Terms of reference

Final evaluation of the “Strengthening Independent Media in Central Asia” project

# Internews overview

**Internews** is an international non-profit organization whose mission is to **empower local civil society worldwide** to give people the **news and information** they need, the ability to **connect** and the means to **make their voices heard**.

For more information about the organisation please visit: [www.internews.org](http://www.internews.org)

# Project background

Internews launched the three-year “Strengthening Independent Media in Central Asia” project in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan in 2015. The project aims to increase citizens’ access to objective information regarding domestic and global issues of public importance by enhancing independent media’s ability to engage a larger print and online readership in Central Asia.

The project is based around the following three objectives:

* **Objective 1: Improve the quality of local and Russian-language media;**
* **Objective 2: Increase the public’s access to reliable and unbiased information**;
* **Objective 3: Strengthen the sustainability and digital security of targeted media partners**

# Evaluation Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the performance and success of the project. It should also look at signs of potential impact of project activities on beneficiaries and sustainability of results. The consultant will be responsible for producing several deliverables using a methodology and following a timeline that is mutually agreed upon with the project staff.

**Scope of Work**

***Evaluation Questions***

The evaluator will address the following questions during the evaluation and also provide recommendations for future work or adjustments based on his/her finding. This list is not exhaustive and may be modified in discussion with the project team.

*Project Implementation*

* How effective was the project in implementing activities across the target countries?
* Did the program meet its set benchmarks and requirements?
* Were there any challenges that arose during project implementation? If so, how did the project handle and adapt to these challenges?

*Content Creation and Access*

* How did the project increase availability of objective information on domestic and global issues in local languages? Why or why not was it successful in doing so?
* Did the program enhance coverage of news and information relevant to marginalized populations, such as women, youth, racial and ethnic minorities, religious minorities and LGBT persons?
* How has the project impacted content quality at partner media outlets?
* How have project activities affected the relationship and cooperation between media and civil society on anti-corruption campaigns?
* How have project activities impacted community engagement with local media?

*Professional Skills and Development*

* How did the project equip Central Asian journalists and editors to be better able to engage the public with reliable news, both editorially and in terms of their security? Was the project successful in enhancing Central Asian journalists’ and editors’ technical and professional skills in print, audio, broadcast, and online production?

*Cross-Border Collaboration and Learning*

* Did project activities lead to effective networking among journalists across the target countries? Have there been concrete examples of cross-border collaborative initiatives or knowledge sharing as a result of project activities?

*Program Impact and Sustainability*

* How have project activities affected the circulation, readership, and online audience engagement of partner independent media outlets?
* Has project support led to direct, concrete gains in income generation (ex. online advertising) for partner media outlets?
* Has there been any evidence to determine the public’s trust in and reaction to project-supported content?

***Required Tasks***

* Conduct an extensive document review, including the original solicitations and proposals, all quarterly reports, documentation of grants opportunities, briefly review and analyze selected partner media and grantee content. (3 days)
* Working with project staff, create a list of questions for each target group of stakeholders. (1 day)
* Hold in-person meetings with staff, partners, funders, and other stakeholders throughout the project’s target countries to evaluate project outcomes. When in-person meetings are not feasible, hold remote meetings. (8 days)
* Complete the evaluation report, with recommendations. (8 days)

# Deliverables

* Final evaluation report (approx. 10-12 pages)
* A debrief with Internews staff on the evaluation findings
* Recommendations for future programming

***Estimated timeframe:*** 20 days

# Evaluator Qualifications

Candidates should provide:

* Descriptions of previous evaluations of multi-year media projects
* Proposed draft research and evaluation methodology
* Cost estimates
* Description of language skills (fluent Russian required, English and at least one local language strongly preferred)

***Applications should be sent to:*** [***akadirov@Internews.org***](mailto:akadirov@Internews.org) ***no later than March 31, 2018***