

## TERMS OF REFERENCES

**Job title:** Evaluation Expert

**Reference to the project:** LEADER approach for rural prosperity in Moldova

**Period of assignment:** March 2021 – February 2022

**Expected Duration of Assignment:** 2-4 working days per month

### 1. BACKGROUND

The Project is implemented by the Solidarity Fund PL in Moldova and the National LEADER Network in the Republic of Moldova being financed by the European Union and co-financed by the Polish Aid. The Strategic Partner of the project is the Ministry of Agriculture Regional Development and Environment.

The Project aim is to contribute to creation of a supportive environment for further functioning of the LEADER approach which ensures sustainable development and modernization of Moldovan rural areas.

Our goals:

- To improve the living conditions and increase the attractiveness of rural areas through implementation of the Local Development Strategies (LDSs) and empowering the Local Action Groups (LAGs) as community-led local development actors;
- To strengthen the capacities of LAGs through increasing the role of the National LEADER Network in providing technical assistance and mentoring for LAGs, as well as in stimulating innovative solutions for rural development;
- To ensure a dialogue with the national stakeholders on designing, implementing and monitoring rural development policies;
- To ensure visibility and experience exchange of the implementation of the EU-LEADER approach in Moldova at both national and international levels;
- To create role-models of managing innovative instruments for sustainable rural development by LAGs.

Financial instruments for 2020-2021:

- EU-LEADER Rural Development Fund will finance LAGs for the implementation of LDSs with a budget of approx. 40.000,00 EUR per grant, for max. 12 months. Total budget: 800.000,00 EUR;
- EU-LEADER Flagship Initiatives will finance flagship rural development projects based on LEADER principles to be implemented by local rural stakeholders – with a budget of approx. 25,000 EUR per project, for max. 12 months. Total budget: 200.000,00 EUR;
- LEADER Partnership Fund will finance partnership initiatives and projects aimed at experience sharing among LAGs and common local and regional initiatives, including participation of Moldovan LAGs in transnational LEADER projects. Total budget: 40.000,00 EUR.

### 2. THE PURPOSE OF THE SERVICES

The external evaluation is conducted to: (1) ensure the accountability to stakeholders and local partners, (2) to identify at early stage potential implementation issues and (3) to validate the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Action.

The Expert is expected to monitor if the Action is implemented according to the accepted Annual Action Plan and the Grant Agreement and conduct the evaluation of the Action.

The Evaluation Expert will fulfil the following **duties**:

1. Assess the Action in terms of its coordination and management efficiency;

2. Identify the ongoing progress of the Action in regard to project activities and objectives;
3. Assess the relevance of project activities (including those of sub-grantees) in regard to project objectives;
4. Assess the extent to which the Action Team was able to identify risks and their ability to respond accordingly;
5. Investigate main challenges faced by the project and analyse how they could be overcome;
6. Identify and document lessons learnt and make recommendations regarding specific actions to be taken or adjustments to be made;

The following **deliverables** are expected to be produced:

- Evaluation Methodology;
- Monthly monitoring reports;
- Two evaluation reports (mid-term and final) that provide practical recommendations supported by evidence, findings and conclusions around key questions addressed by the evaluation;

### 3. EVALUATION PROCESS

#### Requirements for monitoring

##### *Monitoring work plan*

The Evaluation Expert will develop a Monitoring Plan that will help to track and assess the Action outcomes. The Plan will be submitted to the Action Coordinator for approval.

The Expert will perform monthly monitoring activities that will draw a realistic picture of what has been achieved each month, compared to the baseline of the project and to the Annual Action Plan. In order to monitor performance, a range of quantitative and qualitative methods such as surveys, qualitative interviews, project documents will be used. The frequency of collecting/updating the indicators will be established according to their specificity.

##### *Monitoring reports*

The Evaluation Expert will prepare monthly monitoring reports for activities conducted according to the Monitoring Plan. The reports will be submitted to the Action Coordinator in due time.

#### Requirements for evaluation

##### *Evaluation Work Plan*

The Evaluation Expert will prepare an Evaluation Plan to operationalize the evaluation. The Plan will set the course for effective Action evaluation. The Evaluation Plan will address the following reporting elements: (a) Overview of Project; (b) Intended use and users; (c) Evaluation Methodology; (d) Evaluation Framework; (e) Analysis and reporting.

##### *Work steps*

##### Desk phase (phase 1)

- The Evaluation Expert analyses the logic of the Action based on official documents. Key evaluation points are identified. A set of evaluation questions is proposed and validated by the reference group;
- Number of milestones (up to three) for conducting evaluation will be established in the plan.
- The Evaluation Expert will identify indicators and information sources for conducting the evaluation.
- The Evaluation Expert will identify the assumptions remaining to be tested in the field and develops its work plan for data collection and analysis.
- Evaluation plan will be developed and submitted for approval to the Action Coordinator.

