

## Call for tenders

### Senior Strategic Advisor “Project in Support of Sustainable Media Sector Reform for Elections-related Conflict Prevention in Kyrgyzstan”

#### 1. Purpose:

The European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) is recruiting a **Senior Strategic Advisor** for the EU-funded “Project in Support of Sustainable Media Sector Reform for Elections-related Conflict Prevention in Kyrgyzstan” (hereafter: the “Consultant”). The successful candidate will advise key project staff, in particular the Project Manager based in Bishkek and the Quality Control and Technical Advisor based in Berlin, on media support strategies and project activities focusing on media professionalisation and economic independence. This consultancy position requires regular (monthly or bi-monthly) travel to Kyrgyzstan as well as availability for regular conference calls and other forms of remote support to the project team in Brussels, Berlin and Bishkek. The duration of the contract is 14 months, starting on 1 April 2019 and ending on 31 May 2021.

The European Partnership for Democracy (EPD) is a non-profit organisation supporting democracy worldwide. It comprises fifteen European civil and political society organisations from eleven EU Member States present in Africa, Asia, Europe, the Middle East and Latin America. More information about EPD is available at [www.epd.eu](http://www.epd.eu).

#### 2. Background information about the project:

The project aims to strengthen the capacity and responsibility of media actors to operate as drivers of democracy and to prevent potential conflicts during the 2020 parliamentary elections in Kyrgyzstan. It follows two parallel pathways towards achieving this goal: improving the policy and legal environment affecting the media sector, consistent with international freedom of expression standards; and assisting media actors in playing a role of democratic watchdogs during the 2020 electoral cycle. The project relies on three main components, which will be implemented along the electoral cycle of the 2020 parliamentary elections: 1) policy and dialogue, 2) media professionalisation and 3) strengthening the media's economic independence.

The main target groups of the project are: (line) ministries and statutory media regulators; the Central Electoral Commission (CEC) and its territorial branches; Members of Parliament, parliamentary officials, political parties and electoral candidates; media actors, both public and private (editors, journalists, media owners/managers, bloggers, content producers, entrepreneurs); advocacy CSOs, democracy activists and human rights defenders; and media education providers.

The project will be implemented by a consortium of five organisations: European Partnership for Democracy (project lead), ARTICLE 19, Westminster Foundation for Democracy, Media Policy Institute and the European Association for Local Democracy (ALDA). It will be coordinated by the European Partnership for Democracy via a Project Team resident in Bishkek. The EPD Secretariat in Brussels will support the local team in managing the project, with ARTICLE 19, Westminster Foundation for Democracy and ALDA providing specialised international expertise via a Project Steering Committee.

#### 3. Responsibilities:

The Senior Strategic Advisor will advise the core project team in Bishkek and EPD project staff in Brussels and Berlin on media professionalisation (component 2) and strengthening the media's economic independence (component 3) throughout the project. The Advisor will play a prominent role in the design of specific activities under these components. In particular, he/she will support the Project Manager and the Quality Control and Technical Advisor in identifying adequate strategies for promoting media professionalisation and enhancing media economic independence in Kyrgyzstan. He/she will provide advice in this regard during regular strategy meetings with the Project Manager and the Quality

Control and Technical Advisor as well as in response to specific requests by the Quality Control and Technical Advisor.

Key responsibilities include:

- Advising the Project Manager and the Quality Control and Technical Advisor on strategies and actions in support of media freedom online and offline, media education and professionalism, and economic independence of the media;
- Identifying short term media experts to be recruited by EPD to conduct training workshops for media organisations, editors, journalists and related stakeholders;
- Conduct research on media education and identify best practice in this field;
- Participating in meetings of the Project Management Committee consisting of the consortium members' management staff and advise the Committee members, as requested

### *Project objectives and activities*

The Consultant will support with the objectives of developing and refining the project strategy with regard to furthering media professionalisation and economic independence, designing related project activities in such a way that they meet local demand, and identifying target groups and final beneficiaries as well as short term experts and trainers for those activities.

The Consultant will advise the Project Manager and the Quality Control and Technical Advisor on project activities such as:

***Training and coaching of journalists, bloggers and media editors on election reporting and digital security.*** Training workshops may focus on i.a. on data journalism, cyber laws and Access to Information (A2I), local reporting, election coverage and democratic governance, as well as legal, physical and digital security.

***Study tour for representatives of media workers on labour issues.*** A study tour will be organised to an EU or Eastern European/CIS country where the media have been able to set up new bodies to address the matter or which engage in defending labour issues among civil society.

**Expected Output:** Media actors develop their capacities to ensure their own legal, physical and digital security and to provide professional and responsible journalistic coverage throughout the electoral cycle.

