TERMS OF REFERENCE
CONSULTANT / RESEARCH EXPERT
For EVALUATION & REVISION
of REGIONAL STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

| Project: | „Building CSO Capacity for Regional Cooperation within the Black Sea Region” implemented by the Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND and funded by the European Union (January 2019 – December 2021) |
| Assignment: | Conducting an evaluation and revision of the “Strategic Framework for Civil Society Cooperation in the Black Sea Region” (2015) |
| Countries covered by the project: | Black Sea countries – Non-EU: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Republic of Moldova, Russia, Turkey, Ukraine & EU: Bulgaria, Greece and Romania |
| Period of contract: | 6 months (May – October 2019) |
| Type of contract: | Consultancy contract (only with legal entities) |
| Budget | 2000 EUR (including taxes) |
| Open to: | Consultants / Research experts |
| Deadline for submitting applications: | 19 May 2019 |
| Submit to: | fond.romania@gmail.com |

I. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The current call for applications targets consultants / research experts with experience in the field of project/strategy evaluation, with the purpose of conducting an evaluation and revision of the “Strategic Framework for Civil Society Cooperation in the Black Sea Region” (2015), in order to identify the results as well as to redefine its thematic cooperation areas, having the following objectives:

1. Provide a mapping of the initiatives (both regional and bilateral) and their results since 2015 (including the regional thematic meetings 2016-2017), which reflect the thematic and cross-cutting priorities of the strategic framework within the Black Sea NGO Forum (BSNGOF);

2. Gather recommendations on how to revise the current the strategic framework, referring to both its directions: 1) creation of regional thematic networks in the identified priority and emerging cooperation areas; and 2) monitoring and promoting an enabling environment for civil society in the Black Sea Region.
II. RATIONALE: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The current assignment is part of the project "Building CSO Capacity for Regional Cooperation within the Black Sea Region" implemented by the Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND and funded by the European Union for the period January 2019 – December 2021 in the context of the Black Sea NGO Forum.

The main goal of the project is to increase stability and prosperity in the Black Sea Region by strengthening regional cooperation among civil society organisations in the region in the context of sustainable development and societal resilience.

The European project seeks to:

- Improve the internal capacity of the Black Sea NGO Forum;
- Provide capacity building opportunities for CSOs from the Black Sea Region and for the BSNGOF Working Groups;
- Provide support for the creation of joint partnerships, projects, networks and initiatives of CSOs in the Black Sea Region;
- Increase the visibility at European and international levels of CSOs from the Black Sea Region.

The Black Sea NGO Forum is an annual regional event launched in 2008 and organized by the Romanian NGDO Platform (FOND), in the framework of the Black Sea Synergy Policy. The goal of the Black Sea NGO Forum is to create an open space for debate, mutual knowledge and understanding, communication and cooperation among civil society representatives, governments, international organizations and donors active in the wider Black Sea Region, with a focus on sharing good practices in various domains and success stories of regional cooperation.

Since its first edition, the Forum has been a driver of change in the region, reuniting more than 1100 participants with various backgrounds from 11 countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Bulgaria, Georgia, Greece, the Republic of Moldova, Turkey, Ukraine, Romania and Russia. Over the years, the Forum has explored together with the participants a diversity of themes of regional interest (democracy & human rights; local development; youth; children rights; environment; citizen participation etc.), encouraged multi-stakeholder dialogue, sharing of best practices and creation partnerships, supported fellowships in the region, organised study visits for CSOs and offered awards to CSOs for excellence in promoting regional cooperation. All these activities contributed to building trust and confidence, identifying common challenges and opportunities and addressing them together.

Moreover, the Black Sea NGO Forum evolved into a more and more structured initiative, with each edition strategically building on the results of the previous editions. Over the years, the objectives of the annual Forum changed from providing a space for discussion and networking to identifying common needs and challenges, developing bilateral and regional projects and creating regional networks.

Considering this evolution, the Black Sea NGO Forum project team along with its partners decided to evaluate and revise the Strategic Framework for Civil Society Cooperation in the Black Sea Region in order to enhance its effectiveness and sustainability in terms of regional cooperation at the Black Sea.

The Strategic Framework was the product of a participatory process of two years (2014-2015) and was finalised and endorsed by participants at the 8th edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum (Tbilisi, 2015). It identifies 10 thematic cooperation areas for the development of regional CSO initiatives and networks and one cross-cutting priority of promoting an enabling environment for CSO initiatives in the region:

1) Priority cooperation areas: knowledge networks, anti-corruption, civic engagement, youth and education & culture;
2) **Emerging cooperation areas:** sustainable development, youthbanks, human rights & freedoms, networking, media & communications.

In order to encourage the development of regional initiatives and creation of regional thematic networks around these cooperation areas, **10 corresponding working groups** have been created.

As almost 4 years have passed since the endorsement of the Strategic Framework and, taking into consideration the dynamic changes in the region, a process will be started to evaluate its results, as well as to confirm or redefine the thematic cooperation areas.

A list with useful resources is available in the annex below. For more background information, please do not hesitate to contact us at: fond.romania@gmail.com.

