations on the achievement level of the project objectives. As well, the report will reflect an analysis on the weak and strong points of the implemented activities, general information about the project successes, the difficulties encountered and failures as well as about the achievement level of the project objectives. Moreover, the evaluator will present the project team and the project partners a set of recommendations for ensuring the medium and long term project sustainability, taking into account the identified constraints, challenges and opportunities.

#### **D. METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH**

The Consultant will develop its own detailed frameworks and methodology in order to respond to the key evaluation questions. The methodology is to be provided by the consultant in his/her proposal and is also one of the criteria for selecting the appropriate consultant for the assignment. The proposal should justify methodological choices as fit for answering key evaluation questions.

The Consultant shall follow up the qualitative and quantitative methodology to collect and analyze data to answer the evaluation questions, tailored to the units of analysis (Local Coalitions, activists from selected communities and local and central public authorities, etc.), including gender dimension.

The Consultant will carry out interviews with service providers, local coalition representatives and citizens, collect data through focus groups, individual interviews and other relevant means in order to properly address the evaluation questions.

#### **E. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES AND KEY MILESTONES**

In the course of the assignment the evaluator shall provide the following outputs in English:

- i. *Inception report* outlining a detailed plan, methodology and timeline of activities to be accomplished by the evaluator under the assignment, consulted and validated with Expert-Grup – by October 30, 2021 (the draft deliverable has to be submitted at least 1 weeks in advance in order to allow sufficient time for consultations).
- ii. *Report about the results of interviews/surveys*, outlining the key findings of evaluator's discussions with relevant stakeholders about project activities and results, consulted and validated with Expert-Grup – by November 30, 2021, (the draft deliverable has to be submitted at least 1 week in advance in order to allow sufficient time for consultations).
- iii. *First draft of evaluation report* that answers the mentioned three key evaluation objectives and provides recommendations – December 15, 2021 (the draft deliverable has to be submitted at least 1 weeks in advance in order to allow sufficient time for consultations).
- iv. *Final report*, outlining the conducted activities, persons/institutions interviewed, data collected, lessons learned and recommendations for future projects, consulted and validated with Expert-Grup – December 22, 2021 (the draft deliverable has to be submitted at least 1 week in advance in order to allow sufficient time for consultations).

#### **F. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

The proposals received will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Professional experience in evaluating similar projects, financed by international institutions (at least 5 years of experience)

- Knowledge and expertise in collecting and analysing qualitative and quantitative data, including conducting interviews, elaborating monitoring indicators and using data for formulating causal links;
- Understanding participatory budgeting and citizens' involvement mechanisms;
- Knowledge on the context in which the local public authorities are operating in the Republic of Moldova.

The points awarded (maximum 100 points) after the evaluation will represent an accumulation of the points obtained by the technical proposal (maximum 70 obtainable points) and the financial proposal (maximum 30 obtainable points). The selection process will be carried out in 2 stages. During the first stage, the technical proposals submitted by each applicant will be evaluated according to the above-mentioned criteria. The minimum qualifying score for the proposal – 70 points.

## **G. LOCATION, DURATION**

The estimated duration of the assignment is 12 weeks.

The estimated contract period will be October 15 – December 22, 2021.

## **H. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

The Consultant will interact with the team leader and project director of „**Inform, Empower, Act!**” project, from Expert-Grup.

### Key responsibilities of the Consultant:

- 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 present the findings of evaluation to Expert-Grup;
- to elaborate the interim and final completion report;

### Key responsibilities of Expert-Grup:

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

## **I. APPLICATION PROCESS**

**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](mailto:procurari@expert-grup.org) by September 30, 2021

Please take notice that only complete applications will be evaluated.

The technical proposal will contain the following:

- Description of the relevant experience of the bidder, including previous experience in evaluating similar projects;
- CV(s) of the team (the consultant can be a physical or a juridical person and can form a team of 1 or 2 experts with relevant experience).
- The detailed timeline of activities, indicating the deadlines for completing the tasks and submitting the expected deliverable, according to this ToR;
- References and recommendations.

The financial offer will be presented in EUR and will include all taxes, including the contributions of the employer for paying salaries/fees for providing services in the Republic of Moldova.

If the technical proposal is found acceptable, the employer invites the selected firm, opens the financial proposal and negotiates on the price of the assignment. Once both sides agree, a contract will be signed.

#### **L. BUDGET AND PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

The maximum amount of man-days for this effort is estimated at 35 days.

Both parties will agree on a lump-sum form of contract. Under a lump-sum contract the employer agrees to pay the consultant a fixed sum of money for services given up-front specified technical characteristics, such as inception report, the quality of which can be readily assessed to be delivered at a specified deadline or accomplishment of established milestones. The payment schedule is mentioned below (the milestones are according to the deliverables under section E of this ToR):

|                                   |     |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Payment/Milestone | 25% |
| <i>Inception report</i>           |     |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Payment/milestone | 35% |
| <i>First Draft</i>                |     |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Payment/Milestone | 40% |
| <i>Final report</i>               |     |

#### **Annex no. 1**

**The list of partner municipalities in the project „Inform, Empower, Act!” and the regional partners**

| <b>Local public administration</b>                                                    | <b>Rayon</b>   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>Development Region „Nord”, regional partner AO Caroma Nord, Balti municipality</b> |                |
| Mun. Balti                                                                            | Mun. Balti     |
| Town Drochia                                                                          | Rayon Drochia  |
| Town Singerei                                                                         | Rayon Singerei |
| Town Florești                                                                         | Rayon Florești |
| Town Riscani                                                                          | Rayon Riscani  |

|                                                                                                                     |                   |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>Development Region „Centru”, regional partner: AO the Agency for regional development „Habitat”, town Rezina</b> |                   |
| Mun. Straseni                                                                                                       | Rayon Straseni    |
| Town Calarasi                                                                                                       | Rayon Calarasi    |
| Town Rezina                                                                                                         | Rayon Rezina      |
| Town Telenesti                                                                                                      | Rayon Telenesti   |
| Town Soldanesti                                                                                                     | Rayon Soldanesti  |
| Commune Pirlita                                                                                                     | Rayon Ungheni     |
| <b>Development Region „Sud”, regional partner: AO Azi, Cahul municipality</b>                                       |                   |
| Mun. Cahul                                                                                                          | Rayon Cahul       |
| Town Cimisia                                                                                                        | Rayon Cimisia     |
| Town Leova                                                                                                          | Rayon Leova       |
| Town Cantemir                                                                                                       | Rayon Cantemir    |
| Commune Salcuta                                                                                                     | Rayon Causeni     |
| <b>Development Region ATUG<sup>1</sup>, regional partner: ON „Institutul pentru Inițiative Rurale”</b>              |                   |
| Townhall of Ceadir Lunga municipality                                                                               | ATU Gagauzia      |
| Townhall Vulcănești                                                                                                 | ATU Gagauzia      |
| Townhall Baurci                                                                                                     | ATU Gagauzia      |
| village Tomai,                                                                                                      | ATU Gagauzia      |
| village Gaidar                                                                                                      | ATU Gagauzia      |
| <b>Special region, regional partner: Contact Centre, Mun Chisinau</b>                                               |                   |
| Commune Boscana                                                                                                     | Rayon Criuleni    |
| village Dubasarii Vechi                                                                                             | Rayon Criuleni    |
| Town Criuleni                                                                                                       | Rayon Criuleni    |
| village Gura Bicului                                                                                                | Rayon Anenii Noi  |
| village Talmaza                                                                                                     | Rayon Stefan Vodă |

---

<sup>1</sup> Administrative Territorial Unit Gagauzia