***Comprehensive media training needs assessment and media education providers survey.*** Short term experts will be deployed to undertake a comprehensive needs assessment study among media actors and appraise the quality, challenges and needs among institutes of higher education that provide education in journalism and communication.

***Pilot twinning with EU journalism schools.*** The aforementioned assessment report will help local media training providers to develop linkages with EU journalism schools in order to promote exchanges among students and lecturers and help set up twinning agreements for sustained collaboration.

**Expected Output:** The results of a comprehensive media education assessment are available to consolidate the professional profile and independence of media actors in the post-electoral period.

***Funding for editorial productions related to the elections.*** Selected media houses will receive funds to deploy journalists and sustaining correspondents in the regions in order to regularly produce and distribute quality reports on the 2020 elections, but also to broadcast debates between candidates and document issues discussed during the campaign, amongst other activities.

***Funding and coaching to emerging new media and civic tech entrepreneurship initiatives.*** The project will identify and support potential new content providers active in the area of new media production and civic tech in partnership with established incubators in Kyrgyzstan to test and demonstrate alternative business development strategies in the media sector.

**Expected Output:** Pilot initiatives support media content producers and civic tech to promote good governance and target populations at risk

***Comprehensive public and private media funding needs assessment, study tour and elaboration of options.*** The project will prepare a comprehensive assessment of public and private media funding

needs and present the findings and recommendations in a report, with reference to international best practice including through subsidised credit schemes and working with banks. Furthermore, the project will organise a study tour to the UK for 10 media representatives from Kyrgyzstan to explore new and innovative media business and funding models being pursued in the UK.

**Training of media in digital media entrepreneurship and business models.** The project will provide training to media in developing new business models adapted to the digital age, with a focus on monetisation of content, diversification of operations, and collaborative practices, while exposing trainees to international case studies and best practice. The participants of the training workshops will be supported to develop business plans and identify key first steps in implementing these plans.

**Expected Output:** Media actors explore and develop business models improving their economic independence.

#### **4. Scope of service delivery:**

The assignment will be delivered over 14 months, starting on 1 April 2020 and ending on 31 May 2021. The Consultant will be required to travel to Brussels and Bishkek/Kyrgyzstan and potentially to Berlin on a monthly or bi-monthly basis, depending on the needs of the project team. Costs for transportation, accommodation and meals in Belgium, Germany and Kyrgyzstan will be reimbursed by EPD through per diem allowances. For all activities, it is mandatory that the Consultant coordinate with the EPD Quality Control and Technical Advisor and the Project Manager and update them on a regular basis.

#### **5. Qualifications:**

The required profile for this position includes the following criteria:

- A master's degree or equivalent in political science, journalism, communications or a related field required;
- At least 10 years of experience in the international media support sector required;
- Excellent knowledge of strategies and tools for promoting media professionalisation and media economic independence required;
- Knowledge of European Union policies and actions in support of media freedom and freedom of expression online and offline required;
- A broad network of contacts in international media and/or democracy support organisations required;
- Prior experience of working in the post-Soviet space, ideally in a Central Asian country, desirable;
- Experience of supporting media organisations during elections desirable;
- Very good knowledge of English required and good knowledge of Russian highly desirable.

#### **6. Remuneration:**

The remuneration will depend on the applicant's level of qualification and experience. Applicants are requested to state their daily fee rate as part of their application documents. The maximum number of working days is 129.

#### **7. Application and evaluation procedure:**

A selection committee made up of the Quality Control and Technical Advisor, Project Manager and EPD's Executive Director will evaluate all offers received by EPD before the deadline of **Sunday, 15<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 at 18:00 CET**.

In order to be considered for this opportunity, applicants are required to send a separate technical and financial offer by email to [sebastianbloching@epd.eu](mailto:sebastianbloching@epd.eu) before the aforementioned deadline.

The **technical offer** must include the CV of the applicant; an implementation strategy demonstrating a deep understanding of the media sector as well as media development needs in Kyrgyzstan and outlining the proposed methodology for delivery of the requested services; and a statement mentioning the applicant's availability throughout the project duration.

These criteria for evaluating the technical offer will be weighed as follows:

Consultant's experience and expertise in the media sector: 40%  
Consultant's knowledge about Kyrgyzstan: 10%  
Methodology proposed by the Consultant for service delivery: 30%  
Consultant's availability: 20%

The **financial offer** must be sent in a separate file (which may however be contained in the same email). The financial offer must include the proposed number of working days and the daily fee rate of the applicant including applicable VAT rates.

The weighing of the technical and financial offers is as follows: 80% for the technical offer and 20% for the financial offer.



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