

## Terms of Reference (ToR)

### Consultancy to Organise and Facilitate an Experience Exchange on Coalition Building and Networking for NGOs in Kyrgyzstan, Based on the Experience of Eastern European Countries

#### 1. Description of the CED project

In line with the Swiss Cooperation Programme for Central Asia 2022-2025, the Civic Engagement for Development (CED) project aims to strengthen civil society organisations (NGOs) in Kyrgyzstan to effectively engage in civic activism, promote democratic values, and address local community challenges.

*CED Objectives:*

- Empower NGOs to be independent development actors.
- Enhance citizen participation and NGO influence in political decision-making.
- Advocate for democratic reforms and social change.
- Amplify the voices of marginalised groups.

Specific Focus Areas: The project concentrates on three key areas:

1. **Civic Education:** Addressing fragmented formal civic education through CSO-led initiatives to raise awareness of democratic principles and human rights.
2. **Civic Engagement for Social Accountability:** Strengthening proactive civic engagement practices, independent media, and investigative reporting to counter political challenges.
3. **Local Governance and Democracy:** Balancing local autonomy with central government control, despite legal frameworks for self-governance.

Currently, the CED Project provides assistance to local NGOs operating in the fields of youth and women's empowerment; the promotion of civic participation; women's leadership; urban and local development.

The CED project operates across four complementary areas designed to strengthen civil society in Kyrgyzstan. **Area 1** provides core funding to selected NGOs in priority thematic areas through framework agreements, ensuring transparent budgeting, risk assessment, milestone monitoring, and supportive reporting systems, and enabling NGOs to focus on their core mission and strategic development. **Area 2** delivers needs-based institutional strengthening by enhancing internal governance, strategic planning, fundraising capacity, citizen engagement, coalition building skills, and gender and youth mainstreaming to improve long-term sustainability and reduce dependency on single funding sources. **Area 3** focuses on constituency building by strengthening NGOs' capacity, promoting transparency, public trust, and effective communication, including through digital platforms. **Area 4** supports coalition building and networking activities at local, national, and potentially international levels to advance joint advocacy and policy reform, bringing together NGOs, government bodies, media, business associations, and other stakeholders.

Under Area 4, the **Civic Engagement for Development (CED)** project continues to prioritise activities promoting **Coalition and Alliance Building, and Networking**<sup>1</sup>, recognising their strategic importance for the sustainable, inclusive, and democratic development of Kyrgyzstan. To adapt to these changing

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<sup>1</sup> Within the CED Project, coalition and alliance building is understood as a process of forming alliances or partnerships among different groups or organisations (NGOs, media, formal and informal groups, government bodies, local authorities, and other actors) with the aim of achieving a common objective. In the context of policy reforms in the Kyrgyz Republic, coalition building involves bringing together diverse stakeholders to advocate for change and influence policy decision-making processes.

conditions, NGOs need new strategies, enhanced resilience, and practical knowledge on how to operate effectively within a shrinking civic space.

In this context, the CED project seeks to engage an experienced **organisation/experts (hereafter “Consultancy”)** to design and implement an **Experience Exchange** programme for Kyrgyzstani NGOs, drawing on the practical lessons and successful models from the **Eastern European** countries – preferably **Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries** – where civil society has also faced restrictive environments.

## **2. Purpose:**

The overall objective of the consultancy is to **strengthen the capacity of CED NGO partners in coalition building, networking, and advocacy** under restrictive legal and political conditions by organising and facilitating an **experience exchange** with NGOs from the Eastern European countries.

### **Specific Objectives**

The assignment aims to:

1. Familiarise Kyrgyz NGOs with successful coalition-building practices in restrictive environments (shrinking civic space, political pressure, repressive legislation).
2. Equip NGOs with practical tools and knowledge to mitigate risks in advocacy, networking, and coalition activities.
3. Strengthen the resilience and sustainability of NGO coalitions and networks despite reduced access to external donor funding.
4. Foster stronger horizontal cooperation and solidarity among Kyrgyz NGOs working on civic engagement, advocacy, and policy dialogue.

## **3. Scope of Work:**

The Consultancy is entrusted with the following tasks:

### **A. Preparatory Phase**

- Conduct a desk review based on CED documents and online survey among CED-supported NGOs to identify key learning priorities, challenges, and expectations related to coalition building and networking.
- Identify priority capacity needs and challenges based on discussions with the CED team and selected NGO partners.
- Prepare training/workshop materials, case studies, and presentations in collaboration with invited experts.
- Develop a detailed programme and agenda for targeted experience exchange activities, including session topics, methodologies, and learning objectives, drawing from experiences Eastern European countries.

### **B. Implementation Phase**

#### **I. Field Visit and Training Seminar/Workshop in Bishkek**

- Organise and facilitate an **extensive training seminar/workshop** for approximately 10 CED NGO partners.
- Ensure that sessions are participatory, combining theoretical input, practical exercises, and peer-to-peer learning.
- Proposed topics to include (but not limited to):

- Models of sustainable coalitions and networks;
- Internal governance and decision-making mechanisms;
- Risk management and protection strategies for coalition members;
- Adapting to reduced donor funding and ensuring sustainability;
- Effective communication and engagement with government and media (as relevant).

## II. Mentorship and Follow-up Support

- Provide follow-up **mentorship support** (online or hybrid) to at least 3-5 selected NGOs with high potential to develop or strengthen coalition/network initiatives.
- Mentor 3-5 selected NGOs in adapting coalition plans, protection strategies, and advocacy tactics.
- Provide **brief progress reports** on mentorship activities and recommendations.

