

## Call for Service for conducting comprehensive multidisciplinary research

FSM-2024-04-07

Solidarity Fund PL in Georgia is looking for a qualified company to conduct a service for comprehensive multidisciplinary research.

**Service requested:** To conduct a survey that will serve the primary purpose of informing REDI project's decision to select a final list of 250 villages to install Internet access points.

**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, 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. The second direction of the action centres around **promoting digital literacy** in the inhabitants of the rural areas of the selected target regions.

1. The tasks under the planned assignment are as follows:

**SCOPE 1. MAPPING** This part of the research should help the project map the "most vibrant/influential/considered important"<sup>1</sup> villages, that have both more and less than 200 inhabitants as well as define technology consumption habits of locals; The research should follow the "Log in Georgia" [map](#) in 4 target regions of the project in order to choose 250 villages within target municipalities and regions.

*Detailed content of the research is to be defined by the research instrument, designed by selected vendor, but initially here are key points that needs to be addressed by the research:*

- Formulate the list of villages within the target regions (Imereti, Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti, Kakheti) that have more than 200 inhabitants and are secured with optical infrastructure installed by the Open Net programme.
- Formulate the list of highland villages within the target regions that have less than 200 inhabitants (and thus no optical infrastructure).
- **Deliver general social profile of both types of villages** including (i) statistics on age, sex, vulnerability of local population, such as elderly, school children, students, disabled people, youth, women, minorities, unemployed, etc. economic vulnerability of households; (ii) average income; where the income mostly comes from; etc.

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<sup>1</sup> "Most vibrant/ influential/considered important" should be understood as the ones who will benefit from the project most.

- **Map general enterprise profiles of both types of villages**, including the existence of SMEs; ongoing business fields that SMEs operate in, economic potential of the village; the economic potential of the village in terms of industry (tourism? Agriculture? ); etc.
- **Profile community organization**. Community organizations may include activist groups, community organizations/leaders, grassroot organizations, small NGOs capable of running community Internet (profiles and contact information of these organizations will be needed).
- **Identify public space of the villages**. Formulate and grade the list of villages that have existing public spaces/attraction areas; Spaces should be profiled, including functionality (school, *panchaturi*, *birja*, library, etc.) and extent of social impact such as active market infrastructure (flea market), renovated square, etc.
- **Identify technology consumption habits of locals**. Information on interests of local people in having high speed and stable internet connections and the way they source information (e.g., TV? Internet? Radio? Podcasts? Neighbours? Family?). (**examples of questions we need answered**: Does the population have access to internet? What are the means of such access? What are reasons of not having access to the Internet (price? No or slow/unreliable internet connection? no technologies at home? What are basic problems caused by not having access to the Internet? What devices do local people usually use to access the Internet? Do they use payboxes? Do they use it frequently? What are they accessing through the devices? (Purchase web sites? Social services? Government services? Communication with relatives abroad?); How often do they need internet services? What services are needed specifically? Do older people use the Internet? (Why? Why not?); Who are they supported by when using the Internet? (grandkids?); What are SMEs using internet for in most cases? etc.).

**SCOPE 2. WI-FI AREAS** This part of the research is looking to make the list of free Wi-Fi areas out of identified public spaces.

**Detailed content of the research is to be defined by the research instrument, designed by selected vendor and/or its sub-contractor, but initially here are key points that needs to be addressed by this part of the research:**

- a. Which spaces are most optimal for installation of **indoor** access points by connectivity infrastructure (specifically transmission equipment) and **outdoor** access points; (community internet in the highland villages of the target regions, where the number of inhabitants is less than 200 - optimal for installation of access points by connectivity infrastructure Wi-Fi 6 (802.11AX) dual frequency outdoor); (**examples of questions we need answered**: is there optical Internet network in the village? Is there a termination point? Is there 4G coverage? Identify tower type constructions (electrical tower or other types of towers); Landscape peculiarities; (pictures of the landscape in all directions – north-south, east-west); Electricity (graphic or systematic); etc. Are small and medium Internet service providers active around the region? Village? Which ones?);
- b. Identify possible ownership information for indoor public spaces, as well as information on internal conditions of the space (including for the possibility to develop a Digital Rural Hub (DRH).

