

Moscow, 23 May 2016

Terms of Reference for project evaluation

**Project:** Free Civil Legal Aid and Assistance for Vulnerable Groups in the Russian Federation

**Organisation:** Council of Europe

Directorate General Human Rights and Rule of Law

Directorate of Human Rights

Justice and Legal Co-operation Department

Legal Co-operation Division

**Duration:** May - June 2016

**Location:** Russia: Moscow and 3 selected regions participating in the Project

**Background:**

The Council of Europe is implementing a project in partnership with the Ministry of Justice of the Russian Federation entitled “Free Civil Legal Aid and Assistance for Vulnerable Groups in the Russian Federation”.

The project aims to improve access to justice for disadvantaged and vulnerable people in the Russian Federation by improving implementation of the Federal Law on Free Legal Aid. The project aims to ensure that:

* People on low income, certain senior citizens, people with disabilities or mental illness, persons without legal capacity and their guardians, orphaned children and their guardians, and children in institutional care all have better access to legal services and that their civil law rights are better protected;
* Publicly-funded legal services and other forms of free legal advice and assistance are targeted effectively and, as a result, the take-up of legal services by disadvantaged and vulnerable people to protect their civil law rights is increased and generalised.

The project is taking place in 3 pilot regions: Volgograd region, Ulyanovsk and Tambov regions.

**The purpose of the evaluation:** to conduct a *mid-term* in-depth assessment of the project for the period 2015 – 2016 in order to establish its achievements, challenges, successful activities, best practices and lessons learnt as well as suggest future priority actions to address the needs of free legal aid users, including men and women, who fall under the FZ-324. The evaluation should be done to assess the performance of the project against key parameters including the project’s relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, replicability, timelines of activity implementation, and its strengths and weaknesses. Particular emphasis will be placed at the project’s beneficiary satisfaction rates assessment, as well as specific organizational, methodological and financial needs of service providers to increase the delivery of free legal aid.

**Objectives and scope of the assignment:**

* Evaluate the extent to which planned *mid-term* results, including agreed outputs and outcomes have been achieved as result of project implementation;
* Evaluate how economically or optimally financial, human and technical inputs have been used to produce *mid-term* outputs;
* Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the project and come up with findings, lessons and recommendations and learning to guide and inform future programme work;

**Evaluation questions:**

The evaluation will answer the key questions outlined below in its final report. These questions remain generic, but are consistent with standard approaches to project evaluation.

Relevance:

* Are the project objectives addressing identified rights and needs of the target group(s) in regional contexts?
* Do the activities address the problems identified?
* Is the project design articulated in a coherent structure?

Effectiveness:

* What has been the progress made towards achievement of the expected outcomes and expected results?
* What are the results achieved?
* What are the reasons for the achievement or non-achievement?
* To what extent have beneficiaries been satisfied with the results?
* To what extent the objectives have been achieved, and do the indented and unintended benefits meet fairly the needs of the target groups?

Efficiency:

* What measures have been taken during planning and implementation to ensure that resources are efficiently used?
* Have the outputs been delivered in a timely manner?
* Could the activities and outputs been delivered with fewer resources without reducing their quality and quantity?

Sustainability:

* Is the project supported by national/local institutions? Do these institutions demonstrate leadership commitment and technical capacity to continue to work with the project or replicate it?
* What adaptive or management capacities of national partners, such as learning, leadership, programme and process management, networking and linkages have been supported?

Impact:

* What are the intended and unintended, positive and negative, long term effects of the project?
* To what extent can the changes that have occurred as a result of the project be identified and measured? To what extent can the identified changes be attributed to the project?
* What are the positive and negative changes produced directly or indirectly by the project on the opportunities of different target groups?

**Evaluation methodology and approach:**

The evaluation will be undertaken through a combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques that will be used to gather data and information from main stakeholders of the project mainly target groups including men and women, experts, regional co-ordination groups, local government officials etc. The evaluators should use Human Rights and Gender Equality based approaches, as well as results-based management approach, including the methodology of participatory approach of evaluation. The data and information gathered will be systematically analyzed and presented following the evaluation criteria mentioned above.

**Key recommended steps**

Data collection

* Desk reviews and analysis of key and relevant documents including implementing partners, progress reports, reviews, assessment reports etc.
* Undertake site visits according to an agreed schedule to the three partner regions to collect data from the target groups.
* Interviews with key project staff, experts, implementing partners (state and non-state actors) and beneficiaries.

Analysis

* Evaluators will analyse collected data/information, seek clarifications from different sources to enrich the findings.
* The project team will send any necessary documents and information.

Reporting

* Evaluator will present and submit report according to the agreed format to the project team.

**Scope and deliverables:**

1. ***A detailed evaluation plan***

A detailed evaluation plan shall be developed based on the draft evaluation plan presented in the application documents. It will include a clear, time and resource bound detailed work plan, clear evaluation questions and tools.

* Explain the evaluators’ understanding of what is being evaluated and why;
* Review and strengthen the evaluation methodology, describing the plans to engage and involve stakeholders in the design (e.g., questions, objectives, methods, data-collection instruments), data collection, data analysis, and development of recommendations;
* Explain the evaluator’s procedures to ensure informed consent among all people to be interviewed or surveyed and confidentiality and privacy during and after discussion of sensitive issues with beneficiaries or members of the public;
* Provide a proposed schedule of tasks, activities, evaluation methodologies and deliverables consistent with this TOR.

