

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for selecting two experts to carry out a baseline study within the INSPIRED Moldova project, focused on assessing CSOs capacities in policy dialog, advocacy and digital capacities.

Type of Request: Open Call

Issue Date: 18.10.2024

Deadline for Submission of Offers: 05.11.2024, 11:00 a.m.

CONTEXT

About the Project

„INSPIRED Moldova” project aims to contribute to a conducive environment for civil society in Moldova by empowering civil society organisations (CSOs) to actively engage in policy discussions at all levels. Taking advantage of the momentum generated by the EU accession process, the action will facilitate policy dialogue processes on civil society, enabling the environment and relevant plans and programmes to be drawn from the accession negotiations. Recognising the importance of prioritising democracy strengthening in the EU's new fundamentals first accession methodology, the initiative will enhance CSOs' capabilities to act as catalysts of democracy at both national and local levels and in the digital sphere. Moreover, the Action will support collaborative efforts to nurture an inclusive and participatory environment that is conducive to improving public participation, including advancing underrepresented groups and women in Moldova.

The Project is financed by the European Union and implemented by a consortium led by the European Partnership for Democracy (EPD), and composed of CPR Moldova, CONTACT Center, People in Need, ALDA - the European Association for Local Democracy and Democracy Reporting International (DRI).

About the Study

The proposed baseline study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of the capacities and challenges faced by civil society organisations (CSOs) in Moldova. This study combines both quantitative and qualitative methods to ensure a holistic view of CSOs' policy dialog, advocacy and digital capacities.

The key components of the baseline methodology are as follows:

1. The survey conducted by a sociological company:

1.1 Quantitative Data Collection

A survey of approximately 350 CSOs will capture a broad spectrum of data across various regions. The survey, conducted by a sociological company, aims to gather baseline information on CSOs' organisational and digital capacities.

2. Analytical and qualitative data collection by two experts.

Two experts will be selected to work on the following:

2.1. Designing of survey for the sociological company

- In close cooperation with CONTACT, EPD, PIN, and ALDA, the experts will design the survey to be handed out to the sociological company in charge of the survey.

2.2. Qualitative Data Collection

- **Focus Groups:**

- Two focus groups with regional CSOs to understand challenges and capacities at the local level (in the North and the South) and another one on digitalisation;
- One focus group with Local Authorities to gauge their perspective on CSO capacities, particularly in public participation and dialogue;
- One focus group with national-level CSOs will capture insights on national advocacy and dialogue mechanisms.

- **In-depth Interviews: A maximum of 10 interviews will be conducted with key stakeholders**

- 2-3 public policy experts;
- CSOs leaders.

2.3. Desk Review

- A thorough analysis of existing documents, policies, studies, and reports to complement the data collected from surveys and interviews. This will ensure alignment with ongoing research and avoid duplication of efforts.
- Experts will map existing dialogue mechanisms at the local and national levels and investigate how CSOs listed as “interested parties” on national-level policies work and their needs.
- A focus will be placed on implementing national policies (how umbrella organisations work on policies with the national authorities / with their constituency; how local-level dialogues can give feedback on national policies, etc.)

Deliverables

a. **Assessment Report on CSO Capacities:** The cornerstone of this research will be a thorough assessment report that focuses on the technical, organisational, advocacy (all related to partaking in policy dialogue), and digital capacities of CSOs operating in Moldova. This report will serve as a vital resource for understanding the current state of CSO capabilities for capacity development programmes. It will not only evaluate their strengths in engaging in policy dialogue at the local level but will also delve into their advocacy skills and interest in dialogue on implementing national policies. In crafting this report, we will include a detailed methodology section, providing transparency about the research approaches employed, encompassing quantitative and qualitative data collection methods, to build a baseline.

b. **Dialogue Mechanisms Catalogue:** Another key deliverable will be the creation of a catalogue that maps existing dialogue mechanisms and initiatives facilitating engagement between CSOs and public authorities at the local level, notably regarding the implementation of national policies. This catalogue will play an instrumental role in identifying ongoing initiatives that could be supported by the project, as well as highlighting relevant CSOs that could be interested to participate in these processes. By detailing the current dialogue platforms, we aim to underscore best practices and pinpoint opportunities for collaboration among CSOs, government entities, and other stakeholders. This mapping will also aid in strategically selecting localities and CSOs for subgrants, ensuring resources are directed

where they can create the most meaningful impact on governance and community engagement.

Based on the findings from the capacity assessment and the identification of blind spots, the experts will offer a comprehensive set of strategic recommendations. These recommendations will be tailored to address the identified gaps in advocacy skills, technical expertise, and organisational capacity within CSOs (with a focus on policy dialogue capacity eventually), ensuring that the support provided is both relevant and practical. The recommendations will also offer a pathway for developing more effective advocacy initiatives.

Note* *All deliverables should be presented in English*

Terms and Conditions

- **Contract Duration:** The study will commence immediately after the contract is signed, with the total duration estimated to be approximately 2 months. A detailed work plan will be presented within the first week of signing the contract.
- **Confidentiality:** All data collected and analyzed during this study will remain the property of Centrul CONTACT.
- **Payment:** Payment will be made in installments, according to a schedule agreed upon by both parties, based on the delivery of key tasks and meeting the quality criteria specified in the contract.

Instruction for application

Candidates are invited to apply for one of the following positions

1. expert in policy dialog
2. expert in digitalization

Applications can be submitted either individually for each position or in a team of two experts for both positions.

Candidates may also be submitted on behalf of a legal entity*

*The experience and background of the entity will not be considered in the selection process.

Interested experts are invited to submit:

- A technical proposal detailing the proposed methodology and a work schedule;
- A financial proposal in Moldovan lei, VAT0;
- CV of the expert;
- Letters of recommendation from the last two years or references;
- Links to relevant documents and research previously conducted.

Note* *If two experts participate in the competition as a team, it is sufficient to submit a joint application.*

Proposals should be sent by email to concurs@contact.md, by **November 05, 2024, 11.00 a.m.** with the subject line "**INSPIRED Baseline Study**".

SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated against the following criteria:

- Understanding of the proposed task and approach;
- Experience of the experts;
- Proposed price;

Evaluation criteria and maximum marks:

Evaluation Criteria	Expectations	Maximum Score
Understanding of the Terms of Reference and Proposed Methodology	Demonstration of a clear understanding of the proposed tasks. The methodology should be well-defined and include all necessary research stages and techniques.	30
Experts' Experience	Relevant experience of at least 3 years in conducting studies and qualitative research.	20
Quality of Previously Developed Materials	Quality of deliverables previously developed within other studies presented in the application.	20
Financial Offer	Offers will be evaluated based on the lowest price criterion.	30*
TOTAL		100

*The evaluation of the financial offer is carried out according to a formula as follows:

Variables:

Σ_{offer} = amount proposed in the financial offer;

Σ_{min} = the amount proposed in the lowest financial offer;

Score offered for the financial offer $P_{\text{fin}} = 30 * \Sigma_{\text{min}} / \Sigma_{\text{offer}}$.

Any additional questions regarding these Terms of Reference can be sent to info.ong.contact@gmail.com, with the subject **Questions INSPIRED Baseline Study by November 04, 2024**.

CONTACT Center reserves the right to extend the submission deadline and to request further clarifications from applicants if necessary.