

## **CONSULTANCY VACANCY**

### **Final evaluation of the Institutional Support and Advocacy in favour of Afghan CSOs working with Afghans at risk**

#### **CONTEXT AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION**

Since mid-August 2021, the Taliban have taken control of Afghanistan and the vast majority of foreign embassies and organisations have completely withdrawn from the country, which has included an a massive closure of foreign aid programmes, many of which had worked towards strengthening human rights and the civil society space in the country. Simultaneously, the Afghan banking system faced severe disruptions, complicating access to deposits, and hampering the operations of civil society organisations (CSOs). Furthermore, the Taliban executed raids on several NGO offices, subjecting them to searches and freezing their accounts, awaiting 'future assessment' – pushing numerous CSOs into dire financial straits.

In response to these challenges faced by human rights defenders and CSOs, both within Afghanistan and in exile, the ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat, along with five of its partner organisations, worked to deliver – joint advocacy, as well as institutional support to Afghan CSOs.

The programme started in December 2021 with the financial support of the European Union Delegation to Afghanistan, for 18 months and has since been extended, to 24 months. It is operated by a Consortium of 5 international NGOs namely, Front Line Defenders (FLD), Reporters Without Borders (RSF), World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT)-Europe, International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), and the Asian Forum for Human Rights and Development (Forum-Asia)- with the support and under the coordination of the ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat established in Brussels , hereafter referred to as 'implementing partners'.

The overall objective of this action is to “Support Civil Society’s role in promoting a more equitable, open and democratic society by ensuring activists and HRDs at risk are empowered, resilient and enabled to continue their work”. This is the long-term change the project seeks to support and will significantly contribute to the sustainability of local human rights movements. At a more interim, medium-term level the Specific Objective is to strengthen Afghan CSOs’ resilience and capacity to provide protection to HRDs and activists at-risk in Afghanistan”, through the provision of institutional support, and joint advocacy support.

#### **SCOPE AND FOCUS**

The evaluation is to be carried out at the end of the Programme. It should focus on documenting the outcomes and the sustainability of the « Institutional Support and Advocacy in favour of Afghan CSOs working with Afghans at risk » Programme and whether the implementing partners have delivered in accordance with the Project proposal and main objectives of the Project.

The evaluation should concentrate as far as possible on the support to Human Rights Defenders in its entirety. It is not the intention to evaluate the performance of the individual ProtectDefenders.eu Partners, although comparisons of practices can be used when relevant in order to draw lessons learned and contribute to improve overall performance.

The key areas that the evaluation should focus on (the questions below are not exhaustive):

Relevance and coherence:

- Did the Institutional « Support and Advocacy in favour of Afghan CSOs working with Afghans at risk programme » respond to the needs of the defenders?
- Did interventions implemented reach the isolated and at-risk defenders, including women HRDs, HRDs working on LGBTI or minority rights, HRDs journalists or bloggers, and those HRDs with limited networks?
- Were the implementing partners' strategies well-adapted to the context where defenders operate ? And did it manage to adapt as the context evolved since August 2021, and through the course of the implementation?

Effectiveness :

- How effective has the programme been in realizing the outputs and achieving outcomes?
- Are activities relevant and sufficient for the target group?
- What have been the most successful or unsuccessful interventions and why?
- What potential multiplying effects could be observed?

Impact:

- Are there external opportunities and challenges that have impacted the project positively or negatively?
- What has been the impact of the assistance provided on the ability of CSOs to continue supporting HRDs in Afghanistan and HRDs in exile after receiving the grant ?
- Did the program generate any unintended outcomes (either positive or negative)?

Efficiency:

- How efficient was the programme's set-up and strategy for achieving the programme's objectives (consortium structure, number of Partners, necessary resources (human, material, financial)?
- How does the implemented partnership model provide added-value to the programme's objectives?
- Given the resources at its disposal, did the programme target and reach an appropriate proportion of the defenders at risk?

Coordination:

- How effective was implementing partners' cooperation and coordination with other relevant stakeholders (EU institutions, Human Rights INGOs and NGOs, representatives of Protection mechanisms)?
- How effective was the internal operational coordination and cooperation among implementing partners? What best practices can be identified and what lessons have been learned?
- How effective was the communication and coordination with the Donor?

