

Terms of Reference for delivering a training on communication, advocacy and networking for policy influence for national CSOs in Azerbaijan

Project background

The European Union (EU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) value a dynamic civil society environment, which fosters pluralism and contributes towards sustainable development and inclusive growth. To support active engagement of the civil society in the national development, the EU and UNDP have launched a 3-year project “Developing innovation-driven and sustainable civil society in Azerbaijan”, an initiative that aims to build a strong and influential Civil Society Sector by fostering meaningful participation of the CSOs in policy formulation and policy debate, and enable them to better represent and voice the interests and concerns of their constituencies.

The project comes at an opportune time following gradual thwarting of the relations between the government and the CSOs. Over the past few years, the practice of organizing public discussions with the participation of independent experts and CSOs has to some degree improved. CSO-government cooperation channels have widened, with CSOs being given more opportunities to provide policy recommendations and participate in public councils, discussions, and working groups. To earn credibility and effectively influence policy the CSOs need to beef up their technical expertise and experience in policy-making processes, and be familiar with key tools and procedures involved in the development and implementation of policy. While the CSOs in Azerbaijan have practical knowledge of what is happening on the ground it is crucial that they acquire specific advocacy and networking skills and learn how to better utilise the evidence they collect, if they want to stand a better chance of influencing public policies. In addition, the CSOs also need to improve their communication strategies to become better able to persuade various stakeholders of the validity of their goals and strategies, and convey their results of their activity in clear, concise and convincing manner.

In order to contribute to the set overall goal, the project envisages a capacity enhancement programme, with the main objective being to increase the capacity of the CSOs representative in a number of key areas by offering them new knowledge of the contemporary methodologies and techniques as well as the opportunity for exchange and practical experience. These key capacity areas the project focuses on include:

- Policy research and preparation of policy papers
- *Communication and visibility*
- *Advocacy for policy change*
- *Alliance building and networking for policy influence*

Purpose and scope of the assignment

The purpose of the assignment is to strengthen the capacities of the civil society organizations in Azerbaijan to communicate effectively and to influence the public policies and promote policy changes through advocacy and networking.

The content of the training should be designed around three areas and cover the following topics:

Communication:

Training objectives

1. To gain knowledge on the best approach to present the CSO message to policy makers
2. To enhance the capacity of CSOs in communicating the message to the media

Key content

- Developing communication strategies and communication & visibility plans
- Formulating a clear message
- Communicating Project Impact through story writing
- Communicating project impact through images
- Data visualization and presentation
- Effective media relations
- Digital communication and social media

Advocacy for policy change:

Training objectives

1. To increase understanding on the role of the CSOs in advocacy and stages of an advocacy process.
2. To learn on the way to identify key messages and deciding of the most effective approach in advocacy.
3. To learn on how to formulate an advocacy effort on a policy or regulatory issue relevant to the participating CSOs in the workshop
4. To understand the approach for managing and implementing an advocacy process, by setting specific targets together with corresponding activities, timeframe and budget

Key content

- Objectives of advocacy and role of CSOs in the development of advocacy strategy
- The implementation steps of advocacy process: identification of the issue, networking and forming alliances, and involvement of the media
- The three stages of an advocacy campaign: development of concrete proposals for change, bringing the proposal to the political level for consideration and adoption, and integrating the changes made into the policymaking criteria
- Stakeholders' analysis: Identification and analysis of target audience that can make policy change or influence the decisions: primary and secondary audiences
- Identification and formulation of key advocacy messages
- Approach(es) to be taken in advocacy
- Identification of the goal and objectives/outcomes of the advocacy campaign with well formulated indicators of achievement
- Preparation of the intervention framework (log frame) for the goal, objectives/outcomes and activities
- Identification of activities to be undertaken for the policy issue in question, for each of the target audience, together with the corresponding key message.
- Budget preparation with a time frame based on the advocacy strategy and activities

Alliance building (coalitions) and networks for policy influence:

Training objectives

1. To increase understanding on the advantages and disadvantages of CSOs coalitions and networks and the way to mitigate the risks when entering a coalition or a network
2. To enhance knowledge in carrying out an assessment of potential partners in order to design the appropriate coalition communication strategy

Key content

- Coalition and network models
- Why enter a coalition or a network: advantages and disadvantages of building formal or informal relationships with other CSOs?
- Assessment of the potential partners
- Managing coalition partners and networks
- Coalition communication strategy and trust building

The main target audience of the training programme will be national and local civil society organizations working with a diverse population groups including but not limited to youth, women, people with disabilities, internally displaced populations, small entrepreneurs and others. The main sectors of their activity include:

- Gender equality and women empowerment
- Youth development
- Social and economic studies
- Education
- Health
- Support to people with special needs
- Environmental management
- Regional development

The trainings should reach out to around 80 CSOs and should be delivered remotely using Zoom platform. The trainings shall be delivered within normal business hours in Azerbaijan – 10:00 – 18:00 Baku time. Given high number of participants, the training should be delivered in a series of four (4) training events, each accommodating up to 20 participants.