## III. Experience Exchange Visit to Eastern European/Eastern Partnership Countries (Tentative)

- If needed, coordinate an experience exchange visit for a small delegation of Kyrgyz NGOs to Eastern European/Eastern Partnership countries.
- Organise meetings with active coalitions, civil society networks, and public officials to observe coalition models in practice.
- Ensure that key lessons and experiences are documented and shared with the broader NGO community upon return.

## C. Final Phase

- Develop a **comprehensive final report** summarising:
  - Activities implemented;
  - Lessons learned and key findings;
  - Feedback from participants;
  - Recommendations for sustaining coalition-building initiatives in Kyrgyzstan.

## 4. Deliverables:

The Consultancy is responsible for the following deliverables:

#	Deliverables	Expected date	Note
1	Overview of the Consultancy's understanding of the assignment; the proposed approach and methodology	At least 2 weeks before of contract signing	
2	Training Programme Package	Before the workshop	
3	Workshop Implementation Report	Within 1 week after workshop	
4	Mentorship support programme	Before mentorship phase	
5	Mentorship Support Report	After mentorship phase	
6	Experience Exchange Visit Report	Within 2 weeks after the visit	
7	Final Comprehensive Analytical Report	End of assignment	

## Added value of the proposed activity:

As part of this technical assignment, the selected Consultancy is expected to bring the following added value to the CED Project and its NGO partners:

- A system for measuring the success and effectiveness of coalition and network activities of NGO partners is developed and applied.
- NGO partners are introduced to international experience and good practices in coalition and network development, drawing on examples from Eastern European countries that are applicable to the context of the Kyrgyz Republic.
- The sustainability and effectiveness of coalitions and networks established by NGO partners and/or NGOs playing an active role are strengthened.
- The number of members in coalitions and networks established by NGO partners and/or NGOs playing an active role is increased.
- The number of events (e.g., forums, round tables, seminars, public hearings, etc.) conducted or initiated within the framework of coalitions and networks established by NGO partners and/or NGOs playing an active role is increased.
- Coalitions/networks established by NGO partners and/or NGOs playing an active role are involved representatives from at least two different sectors (e.g., private sector, local authorities, youth councils, media, and others).
- NGO partners received support in developing and implementing a systematic approach to coalition and network activities, including, but not limited to, the establishment of membership criteria, participatory planning and implementation mechanisms, and membership based on shared goals and values.
- NGO partners received mentoring support in the development and implementation of action plans for at least two coalitions or networks.
- Up to 4 NGO partners join international networks or coalitions, including those involving organisations from Eastern European countries.

#### **5. Timeline:**

The total duration of the consultancy is expected to be **up to 8 months** (depending on the agreed detailed implementation plan), tentatively from **April 2026 to December 2026**.

All preparatory activities and preliminary research will be undertaken at the Consultancy's office before the commencement of the fieldwork. This approach ensures that the assessment is well-organised and that the fieldwork is executed efficiently and effectively in the designated locations.

#### **6. Reporting and Coordination:**

The Consultancy will report directly to CED Team Leader Joldoshbek Osmonov and CED expert Azamat Abdurakhmanov, responsible for Area 4. The Consultancy will provide the electronic version of the reports and annexes in Word format. Regular coordination meetings shall be scheduled to monitor progress and address any queries or issues that arise during the consultancy period.

**7. Qualifications and Expertise:** The Consultancy should possess the following qualifications and expertise:

- Proven track record in the field of coalition building and networking
- Proven experience in organising and facilitating international experience exchanges, training workshops, or study visits
- Demonstrated understanding of challenges faced by NGOs in restrictive civic environments.
- Established professional network or collaboration with civil society actors in at least one Eastern European country (especially in Eastern Partnership countries: Georgia, Moldova, Armenia).
- Excellent facilitation and communication skills in English, Russian language will be an important asset.
- Strong writing skills to develop clear and concise strategy documents
- Experience working in Central Asia will be considered an asset

**8. Budget:**

The overall budget, including consultants' fees, travel, accommodation costs in the Kyrgyz Republic, and other expenses, will be agreed upon based on the consultancy's offer and in line with internal guidelines and SDC's rules and regulations. Payment terms and milestones will be outlined in the contract agreement between the CED Project and the Consultancy.

**9. Confidentiality:**

All information shared with the Consultancy during the assignment shall be treated as confidential and used solely for the purpose of this consultancy.

**10. Ownership of Outputs:**

All deliverables produced during the consultancy period shall become the property of the CED Project and may not be used without the authorisation of the CED Project.

**11. Logistics**

All logistics for this assignment shall be organised by the Consultancy. The CED project may assist if need be.

**12. Formal requirements of the technical offer**

The structure of the offer must correspond with the structure of the ToRs. It must be legible (font size 11 or larger) and clearly formulated. The language of the tender is English or Russian.

The technical-methodological concept of the offer should not to exceed 10 pages (not including CV, the cover page, list of abbreviations, table of contents, brief introduction and, if applicable, CV for the backstopper).

The CVs of the staff proposed should clearly show what position the proposed person held, which tasks they performed and how long they worked during which period in the specified missions / roles.

### **13. Evaluation of the offer**

The selection of the Consultancy will be based on the following criteria:

#### **Technical Proposal (70%):**

- Clarity of proposed methodology and approach: Up to 20 points.
- Relevant experience in conducting capacity development for NGOs: Up to 20 points.
- Quality of proposed tools and techniques: Up to 15 points.
- Understanding of local context and challenges faced by NGOs in Kyrgyzstan: Up to 15 points.

#### **Financial Proposal (30%):**

Cost-effectiveness and reasonableness of the financial proposal: Up to 30 points.

Note: The tender evaluation criteria and points allocation are intended to ensure a comprehensive assessment of both technical and financial aspects of the proposals. The evaluation will be carried out by an evaluation committee comprising representatives from the project team.