

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Final external evaluation

Tajikistan Action for Justice (TAJ)

Type of contract: Consultancy

Location: Home-based with travel to Geneva, Switzerland and Dushanbe, Tajikistan (if sanitary situation allows)

Duration of contract: 35 working days

Start Date: 10th January 2021

End Date: 28th February 2021

Summary

The International Commission of Jurists (ICJ) is seeking qualified applicants to conduct a final evaluation for its project, *Tajikistan Action for Justice (TAJ)* in January and February 2021.

Overview of the ICJ

Composed of 60 eminent judges and lawyers from all regions of the world, the ICJ promotes and protects human rights through the rule of law, by using its unique legal expertise to develop and strengthen national and international justice systems. Established in 1952 and active on the five continents, the ICJ aims to ensure the progressive development and effective implementation of international human rights and international humanitarian law; secure the realization of civil, cultural, economic, political and social rights; safeguard the separation of powers; and guarantee the independence of the judiciary and legal profession.

Project Background

The ICJ has been undertaking the *Tajikistan Action for Justice (TAJ)* project since May 2019. The project seeks to provide support and empower local human rights defenders against harassment and persecution in Tajikistan.

The ICJ does not maintain an office in Tajikistan but operates the project with local consultants guided by a project team in the Geneva Head Office and Brussels Regional Office. The project is implemented in close cooperation between the International Commission of Jurists (ICJ), its sister organization International Commission of Jurists – European Institutions (ICJ-EI) and two regionally based partners: the Tajikistan Union of Lawyers (TUL) in Tajikistan and the Legal Policy Research Centre (LPRC) in Kazakhstan.

The **overall goal** of this project is to protect human rights defenders including lawyers against harassment and improper interference with their work. This project sets following **specific objectives**:

- **SO1.** To improve the protection of human rights defenders, in particular lawyers, through more effective use of international human rights law and standards in the Tajik justice system, including in individual cases where HRDs face legal persecution. Under SO1 the ICJ has conducted support, advocacy and awareness raising actions in cases of attacks and judicial persecution of lawyers, other HRDs and their families; has organised a regional workshop/conference on the harassment of lawyers and their role in the justice

system; has organised a study / advocacy visit of Tajikistan human rights defenders before international human rights bodies in Geneva; has organised trainings for lawyers and other HRDs in Tajikistan; has conducted international advocacy actions on systemic issues before international human rights bodies.

- **SO2.** To strengthen the independence, accountability and integrity of the judiciary in order to enhance the justice system's capacity to protect human rights, including of lawyers and other human rights defenders. Under SO2 the ICJ has conducted a research mission and drafted a report on the independence of the judiciary in Tajikistan and identification of concrete recommendations to improve the situation; has conducted advocacy missions and meetings on the independence of the judiciary in Tajikistan; has organised workshops on the independence and functioning of the judiciary in Tajikistan based on the mission report.

This project's **target groups** are lawyers, expert and human rights NGOs, judges, Government officials and Members of Parliament, International organizations (including bodies of the UN and OSCE, international NGOs, embassies and other diplomatic community members).

Evaluation Overview

The **primary users** of the evaluation report will be the ICJ's staff and consultants (in particular the Europe and Central Asia project team) who will use the findings and recommendations to inform any adjustment to the strategies and future programming in the country, region and beyond. The **secondary users** will be the Legal and Policy Office, and the ICJ Program Management and Donor Relations team who may also refer to the conclusions and recommendations to respectively inform changes to the ICJ's approach and to program management in general (from design to monitoring and closure). The institutional bilateral donor supporting this project may also use some of the findings to reflect on its support for HRD protection related programs.

Objectives and criteria

The general objective is to assess the **effectiveness of the project's approach** and the **sustainability of the achieved outcomes**; in addition, the ICJ is interested in informing its future programming in the country. As such, the evaluation should assess the achievements of the project against its stated outcomes, including a re-examination of the relevance of the expected results and of the project design. It shall also identify significant factors that are facilitating or impeding the delivery of outcomes. The evaluation should have a **strong learning objective**. It should reflect on what has worked and what has not worked so well, and identify lessons and ways to enhance the project relevance, effectiveness and impact. It is expected to lead to **concrete, specific recommendations and lessons learned** for the future. Below are some proposed evaluative questions for each stated evaluation criterion:

Effectiveness

- Were the outputs "dosed" properly to enable achievement of the intended outcomes?
- Were intended outputs achieved?
- What, if any, unintended positive and/or negative changes occurred?
- How can future programming in Tajikistan be improved in terms of both project objectives and methodology? What lessons can be drawn to enhance its relevance and effectiveness?
- How has the operating environment in the region affected project outcomes and ability to achieve proposed objectives?

Trends of impact and sustainability

- Is there evidence that changes brought by the project amongst the target groups are being transferred to their daily activities? What do these changes look like and do the beneficiaries continue to implement them?

- Is there evidence that the changes amongst the target groups are being transferred to the broader community? Had the project had a multiplier effect?
- How is the method of project implementation supporting, or not, the long-term sustainability of the program?