#### Sustainability:

- What is the level of sustainability in the project interventions? How will the project ensure the sustainability of interventions after the end of the project?
- How did this programme work alongside complementary interventions for the protection of HRDs led by other organisations working on Afghanistan.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The consultant should use the following methodologies to conduct the assessment :

1. **Desk review:** The desk review should include all available internal documentation (proposal, Project strategies, interim and final reports from ProtectDefenders.eu to the Donor).
2. **Key Informant Interviews:** Interviews should take place with the donor, with the implementing partners, with grantees. Interviews must be organised via secure online platforms.

## **DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Under the overall supervision of the Secretariat of ProtectDefenders the consultant is expected to:

- Prepare a methodological note with a workplan for the implementation of the assignment;
- Provide an update on the evaluation's progress in the regular meetings;
- Deliver the following deliverables during the evaluation assignment/process:

□ i. Comprehensive evaluation report ( 30 pages excluding annexes) including:

1. Executive summary (including main findings and recommendations)
2. Introduction
3. Methodology

4. Evaluation of the « Support and Advocacy in favour of Afghan CSOs working with Afghans at risk » Programme including a presentation of the findings and their analysis
5. Lessons learned and good practices
6. Recommendations
7. Annexes

□ ii. Two presentations to be delivered summarizing methodology and findings:

1. Presentation of the draft report
2. Presentation of the final report

## **CONTACT POINT**

The evaluation will be facilitated by and carried out under the supervision of the ProtectDefenders.eu Secretariat. The Secretariat will provide all necessary material for the desk review, as well as contacts for key informants.

## **TENTATIVE TIMELINE**

The final report must be available by 30 April 2024.

## **PAYMENT SCHEDULE**

Payments will be scheduled against deliverables:

- Signed Contract – 30% up-front.
- Draft Evaluation Report including first presentation – 40%.
- Final Evaluation Report - 6 hard copies -1 PDF soft copy – Second presentation – 30%.

All deliverables should be provided in English.

## **DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS**

- Advanced University degree in Human Rights, International Relations, Law, Political Science or related field;
- At least seven years of work or academic experience in a professional capacity in Human Rights, International Relations, Law, Political Science or related field;
- Extensive experience in conducting evaluations of human rights projects preferably involving multiple partners and the European Union as a donor, including designing and employing both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods, which are participatory and sensitive to the needs of the target group;
- Deep understanding of non-governmental organisations, human rights organisations, call for proposals procedures, legal and practical aspects of funding frameworks and Project management;
- Deep understanding of the human rights situation in Afghanistan ;
- Experience liaising with different stakeholders, including individuals, governmental and international entities and civil society;

- Advanced critical thinking, analysis, and synthesis skills required to draw conclusions from several sources of information and data;
- Fluency in written and spoken English. Knowledge of Dari and/or Pashto is an advantage;
- Ability to express clearly and concisely ideas in written materials and presentations;
- Proven skills in interpersonal communication and networking.

### **SUBMISSION OF OFFERS AND SELECTION CRITERIA**

Applicants are requested to send their submissions to [recruit@protectdefenders.eu](mailto:recruit@protectdefenders.eu), with the subject "Evaluation consultant" by 10 December 2023.

Applications must include:

- A cover letter
- A statement (10 pages maximum) detailing the understanding of the task, the proposed study methodology, a work plan and the proposed evaluation team (CVs annexed)
- A detailed financial proposal in Euros including consultancy fees and other eligible costs (transport and accommodation for field visits, printing, etc) □
- 1 sample abstracts of previous relevant research/work.

The review of the submissions will take into account the following criteria:

- Understanding of the ToRs (10%)
- Suggested methodology (30%)
- Experience of the suggested team (30%)
- Quality of submitted samples (10%)
- Financial offer (20%)

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information presented, obtained and produced concerning the Comprehensive Support to Human Rights Defenders Project, the Partners and beneficiaries during the Evaluation process/Consultancy is to be treated as confidential. The selected consultant will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement upon signature of the contract.