Each training event is expected to take place remotely and last for 6-7 full days (12-14 days in half-day sessions) using a mix of training methodologies including lectures, power point presentations, guided discussions, group work, simulation exercises, demonstration of video materials, case-study analysis and other. Relevant essential documents for the training, and instructions for trainees shall be shared prior or during the trainings. Final training content, methodology and agenda should be designed and finalized in consultation with UNDP.

, trainings are to be conducted through zoom within normal business hours in Baku, Azerbaijan (10:00 – 18:00 Baku time).

Deliverables

The selected Service Provider is expected to produce the following deliverables:

Deliverable	Deadline for delivery
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Inception report detailing overall approach to the assignment, training methodology and content, learning outcomes and methods	Within 7 days from the commencement of the assignment
Delivery of the 4 training events to around 80 CSOs, each training event for up to 20 CSOs	Within 60 days after approval of the methodology
Training report outlining the pre- & post-test assessment, general trainer's reflections on training workshops, overview of most common issues of concern, recommendations for improvements and statistical results of trainee feedback forms.	Within 7 days after the completion of the trainings.

CRITERIA FOR THE ASSESMENT OF THE PROPOSAL:

Technical Proposal (T=70%)

Expertise of the Firm 25%

- At least 5 years of proven experience in delivering trainings on advocacy / communication / networking – 15 points
- At least 3 projects on delivery of relevant trainings to CSOs – 10 points

Methodology, Its Appropriateness to the Condition and Timeliness of the Implementation Plan 30%.

The methodology, inter alia, must include training content, learning methods, tools and techniques.

- Methodology - 20
- Implementation plan - 10

Team composition and Qualification of Key Personnel 45%

- Adequacy of the team composition to the complexity of the assignment – 7
- Qualification of the trainers - 38

Trainers must meet the following requirements:

- University degree in communications, public relations, journalism, marketing or relevant field is required (5)
- At least 7 years of professional work experience at international level in public relations, communications, or advocacy; (8)
- Experience in media relations or in journalism; (5)
- Experience in the use of social media; (5)
- Proven experience in building capacities for Communication, Advocacy and Networking for multiple target audiences including civil society organizations (8)
- Previous similar experience of work with CIS / Central Europe (5)
- Fluency in English is required (oral and written) (2)

Financial Proposal (P=30%)

Financial scores to be computed as a ratio of the Proposal's offer to the lowest price among the proposals received by UNDP:

$$Sf = \frac{\text{Lowest Proposal}}{\text{Proposed Proposal}} \times 100$$

Proposals will be ranked according to their combined technical (St) and financial (Sf) scores using the weights (T = the weight given to the Technical Proposal; P = the weight given to the Financial Proposal;

$$T + P = 100; S = St \times T\% + Sf \times P\%.$$

The contract will be awarded to the firm whose proposal will obtain the highest aggregate score based on the technical and financial evaluation.

If a company passes 70% minimum threshold as a result of technical evaluation, then UNDP will officially request the companies passing 70% to provide their passwords for financial proposal. The companies not gaining 70% for technical evaluation will not pass to the next stage of evaluation and their passwords will not be requested.

PROPOSED PAYMENT SCHEDULE:

The schedule of payments for the services will be agreed with the Contractor before the start of the assignment. A preliminary schedule is provided below.

Outputs	Percentage	Timing for completion of the output	Condition for Payment Release
Inception report detailing overall approach to the assignment, training methodology and content, learning outcomes and methods	20%	Within 7 days from the commencement of the assignment	a) UNDP's written acceptance (i.e., not mere receipt) of the quality of the outputs; and b) Receipt of invoice from the Service Provider.
Delivery of the 4 training events to around 80 CSOs, each training event for up to 20 CSOs	65%	Within 60 days after approval of the methodology	
Training report outlining the pre- & post-test assessment, general trainer's reflections on training workshops, overview of most common issues of concern, recommendations for improvements and statistical results of trainee feedback forms.	15%	Within 7 days after the completion of the trainings.	

IMPLEMENTATION ARRANGEMENTS

Service Provider will work in close collaboration with the Project Team and will get any assistance required to implement the functions under the contract. The Service Provider will use own facilities and transport, as well as own corporate Zoom account.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION:

Project Manager is responsible for monitoring and evaluation of all deliverables.

LOCATION

The assignment is home-based. The contractor is expected to work at his location.

REPORTING

The Service Provider will provide the reports to Project Manager.