The ICJ's Program Manager and MEL Officer will review the methodology proposed by the evaluator. Ideally, it will include (i) a desk review of pertinent project documents and records (including the project proposal, logical framework, amended project documents, quarterly reports, and various records containing monitoring data); (ii) in-country data collection / field visits: considering that such visits will not be possible due to COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent restrictions, online communication with project partners, event participants, lawyers and other target groups will be privileged. The primary data should involve qualitative research methods as well as quantitative where relevant – including but not limited to interviews with staffs from ICJ, ICJ-EI, TUL and LPRC; focus group discussions with training participants; key informant interviews with political officials; perception surveys of members of the public communities; ... Project activities will conclude by January 15th, so direct observation of program activities may be possible.

Evaluation Implementation

The evaluation should take place in **January and February 2021**, with the final deliverables due and contract concluding by **15th February 2021**.

The ICJ staff will provide logistical and technical support as appropriate throughout the evaluation process (compilation of project documents, assisting with scheduling meetings / interviews if desired, etc.).

A total of up to **35 working days** will be available for:

- *Evaluation preparation* (including 5-10 days for finalizing the evaluation methodology, performing the initial desk review of project materials, creating and testing data collection tools, compiling a brief inception note);
- *In-country and remote data collection* (including approximately 10-15 days consisting if possible of travels to Tajikistan and, if not, of online interviews and meetings);
- *Data analysis and synthesis* (including 5-10 days for transcription, data aggregation, writing a draft report, presenting findings to the ICJ, and incorporating feedback from the ICJ and its partners into a final report).

The **final deliverables** for this evaluation will include:

- *A inception report and evaluation plan* (due to the ICJ for feedback and approval within the first 5 working days from contract signature and prior to departure for Tajikistan – or, should travel not be possible, prior to the beginning of online interviews and meetings);
- *One oral presentation of key findings* by Skype or another online platform with relevant ICJ staff (due to the ICJ upon return from Tajikistan and before submission of the written draft report – or, should travel not be possible, upon to the finalization of online interviews and meetings, and before submission of the written draft report);
- *A draft report* detailing key findings, supporting evidence, and pragmatic recommendations (due to the ICJ Program Manager and MEL Officer for feedback within 20/25 days)
- *A final report* incorporating all relevant feedback to the ICJ and its partners, and including an *executive summary or fact sheet* to be distributed with additional stakeholders (due within 30 working days and prior to 15 February 2021). The final report should provide brief, clear and pragmatic conclusions and recommendations, including: the degree to which the project outcomes are likely to be delivered; important lessons that can be drawn from the experience of the project and its results

to date; general recommendations on improving implementation for the remainder of the project; and recommendations on further action upon completion of the current project.

Application Guidelines

The selected consultant should have demonstrated expertise in results-based project evaluation and familiarity with governance and human rights programming. Previous work experience in Central Asia is required. Russian and local language skills are an asset. Additional information about desired qualifications is listed below:

- Bachelor's degree in social sciences, political sciences, international law, international relations, human rights, or related field (Master's degree strongly preferred);
- Minimum 4–6 years of experience in designing, overseeing, and implementing project M&E or combination of education, training and experience;
- Experience with qualitative and quantitative M&E data collection and analysis methods;
- Experience in conducting evaluations for US federal funding agencies preferred;
- Experience in working in politically sensitive countries and ability to maintain security and confidentiality considerations throughout the evaluation process and beyond;
- Excellent inter-cultural communication skills and ability to forge strong cross-cultural relationships and build trust;
- Strong facilitation, presentation, and communication skills;
- Strong ability to communicate effectively in English, both verbally and in writing;
- Team player with the ability to closely collaborate with the ICJ staff, local partners, and project stakeholders.

Interested applicants must provide all materials outlined below to europa-recruitment@icj.org by **December 8th, 12am CEST**. Candidates selected for an interview will be notified by December 10th, 12am CEST, and a final decision will be made by December 18th, 12am CEST.

Interested applicants should provide a **current CV** and a **maximum 3 page technical proposal**. These materials should clearly outline (i) the candidate's *key skills and experience* that are relevant to this evaluation; (ii) a concise description of the desired *evaluation approach* and *key standards and principles* that will inform her/his work; (iii) an identification of *possible data limitations* and ways to mitigate them (recognizing that the applicant is operating with only the limited information provided herein); (iv) a short *cost justification* and (v) the names and contact information for two recent *references*. Note that the ICJ may ask for examples of previous work after reviewing the application materials.

Budget Guidelines

The estimated budget for this evaluation should not exceed **15,000 USD**. This figure includes all costs relevant to the evaluation, including the consultant's daily rate, meals and incidentals expenses, travel, per diem, interpreters, etc. Should travels be impossible due to COVID-19 restrictions, the amount of the consultancy will not exceed **13,000USD**. Please note that payment in full will not be made until all project deliverables have been received and verified as meeting the ICJ's expectations. Cost saving will be a consideration in the selection process.