

Call for Service: Field/Technical Expert (s)

FSM- 2024-02-13

INTERNET ACCESS FLAGSHIP: Rural Empowerment through Digital Inclusion (REDI) is an EU funded project that Solidarity Fund PL in Georgia (SFPL in GEO) began implementing on December 1st, 2023, together with our partner - the e-Governance Academy from Estonia (eGA).

By virtue of its innovative approach, this action will reduce the existing digital division and include those traditionally left behind by improving access to affordable digital infrastructure and developing digital literacy skills in rural areas of the target regions of Imereti, Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi and Kvemo Svaneti and possibly Kakheti.

When it comes to the development of the connectivity infrastructure, first of the two main directions of the project, it will be implemented as a follow-up of the Open-Net Programme's project "Log-in Georgia" and will focus on providing access to the Internet and technology to inhabitants of rural areas from ~200 selected villages from target regions with a minimum effort required (via public spaces of the greatest social impact (i.e., schools, kindergartens, ambulatories, libraries, village administration, outdoor pavilions - panchaturi, local shops, etc.)) and at the minimum cost, so that it is affordable and at the villagers' fingertips.

The second direction of the action centers around promoting digital literacy in the inhabitants of the rural areas of the selected target regions. This will be done in coordination with and by increasing the impact of the already existing educational programmes implemented by the "Login Georgia" project and the Communications Commission (ComCom). Approx. 25 Digital Rural Hubs (DRH) will be created to be used for the purpose of enhancing digital skills of the rural population. Some of them will be set up by expanding the existing ones, while others will be in completely new locations, closer to the villagers, which will make them more accessible. Furthermore, mobile training buses with IT trainers, equipped with laptops and with Internet, will be visiting the areas with no IT-equipped training classes.

The REDI team is looking for service/consultancy contract with seasoned professionals with extensive experience in digital infrastructure deployment. Ideal candidates will possess a profound understanding of networking technologies, wireless communication systems, hardware and software installation, as well as troubleshooting techniques. This technical proficiency is paramount for effectively designing, implementing, and maintaining robust and reliable internet connectivity solutions, particularly in rural areas.

Service requested: Expert Profile: TOR expert for Rural Empowerment through Digital Inclusion (REDI).

Responsibilities:

Phase 1: Technical Infrastructure Responsibilities - Conduct fieldwork to map a list of 250 villages, including the verification of profiled villages.

- Carry out field visits to process on with relevant technical study, including mapping landscape of villages, creating technical profiles of villages and choosing relevant infrastructure for installation of Wi-Fi arrays, community internet and/or digital rural hubs.

- Support team/local partners in Designing tailored formats for deploying connectivity infrastructure, such as Wi-Fi arrays and transmission equipment, based on identified community needs and technology consumption habits.
- Collaborate with local stakeholders to select and refurbish suitable premises for Digital Rural Hubs (DRH), ensuring accessibility and functionality in line with community needs.

Phase 2: Developing TOR for the study Addressing Digital Gaps and Information Shortcomings in Regional Contexts

- Support Project team to Develop Terms of Reference (TOR) for conducting comprehensive needs assessment (study) in target villages to identify specific challenges and requirements for digital inclusion. Within the aim of this activity the expert will need to a) understand the needs of project team in identifying all the villages for deployment of community internet infrastructure; b) understand types of access points to be installed and consider team's criteria for village selection; c) forecast network planning phase, identify all possible points/questions that team will be needing for deployment of the equipment; Closely coordinate and consult team to include all possible needed details in the TOR , including guidelines for replicating successful digital accessibility and connectivity models across other rural areas.
- Support Project team/local partners to deploy and install digital infrastructure, equipment and software in public spaces, relevant tower, digital rural hubs, etc; Advice the project Team regarding the operation of Internet access points, Digital Rural Hubs (DRH), wifi equipment, rally connections, fiber optics, pay boxes etc;
- Formulate guidelines for the replication and scaling of effective digital inclusion strategies, emphasizing sustainability and long-term impact across different regions.

2. Duration of the assignment:

Upon request, during the year of 2024, 100 working days, including with possible term of extension, subject to terms and conditions of the agreement to be signed between parties.

3. Place(s) of Assignment

Online and in-person in Georgia with field visits in selected villages;

4. Minimum requirements

1. **Technical Proficiency:** Proficiency in assessing technical requirements and deploying digital infrastructure solutions, including WI-FI equipment; Advanced degree in a relevant field such as Information Technology, or Public Policy.
2. Proven track record in managing IT network infrastructure development projects, preferably in diverse landscape areas;
3. Strong understanding of IT networking and radio frequency engineering;
4. Strong analytical and problem-solving skills, with the ability to translate data into actionable insights.

5. Excellent communication and interpersonal abilities, adept at fostering collaboration among diverse stakeholders.
6. Familiarity with international best practices in digital inclusion and connectivity initiatives.
7. Fluency in English and Georgian; additional language proficiency is an asset.

