



CALL FOR PROPOSALS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Evaluation of EU-funded STRONG project

1. Introduction

[STRONG](#) (Sustainable, Target-group oriented, Resilient and Open NGOs with Good governance) Civil Society is a project implemented by Human Rights House Foundation (HRHF) that aims to strengthen the role that civil society plays in the democratisation processes in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. STRONG Civil Society is co-funded by the European Union and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Originally approved as a 3-year project (July 2020 – June 2023), its implementation was extended to January 2024 through no-cost extension.

With STRONG, HRHF sets out to strengthen the role that Human Rights Houses, member NGOs and other CSOs play in the democratisation processes in their countries.

The project aims to:

1. Strengthen capacities of CSOs for outreach and engagement with citizens and communities;
2. Promote and engage in dialogue between civil society and relevant stakeholders on four fundamental rights – expression, association, assembly and the right to be a human rights defender – nationally and internationally; and
3. Ensure that well-governed Human Rights Houses in the countries serve as platforms/national networks for CSOs in their countries.

A set of specific activities are designed and implemented to achieve each of the project objectives.

As the project approaches the end of its implementation period, HRHF will commission an external evaluation to assess efficiency and impact of the project, identify best practices and examples of success, as well as areas for improvement.

2. Background

Human Rights House Foundation establishes, supports, and connects Human Rights Houses – coalitions of civil society organisations working together to advance human rights at home and abroad. Today, more than 80 civil society organisations are united in Human Rights Houses in an international network active across Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans, and the Caucasus. Together, we advocate for the freedoms of assembly, association, and expression and the right to be a human rights defender. These four rights underpin a strong and independent civil society and protect and empower human rights defenders.

At the end of 2019, HRHF entered into a financial framework partnership agreement with the European Union for a period of four years. The partnership is based on common general objectives to:

- Strengthen the role of civil society organisations (CSOs) as governance actors in the Eastern Partnership countries.

- Enhance cooperation and coordination of CSO capacity building actions and initiatives in the Eastern Partnership countries.
- Increase the impact of capacity development initiatives actions across the Eastern Partnership countries.

STRONG project is a specific grant awarded to HRHF by the Commission for the purpose of implementing the partnership, for which framework agreement applies. The project is co-funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which is a long-term donor of HRHF.

3. Scope of the evaluation

As project STRONG implementation is coming to an end, HRHF seeks to assess the impact of project implementation for the purposes of accountability and organisational learning. The project should be evaluated with a view to point out successes and best practices, as well as identify recommendations and needs of future intervention in this area. In addition, the evaluation should also reflect on the impact of sub-grants on increased cooperation, including cross-border cooperation, between and among project beneficiaries.

Given that the project is implemented under [DG NEAR Framework Partnership Agreement for Capacity Development of Civil Society Organisations in the Eastern Partnership](#), the evaluation should analyse the impact of the project on coordination, synergies, relations and information sharing with other framework partners and the bodies of the European Union such as DG NEAR and EU Delegations.

The external evaluation will be an important part of HRHF's reporting to DG NEAR and will help HRHF plan future interventions in this area.

4. Methodology and stakeholders

The evaluator will be expected to develop an evaluation methodology to ensure that findings and recommendations are based on a representative selection of samples and facts. The evaluation methodology, process and outputs must adhere to the OECD Development Quality Standards for Development Evaluation. These standards include a requirement for the evaluator to be mindful of gender roles, ethnicity, ability, age, sexual orientation, language and other differences when designing and carrying out the evaluation.

HRHF envisages that the evaluation methodology will include:

- Desk research/document review
- Interviews and consultations

During the first phase of the project implementation period, HRHF received rapid assessments of a number of sub-granting projects, commissioned by the European Commission and carried out by a team of regional monitoring experts from Technical Assistance on Impact Monitoring of EU Civil Society Support in Eastern Partnership Countries. The evaluator will be asked to reflect how results and recommendations from these rapid assessments were addressed and implemented.

The following stakeholders should be involved in the evaluation:

1. At least three different Houses
 - o Board members;

- Management/Coordinator;
 - Staff of member and partner organisations
2. At least six organisations that have implemented small and large projects through sub-grants portfolio
 3. External stakeholders, including advocacy targets
 4. HRHF staff

5. Schedule and Deliverables

The evaluator will prepare:

1. An evaluation work plan, to include a detailed evaluation methodology.
2. Questionnaires for interviews and data collection for everyone involved in the evaluation.
3. An evaluation report.
3. An online presentation of the evaluation report and its main findings and recommendations.

The evaluator must prepare these deliverables in English and submit them to the HRHF by email to the designated contact point. The evaluator will be provided with a contact point at management level within the HRHF.

The evaluator will adhere to the following schedule:

<i>Draft Evaluation Work plan</i>	A draft detailed work plan will be submitted within one (1) week of the signing of the contract. It is envisaged that the contract will be signed by 10 November 2023.
<i>Final Evaluation Work plan</i>	Within three (3) workdays of receiving HRHF's comments on the draft detailed work plan, the evaluator will produce a final evaluation work plan.
<i>Draft Evaluation Report</i>	The evaluator will submit a draft evaluation report for review by HRHF within 5 (five) weeks of producing the final work plan. For the avoidance of doubt, the draft report must be submitted by 7 January 2024.
<i>Final Evaluation Report</i>	Within one (1) week of receiving HRHF's comments on the draft report, the evaluator will submit a final evaluation report, including an evaluation abstract/executive summary.
<i>Presentation</i>	The evaluator will be required to give an online presentation on the main findings and recommendations. This is likely to be required in the second half of January 2024.

5. Budget

The evaluation is budgeted with not more than 20 consultant days.

The tenderer shall quote a total price for the assignment exclusive of potential interpretation costs, which HRHF will cover directly.

Indicative budget is up to 20.000 euro.

6. Evaluator – Required Experience, Skills and Qualifications

The evaluator will need the following experience, skills and qualifications:

- Minimum 5 years experience in conducting evaluations and a proven record of conducting evaluations of EU funded projects.
- Experience undertaking evaluations of complex human rights programmes.
- Experience working in civil society and preferably in the human rights field, with strong knowledge of the human rights movement in Eastern Partnership countries and the Russian Federation.
- Fluent in English; Russian is a strong advantage (the evaluation report must be written in English).

7. Call for proposals

Any individual or firm interested in undertaking this evaluation should submit a proposal by 17:00 CEST on **31 October 2023** at info@humanrightshouse.org.

Proposals should include:

- Technical proposal, including proposed evaluation methodology and brief work plan (no more than two (2) pages);
- Financial proposal, including the proposed fee and breakdown (no more than one (1) page based on HRHF financial proposal template);
- CV(s), including examples of other evaluations undertaken by the individual(s) (no more than two (2) pages each);
- A list of at least three references for each individual, including contact details;
- Information on their legal form and ownership structure where applicable;
- Confirmation of their good standing and that they are an eligible tenderer as defined in the rules and principles for procurement for projects funded by the European Commission; and
- Confirmation that they are not aware of any conflict of interest (completed and signed Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria and selection criteria)
- HRHF Supplier profile/registration form

The HRHF will reject any proposal should it suspect any illegal or corrupt practices have taken place in connection with the same and may terminate any contract to undertake the evaluation should it find that illegal or corrupt practices have taken place.

Eligible proposals will be ranked on the basis of responsiveness to the required experience, skills and qualifications, evaluation methodology, proposed work plan, and financial proposal.

The contract award shall be to the tender offering the best price/quality ratio.

For any questions, please contact Daiva Petkeviciute, Head of House Development and Support program at daiva@humanrightshouse.org.



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