**2. Duration of the assignment:**

The duration of the assignment will be subject to negotiation with pre-selected candidates; The final decision will be reflected in terms and conditions of the agreement that will be signed with the most advantageous vendor selected.

### **3. Place(s) of Assignment**

Following target regions of Georgia: Imereti, Guria, Racha-Lechkhumi, Kvemo Svaneti, Kakheti.

### **4. Minimum requirements for the consideration of the offer:**

**Offers that do not meet minimum requirements will be excluded on a formal basis:**

**4.1. General Experience:** A well-established company, with no less than 5 years of experience in conducting research, producing reports and data analysis;

**4.2. Subcontracting Experience:** Experience in subcontracting technical/specific field specialists/companies to fill in required information/data in the report to be produced;

**4.3. Multidisciplinary Experience:** Experience in integrating/compiling multidisciplinary (technical) studies/assessments in final reports.

**4.4. Dedicated focal point** for our project.

#### **Following requirements would be considered an asset:**

4.5. Experience in working with donor-driven projects;

4.6. Proven track record of various types of field work and usage of other types of methodology;

4.7. Transparent system of management and accounting and/or audit within the company.

### **5. Criteria for selection of the Applicant (max. 150 points)**

#### **5.1. General Experience - max. 35 points**

- More than 10 years of experience – 35 points
- More than 5 years of experience, and less than 10 years - 25 points
- Less than 5 years of experience – rejection of the offer on a formal basis

#### **5.2 Subcontracting Experience\_ – max. 20 points**

#### **5.3 Multidisciplinary experience – max. 20 points**

#### **5.4 Ability to dedicate a focal point – max. 10 points**

#### **Additional Requirements**

#### **5.5 Experience in working with donor-driven projects – max. 10 points**

#### **5.6 Experience in various types of field work (working on a local level, outside Tbilisi) and usage of other types of methodology – max. 10 points**

#### **5.7 Audit done within the company for last 5 years- max. 5 points**

### **6. Price**

**6.1.** The Research budget is pre-approved from the donor and amounts to **no more** than equivalent of 45 000 euros, including all applicable taxes and expenses.

6.2 Applying vendors need to provide their proposed tentative budget, within the frames of agreed budget and the information of the extent of representability of research data, possible within the proposed budget - max. 40 points

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

$$P = P_{min} / P_{of} \times 40 \text{ points}$$

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.

6.4. Settlements between the Contracting Authority and the Contractor will be conducted in GEL. **The tender receiving the highest number of points will be invited to the Interview as the next stage of call for service.**

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

## 8. SUBMISSION

Application must be submitted no later than April 26, 2024 Tbilisi time to the email address: [georgiarep@solidarityfund.pl](mailto:georgiarep@solidarityfund.pl)

Questions regarding the call for proposals, can be directed to [georgiarep@solidarityfund.pl](mailto:georgiarep@solidarityfund.pl) before expiration of the deadline.

9. The contracting authority will reject any tenders/questions submitted after the deadline for submission of tenders.

10. 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/>

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. A contract will be signed with the selected contractor.

12. The Contractor whose tender was selected as the most advantageous, including the results of interview shall be informed by the Contracting Authority about the place and date of signing the contract.

13. Prior to concluding the contract, the Contractor shall provide all information necessary to complete the content of the contract at the request of the Contracting Authority.

14. If the Economic Operator whose tender was selected as the most advantageous evades the conclusion of the contract, the Contracting Authority may re-examine and evaluate the tenders

from among the tenders of the remaining Economic Operators in the procedure or cancel the procedure.

**15.** Persons representing the Economic Operator at the time of signing the contract should present documents confirming their authorisation to represent the Economic Operator, if such authorisation does not result from the documents attached to the tender.

**16.** 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.

**17.** 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](mailto:georgiarep@solidarityfund.pl) – we are committed to protecting your rights to the best of our ability.