**III. TASKS TO BE PERFORMED**

The assignment of the consultant / research expert includes the following mandatory activities:

- **Elaborate the methodology of the evaluation** in accordance with the objective of the assignment, including at least 1 quantitative and 1 qualitative research method and taking into consideration the above-mentioned background information & documents;
- **Conduct the evaluation** in accordance with the agreed methodology;
- **Elaborate an evaluation report of the strategic framework 2015 – 2019**, which will also include recommendations on the revision of the strategic framework;
- **Facilitate an interactive session at the Black Sea NGO Forum (October 2019)**, during which the findings of the research and the recommendations for the revision of the strategic framework will be presented (travel costs will be covered by FOND). The input & feedback from the participants will be included in the final version of the evaluation.

**IV. DELIVERABLES**

- **Evaluation plan & proposed methodology** which should include: process and criteria for selecting participants to be part of the evaluation, sample size, full methodological approach taking into consideration the objective of the assignment and timeline for implementing the agreed methodology.
- **Data sets** to include: database of participants included in the research together with contact details, quantitative data received through surveys/questionnaires, qualitative data received through interviews (recordings/transcripts if available in English).
- **Draft evaluation report of the strategic framework 2015 – 2019 (in English)**, which will also include recommendations on the revision of the strategic framework. This version will be available for consultation for the next edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum (October 2019).
- **Concept and facilitation guidelines for the session on the evaluation and revision of the strategic framework**, part of the next edition of the Black Sea NGO Forum (as mentioned above III. Tasks to be performed)
- **Final evaluation report (in English)** – full version of the evaluation addressing all the objectives of the assignment and reflecting the input received during the Black Sea NGO Forum (October 2019).
V. TIMELINE

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<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of the consultant/research expert</td>
<td>May 2019</td>
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<td>Finalising the contracting process</td>
<td>May – early June 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Implementing the research according to the agreed plan &amp; methodology</td>
<td>June – September 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Draft evaluation report</td>
<td>Early October 2019</td>
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<td>Final evaluation report &amp; recommendations revised strategic framework</td>
<td>End of October 2019</td>
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VI. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

Consultant/ Research expert:
- Develop the methodology of the evaluation;
- Conduct the evaluation according to the agreed plan, which will include also a calendar of activities;
- Respect the deadlines established in this ToR – early October for submitting the draft evaluation report and end of October for submitting the final evaluation report to the project team;
- Facilitate an interactive session at the Black Sea NGO Forum (October 2019), during which the findings of the research and the recommendations for the revision of the strategic framework will be presented.

The Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND (Black Sea NGO Forum - Project team):
- Support the consultant/research expert with necessary background documents and information about the Black Sea NGO Forum (including contacts of participants);
- Provide feedback on the documents resulted from this assignment;
- Cover the consultant’s/research expert’s travel and accommodation expenses at the Black Sea NGO Forum (October 2019).

VII. BUDGET

The total budget for the assignment is 2000 EUR, including the taxes that have to be paid to the fiscal authorities by the contracted consultant/research expert. The budget will cover the fee of the consultant/research expert.

The consultant/research expert must be represented by a legal entity for the signing of the service contract concerning the above mentioned assignment.

VIII. SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

Required:
- At least 3 years of experience in evaluation of projects/programmes/strategies implemented by civil society organisations;
- Proficiency in English;
- Experience of working in multicultural contexts;
- Excellent interpersonal skills;
- Excellent planning and prioritisation skills;
– Proven ability to adapt the methodology to challenges and opportunities emerging during the evaluation;
– Proven ability to multitask and work under tight deadlines.

Would be considered an advantage:
– Knowledge of the context and dynamics specific to the Black Sea Region and/or experience in working with civil society organisations in the Black Sea Region;
– Knowledge of the Russian language.

IX. APPLICATION PROCESS

The application procedure consists of two stages:

1) Initial selection

Interested candidates must send the following application documents by e-mail at: fond.romania@gmail.com until the 19th of May 2019, 5:00 PM Romanian time:
– CV and motivation letter (in a separate document);
– Two relevant evaluation/research samples (one preferably on a subject related to civil society - the samples will not be made public, their use will be solely for the selection process);
– Evaluation plan (including a calendar of activities).

Candidates accepted for the interview stage will be announced on the 23rd of May 2019.

2) Interview

The interviews will take place between 27th and 29th of May 2019, with the possibility of organising the interviews via skype.

At the stage of the interview, the selected candidates must demonstrate their motivation and commitment for carrying out the assignment, as well as present the evaluation plan together with the calendar of activities to the project team.

Should you need any other information related to the current assignment, do not hesitate to contact us at: fond.romania@gmail.com.
ANNEX 1

USEFUL RESOURCES:

Available online:
Black Sea NGO Forum website: www.blackseango.org


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This activity is part of the project „Building CSO Capacity for Regional Cooperation within the Black Sea Region“ is implemented by the Romanian NGDO Platform – FOND and funded by the European Union for the next three years, for the period January 2019 – December 2021.