4.8 Providing a CV.

4.9 Providing a completed practical task. (check annex 1) empowering the project team to make informed decisions in selecting the most suitable candidate(s) for a proposed position.

Offers from service providers that do not meet the minimum criteria will be rejected for formal reasons.

5. Criteria for selection of the Applicant (max. 150 points) (Experience, availability, practical task).
Only shortlisted candidates will be invited for an interview.

A) Experience (60 points)

Experience in **Technical Proficiency:**

- over 5 years of experience – 10 points
- 1 to 5 years of experience – 5 points
- below 1 year of experience – rejection of the offer for formal reason

Experience in managing **IT network** infrastructure development projects

- over 5 years of experience – 10 points
- 1 to 5 years of experience – 5 points
- below 1 year of experience – rejection of the offer for formal reason

Experience in Strong understanding of **IT networking** and radio frequency engineering

- over 1 year of experience – 10 points
- 6 months to 1 year of experience – 5 points
- below 6 months of experience - rejection of the offer for formal reason

Experience in familiarity with international best practices in digital inclusion and connectivity initiatives.

- over 1 year of experience – 10 points
- 6 months to 1 year of experience – 5 points
- below 6 months of experience - rejection of the offer for formal reason

b) Availability 40 points

Availability (From receiving an assignment from a project):

- If a person is available within 24 hours– 10 points
- If a person is available within 48 hours – 10 points
- If a person is available distantly any time needed – 10 points
- If a person is able to travel in regions– 10 points

c) Practical task – 50 points.

6. Information about remuneration:

6.1. The remuneration proposed by the project: 150 euro (gross) per day;

6.2. Settlements between the Contracting Authority and the Contractor will be conducted in GEL depending on the Contractor's place of tax residence and in relation to the current Euro exchange rate of the National Bank of Georgia.

7. The application must contain Fiscal Statement (bilingual) and Application FORM (ENG only) (templates attached), signed and scanned in PDF format .

8. SUBMISSION

Application must be submitted no later than 1 March 2024 Tbilisi time to the address: georgiarep@solidarityfund.pl

9. Information on the outcome of the procedure will be sent to the e-mail address indicated by the applicant and will be published on Solidarity Fund PL_GEO Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/solidarityfund.ge> and <https://participatoryhub.ge/>

10. Please be advised that by submitting an application you agree to share the content of the application with other applicants who could submit an appropriate request to the SFPL (except for personal data, which will be anonymized).

11. Solidarity Fund PL, provides equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment in employment to all people without regard to race, colour, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, marital status, protected genetic information, or sexual orientation.

12. Please be advised that the administrator of personal data contained in the submitted applications is the Solidarity Fund PL with headquarters in Warsaw, ul. Mysłowicka 4, 01-612 Warsaw. The data will be processed on the basis of art. 6 clause 1 point. c of the Polish law on personal data protection for the purpose related to public procurement procedure. You have the right to access the personal data provided, the right to rectify personal data and the right to request the administrator to limit the processing of personal data, subject to the cases referred to in art. 18 clause 2 of the law. You have the right to lodge a complaint with the President of the Office for Personal Data Protection "The data controller is Solidarity Fund PL in Georgia, 20 Chavchavadze Avenue, Apartment #3, floor 2, 0179 Tbilisi, Georgia. To exercise your rights, please contact the SFPL in Georgia directly at georgiarep@solidarityfund.pl – we are committed to protecting your rights to the best of our ability."

Annex 1

Practical Task: Verification of the Lists of Villages

Objective: Consider List of [villages](#) covered under Open net program, and verify and finalize the (i) list and (ii) initial digital of profiles of villages within project target regions (please see in description above), where Internet access points infrastructure would be relevant to install as the follow up to “Log in Georgia” Project;

Villages should be profiled based on following criteria:

- a) Demographic Profile of Villages (size of population):
- b) Broadband installation status and size: with particular focus on fiber optic connectivity:
 - Internet Connection Status: Determining the connectivity status, whether villages are already connected to internet (by either large or small/local service providers), or not connected;
 - Construction Works Status: Investigating the progress of construction works, including the status of tenders;
 - Project (Design) Work Status: Reviewing the current status of project design, including any ongoing or planned initiatives.
 - Number of identified villages adjacent to optical connectivity infrastructure, but uncovered by Open Net program;
 - Any other criteria, that expert suggests as relevant for mapping villages for future connectivity plan (optional);

Completion Criteria:

The final list of villages is accurately verified and aligned with requested criteria and objectives;

Any discrepancies or changes in the village lists are documented;

A summary report or excel document format of the verification process is completed.

Please, send the completed task to the next designated email address: georgiarep@solidarityfund.pl, additional documents may be attached along with the completed task.