##### Field phase (phase 2)

- Field phase will be implemented both in the mid-term and in the final evaluation.
- The Evaluation Expert will act according to the methodology and plan described in the Desk phase to ensure data collection. He/she will gather credible evidence. The expert will apply the specified techniques (interviews, questionnaires, case studies, etc.) and tests the assumptions.

#### Synthesis phase (phase 3)

- Synthesis phase will be implemented both in the mid-term and in the final evaluation.
- The Evaluation Expert will submit **two reports (mid-term and final evaluation)**, which includes a thorough analysis of the project. The reports will show the findings and conclusions as a response to the questions asked, as well as an overall assessment. These reports will include recommendations that are clustered and prioritized per topics and organizations.
- The final report will also provide good practices and lessons learned along the project implementation period and the recommendations. The presentation of results is to be intrinsically linked to the evaluation issues, establishing a flow of logic development derived from the information collected.

#### 4. MINIMUM PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND SKILLS<sup>1</sup>

- Master's degree in the field of Management, Law, Economy, Public Administration or any related relevant discipline;
- Professional experience in conducting international project evaluations;
- Expertise in project design, project management, monitoring and evaluation;
- Experience working in local community development projects.

*Additional skills that will constitute an advantage if the candidate is preselected for interview*

- Excellent analytical skills;
- Effective communication and negotiation skills;
- Ability to work under tight deadlines with excellent time management skills;
- Fluency (oral and written) in Romanian (C2), English (C1) and Russian (B2);
- Work experience in international teams.

#### 5. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Application shall be sent by e-mail to [hr@solidarityfund.md](mailto:hr@solidarityfund.md), with subject line "Evaluation Expert EuropeAid – LEADER", not later than **19 February 2021, 6 p.m.** and shall contain:

- CV in format Europass;
- Methodological approach for the implementation of the assignment (up to 2 pages);
- Salary requirements.

In case of questions, please contact our representative at the following email [victoria.vechiu@solidarityfund.md](mailto:victoria.vechiu@solidarityfund.md).

#### 6. SELECTION PROCESS

The submitted applications will be assessed within a 2-stages evaluation process:

##### Stage 1: Compliance Check

At this stage, a *review* of formal requirements will be conducted. It includes screening of the application on the basis of ToR and checking the completion of all application components (CV, Methodological approach, Salary requirements). The Administrative check is executed by the Evaluation Team Leader.

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<sup>1</sup> Minimum qualifications reflect the lowest level of acceptable education and experience required to satisfactorily perform the duties of the position.

## Stage 2: Evaluation of the full Application

A team of minimum 3 evaluators will carry out the assessment of the application's components against the criteria included in the Evaluation Form.

The criteria for selection process are following:

- Relevant background including the minimum professional qualifications and skills listed under point 4 (highest possible score – 50);
- Applicable methodological approach (highest possible score – 20);
- Reasonable price (highest possible score – 30).

Assessment under the criterion „price” will be based on the following formula:

$P = P_{min} / P_{of} \times 30$  points, where:

$P_{min}$  - the lowest proposed price

$P_{of}$  – price presented in the examined offer

$P$  – the number of points awarded to the examined offer under the price criterion, rounded to the full number.

Each evaluation team member will conduct the evaluation individually. After the assessment, the average score obtained by each candidate will be calculated. The first 3 candidates, with the highest score, will be invited to a final interview.

*\* The personal data will be processed by Solidarity Fund PL for the employment purposes only. The data will not be sent to third parties without the preliminary agreement of the persons that entrusted us with their data.*

## EVALUATION FORM

**Applicant's name:**

Evaluation criteria			Maximum obtainable score
<b>CV</b>			
1	Master's degree in the field of Management, Law, Economy, Public Administration or any related relevant discipline	Management	10
		Law, Economy, Public Administration	9
		Other relevant discipline	8
		Other non-relevant discipline	7
2	Professional experience in conducting international project evaluations;	Evaluation of 4 or more projects	20
		Evaluation of 3 projects	17
		Evaluation of 2 projects	14
		Evaluation of 1 project	11
3	Expertise in project design, project management, monitoring and evaluation;	4 and more years of experience	10
		3 years experience	9
		2 years experience	8
		1 year experience	7
4	Experience working in local community development projects;	4 and more years experience	10
		3 years experience	9
		2 years experience	8
		1 year experience	7
<b>Sub-total</b>			
<b>Methodological approach</b>			
5	Methodological approach for the implementation of the assignment (up to 2 pages);	Good/meets all the requirements in the ToR	20
		Applicable	15
		Needs improvements	10
		Non-applicable	0
<b>Sub-total</b>			
<b>Price</b>			
6	Salary requirements	According to the formula $P = P_{min}/P_{of} \times 30$ points	30
<b>Total score</b>			