1. ***Draft Evaluation Report***

The Evaluator shall submit an electronic copy of a **draft evaluation** report to the Council of Europe **no later than 20 days after starting project evaluation**.

After review of the draft report, the project team shall submit comments to the evaluator. Based on these comments, the evaluator, shall correct all factual errors and inaccuracies and make changes related to the report’s structure, consistency, analytical rigor, validity of evidence, and requirements in the TOR. After making the necessary changes, the evaluator will submit a revised draft evaluation report, which may lead to further comments from the Council of Europe.

1. ***Final Report***

The **final report** should be submitted to the Council of Europe **electronically** no later than **15 days** after the end of the evaluation. The recommended structure of the final report is provided below and the evaluator should follow this as closely as possible. The report must contain a self-contained executive summary that provides a clear, concise presentation of the evaluation’s main conclusions and key recommendations and reviews issues identified in the evaluation. All deliverables must be in **English**.

The report should include, but not be limited to the following:

* Contents page.
* Abbreviations glossary.
* Executive summary of the main findings.
* Information in structured format, gathered through variety of tools and techniques.
* A clear set of conclusions and recommendations emerging from the evaluation.
* Recommendations for further program planning, main strategies and future priorities.
* Relevant annexes with supporting documentation that might include approach, methodology, persons consulted, project sites visited, case studies, other.

At a minimum, the final report shall contain the following annexes:

* List of persons interviewed (using aliases to ensure confidentiality where needed) and sites visited;
* Data-collection instruments (copies of surveys, questionnaires, etc.);
* Methodology used (detailing the process, activities and timelines associated with the evaluation);
* Sample profile (detailing the beneficiary sample distribution, how it is representative of population served, people interviewed internally at the organization, external interviews, sources of secondary data/ documents reviewed);
* A bibliography or list of references.

**Ethics**

The evaluation of the project will be conducted along highest ethical and legal standards and with due regard for the welfare of those involved in the evaluation. Due consideration will also be given to beneficiaries and other stakeholders on confidentiality of information and privacy during consultations and personal interviews.

**Timeframe**

The overall consultancy will tentatively begin on June 1st, 2016 and finalize in 20 working days including a 6-days mission (field visit) to the 3 pilot regions. The other time will be dedicated to the desk review and wrap up of the mission/ finalising of the report, respectively.

The evaluator is expected to submit a draft evaluation report no later than June 20th, 2016 and the final report no later than July 18th, 2016.

**Definition of supervision arrangements:**

The selected organization will work in close cooperation with the Senior Project Officer, but without compromising the objectivity of the evaluator.

**Evaluator qualification and experience:**

*Key qualifications:*

For the Institution:

* Internationally or regionally recognized research institution acting as an independent entity;
* Proved record of independent evaluations of social programmes, including specific programmes targeted at MARPs;
* Experience of working in Russia or in other countries of Eastern Europe and Central Asia;
* Ability to work with the organization commissioning the evaluation and with other evaluation stakeholders to ensure that a high quality product is delivered on a timely basis.
* Displays cultural, gender, religion, race, nationality and age sensitivity and adaptability.

For the Expert provided by the Institution:

* Advanced University Degree or equivalent in legal analysis or other related field;
* At least 5 years of working experience in evaluation programmes;
* Extensive knowledge and experience in evaluation and application of quantitative and qualitative methods.
* Experience in gender analysis and human rights.
* Experience in working with multi-stakeholders essential:  governments, civil society, community based organizations, and the multilateral/bilateral institutions.
* Excellent communication and interpersonal skills;
* Experience in evaluation of programs with budget over Euros 300 000;
* Excellent writing skills, ability to write in a structured and concise manner.
* Publications in the relevant field.

Expert Candidates **shall not** be civil servants or public officials in the countries where the project activities are implemented (during the execution of the consultancy contracts).

**Communication, supervision and coordination.**

The selected evaluation institution and its experts report to Senior Project Officer on the evaluation findings and deliverables. They communicate with the project staff on logistics, and on the technical issues. Meetings or other forms of communication will be organized between the Council of Europe project staff and evaluating experts periodically to review the process and interim results.

**Submission of proposal**

Eligible organizations should submit technical and financial proposals in an electronic format. Proposal should include:

* + **Technical Proposal highlighting:** brief explanation about the evaluator with particular emphasis on previous experience in this kind of work; profile of the evaluator(s) to be involved in undertaking the evaluation; and staff CVs.
  + **Evaluation plan** will include a clear, time and resource bound work plan, evaluation questions and tools. The evaluation plan presented for discussion and agreement before the evaluation team moves to the implementation phase.
  + **Financial Proposal:** Each applicant will be required to submit a financial offer (including the total sum of all financial claims of the candidate for accomplishment of the task including travel expenses). The evaluator shall bare costs for all supplies needed for data collection and data processing including possession of his own personal computer.

**Applications:**

Interested organizations are kindly requested to send their commercial offers comprising the description of the methodology, expert resources, as well as price tables, in electronic format not later than 24:00 MSK time, **29 May 2016** at [natalia.khodakevich@coe.int](mailto:natalia.khodakevich@coe.int) marked with the title “Evaluation of the FCLA project”.