**Terms of reference**

**Final evaluation of “Strengthening Resilience to Radicalisation and Disinformation in Central Asia through Independent Media” project**

**4180-1 CA-DG-EC**

**Email to:** [Central-Asia-Info@internews.eu](mailto:Central-Asia-Info@internews.eu) **Deadline: 26 February 2021**

**Internews overview**

**Internews** is an international non-profit organisation 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 overview**

In October 2019, Internews launched the second phase of an 18-month regional project “Strengthening Resilience to Radicalisation and Disinformation in Central Asia through Independent Media” funded by the European Union.

The regional project aims to strengthen the resilience of citizens to radicalisation narratives and disinformation leading to violent extremism through support to media, civil society organisations, government institutions, religious leaders and active citizens in Central Asia with specific objectives:

* to increase the availability of objective, conflict-sensitive information regarding preventing radicalisation leading to violent extremism;
* to increase and consolidate collaboration, content exchange and networking among practitioners in national and regional efforts on preventing violent extremism and radicalisation leading to violent extremism (RVE);
* to improve the critical media consumption skills of local communities in Central Asia.
* to counter misinformation, disinformation, rumour, xenophobia, and stigma towards migrants and their families, refugees and ethnic minorities affected by COVID-19 pandemic in Central Asia.

**Evaluation Purpose and Objectives**

The purpose of this final evaluation is to assess the performance and success of the project. It should look at signs of potential impact of project activities on beneficiaries and the sustainability of results, as well as providing solid, evidence-based conclusions on whether the project’s overall objectives were achieved. There are several aspects of the project that require detailed case studies to be developed, in order to capture examples of impact.

According to the expected project results, this evaluation has the following tasks:

* Assess the project impact on increasing capacity to produce quality conflict sensitive media content by journalists, civic activists and media professionals in Central Asia;
* Assess the project impact on improving critical media consumption for civil society organisations, policy makers and active citizens in Central Asia.
* Assess performance of the project in terms of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, coherence, impact and sustainability;
* Analyse underlying factors beyond Internews’ control that affect the achievement of the project’s objectives;
* Provide recommendations for potential future interventions.

Also, the final evaluation will assess to what extent the Action has helped to raise awareness of the external policies and actions of the European Union in its role as a global player, and provided accountability and transparency on the use of EU funds to taxpayers and the citizens of partner countries.

Internews envisions a theory-driven evaluation that speaks to the international evaluation criteria, OECD/DAC (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, coherence with other interventions, potential for impact and sustainability,) and that pays particular attention to gender equality issues.

**Evaluation Scope**

The following general key questions should be addressed through the evaluation:

1. Did the theory of change hold true?
2. Has the project responded to the needs of the target groups and have they continued to do so if/when circumstances have changed?
3. How compatible has the project been with other interventions or organisations in the region where it was being implemented?
4. How effective was the project at building the capacity for national media professionals, civic activists, religious/community leaders and active citizens achieved the intended outcome of increasing capacity to produce quality content as well as improving media consumption skills of local communities in CA countries?
5. How effective was regional and national online media literacy campaign improved or contributed to critical media consumption among civil society organisations, government institutions, religious leaders and active citizens in Central Asia?
6. To what extent the project activities have progressed in countering misinformation, disinformation, rumor, xenophobia, and stigma towards migrants and their families, refugees and ethnic minorities affected by COVID-19 pandemic in Central Asia?
7. What results have been achieved in the implementation of the project? What factors have contributed to the achievement of the project’s objectives? What have been the main challenges/barriers to achieving the project’s objectives?
8. What are the tangible outcomes (positive and negative) as a result of the project? Has there been positive or negative impact on beneficiaries as a whole? What specific real difference has the activity made to the beneficiaries?
9. Are the resources and inputs converted to outputs in a timely and cost-effective manner? Is the project achieving the planned outputs? Could the outputs be achieved with fewer resources?
10. To what extent the awareness of key stakeholders and the target population in Central Asia (CA) has been raised about the Action without compromising the EU’s fundamental values and principles and jeopardizing the project impact?
11. Are the results sustainable? If so, how?
12. How could things be done better in the future? (future recommendations)
13. Has the project had any positive or negative effects on gender equality? Could gender mainstreaming have been improved in planning, implementation or follow up?

We are particularly interested in submissions that employ a mixed-methods approach, including but not limited to interviews, focus groups, surveys, etc. In addition to the overall evaluation design, we also require case studies to be developed, which should use multiple data collections methods in order to triangulate and corroborate information. The case studies should be designed to capture information in the following areas:

1. Assessing project impact on increasing access to conflict-sensitive information (this relates to overall project impact and a suitable case study approach should be employed).
2. Looking at how people in Central Asia engage with and use information produced with project support (this also relates to overall project impact and a suitable case study approach should be employed).
3. Assessing the impact and reach of 2 projects funded through Media Innovation Labs.
4. Assessing the impact and reach of 4 projects funded through IdeaFest seed grants.
5. Assessing the impact and reach of 2-3 projects funded by community journalism grants.

**Note:** Due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the final evaluation should be conducted online.

**Timeframe and deliverables**

Internews anticipate around 25-30 full working days will be needed to conduct this evaluation with a maximum budget of 35,000 Euro. Given the deadlines and scope of work, this consultancy may suit a company or a group of individuals working together. The tasks and deadlines are as follows:

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| **Activity** | **Timeframe** | **Comments** |
| Launch of ToR and bids  Reception | Deadline for applications:  **26 February 2021** |  |
| Appointment of evaluator and initial debrief | Appointment: by 22 March 2021  Debrief: as soon as possible upon appointment. | The evaluator is expected to  have initial online meetings with project staff in order to understand the expectation of the evaluation. Relevant project documents will be made available to the evaluator. |
| Inception report | By 30 March 2021 at the latest, estimated time: 4-6 working days | Relevant documentation will  be made available and the  inception report must include:   * Literature review * Draft methodology * Data collection tools including conducting case studies   Outline of final report structure |
| Online data collection with key stakeholders and beneficiaries; data analysis | By 20 April 2021,  estimated time: 12-15 working days | Conduct online data collection (e.g. KIIs, surveys, FGDs) and project documents review |
| Report writing and  submission of the first draft to Internews | By 26 April 2021 at the  latest, estimated time: 2-3  working days | Internews to have an  opportunity to comment and provide  feedback |
| Final report submission to Internews after revision | By 3 May 2021 | The evaluator is expected to revise the draft report based on feedback from Internews. Any remaining sets of data to be submitted to Internews |

Note that the draft and final reports should be presented in English and be no longer than 30 pages (excluding any relevant annexes) and contain a concise Executive Summary of core findings and recommendations, the latter being specific and action-oriented, and tailored to all relevant stakeholders (i.e. Internews and the donor). It should also include a methodology section, making explicit any limits to the evaluation.

**Application guidelines and requirements**

Interested parties should apply to [Central-Asia-Info@internews.eu](mailto:Central-Asia-Info@internews.eu) with attention to Regional M&E Manager Ikrom Mamadov.

Applications should include the below documentation. **Deadline: 26 February 2021:**

* A 2-3-page statement of interest/draft proposal, highlighting how your methodological approach will address the scope planned for this evaluation as well as describing how your profile meets criteria (see next section);
* A CV and 2 reference letters;
* Evidence of evaluation work (e.g. link to evaluation reports or PDF attachments), highlighting evaluation theories and approaches;
* A short cost justification (not included in the 2-page limit) and estimated level of effort (number of days), including your salary history and/or daily rate for your last 3 similar consultancies.

**Essential qualifications**

* Fluent in English and Russian;
* Bachelor’s degree in media, journalism, international development, evaluation or related field;
* At least 3 years’ experience conducting evaluations in challenging contexts, particularly for European Donors;
* Experience in the evaluation of media projects;
* Experience with qualitative and quantitative M&E data collection and analysis methods;
* Excellent intercultural communication skills/cultural sensitivity and the ability to forge strong cross-cultural relationships and build trust demonstrated through previous intercultural experience;
* Strong facilitation, presentation, writing and communication skills.

**Desirable**

* Masters’ degree or PhD in relevant field
* Experience conducting evaluations for media development, or more than 5 years’ experience as evaluator