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# Terms of Reference

## Final Evaluation

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## 1. Contracting body

Hilfswerk International (HWI)  
Grünbergstraße 15/2/5  
A – 1120 Vienna, Austria  
Type of organization: NPO

## 2. Project data

<b>Project title:</b>
Strong CSOs and Multi-stakeholder Partnerships for Active and Prosperous Youth in Tajikistan – ProYouth
<b>Countries of implementation:</b>
Tajikistan
<b>Source(s) of funding:</b>
European Commission (EC) & Austrian Development Agency (ADA)
<b>Donor reference:</b>
2020/ 422 – 317
<b>Project duration:</b>
01 April 2021 to 31 Mai 2023 (26 months)
<b>Total project budget:</b>
EUR 444.447,61
<b>Project and cooperation partner(s):</b>
Hilfswerk International (HWI) – lead applicant MIR Office for Initiatives Development (MIR) – co-applicant UPCT Union of Professional Consultants of Tajikistan (UPCT) – co-applicant

## 3. Project summary

The report of the Roadmap Support Facility for Engagement with civil society 2018-2020 shows that weak CSO capacity and engagement in policy dialogue and lack of collaboration between civil society and governments still hamper civil society development in the Republic of Tajikistan (RT), despite the progress made in the priority areas. Tajik CSOs struggle with inadequate legislation and reduction in funding from the donor community. Due to weak democratic traditions, and absence of a certain general civic culture in RT, many policymakers on local level do not clearly understand the role and support for the notion of civil society. Lack of coordination and organization within the CSO sector make its ability to react to developments on the public agenda limited. Relations and cooperation between governments and local authorities and CSOs are insufficiently developed to initiate reforms and general decision-making processes. Only 9 % of all CSO work with youth and children and around 20 % with women, although young people represent more than 50% of RT's population, with the majority living in rural areas. Over the past decade, RT has made progress in reducing poverty and growing its economy. However, the rate of job creation has not kept pace with the growing population. Poverty is highest in rural areas (73,8% rural population in RT), where about 2/3 of the population are poor and subsistence economies prevail. Youth in rural and most-at-risk regions face greater challenges accessing employment and training, thereby exposing them to relatively higher risks of being drawn into illegal activities and/or radicalization. Youth unemployment in general is high (according to ILO, in 2019 - 20,82 %), with even increased rates in remote areas. Youth wages are very low. Despite being a substantial demographic group, young people often feel they lack opportunities to actively participate in public life. For these reasons, many young people are forced to migrate to earn money to support their families. Young people from remote areas and especially young women are more likely than their peers to suffer multi-dimensional deprivation. Additionally young women face specific education and labour market barriers. Although young people are concerned about societal problems, civic engagement, especially in rural areas, remains very low. The implementation of the legislative and policy framework on gender equality

is lagging and there is a gap between de jure and de facto realization of women's rights. Under-representation of women in decision-making in the public arena is a critical factor in limiting the inclusiveness of political process. Active participation of women in economic and social life is weak, e. g. only 20,8% women are engaged in entrepreneurial activity. The COVID-19 pandemic had an additional negative impact – larger and more prolonged effect on women, increased degree of vulnerability due to changes in employment and falling incomes, increased unemployment among youth and women.

Therefore, the project strives to activate the civil society in rural and remote areas. It will be implemented in 24 communities (jamoats) in 4 districts in Sughd region (Asht, Isfara, Spitamen, Devashtich) and 4 districts of Khatlon region (town Bokhtar, Nurek, Panj, Shaartuz). The target area is predominantly rural, with high population density and represents a population of more than 500.000. Many of the target districts are vulnerable and/or remote. Half of them is in border areas (Afghanistan, Kyrgyzstan and Uzbekistan). According to our need analysis there are a number of CSO working with youth and women, encountering a number of needs and constraints. Additionally, the action envisages mobilizing youth in the target jamoats, inspiring it to involve in the project, to improve skillset, connect with peers from other communities and with youth active CSOs. The aim is to organize them in informal groups (youth contact groups - YCG) to strengthen the civil participation of youth and in favour of youth. We believe that this will foster the social and economic development of their communities. The target area also includes Dushanbe and Khujand, as the action aims to involve relevant stakeholders on national and regional level to achieve a great impact on the policy level, and to promote experience exchange among CSOs active in the capital and those active in rural areas, thus addressing the gap between rural and urban CSOs.

We believe that promoting entrepreneurial skills & spirit and awareness of gender equality, social inclusion and environmental protection, as well as enabling multi-stakeholder partnerships between decision-makers and civil society and strengthening further the competence of civil society actors to mediate between youth and local authorities is powerful approach to activate young women and men in rural areas to better recognize and use their potential. Through their successful realization they can sustainably improve economic and social life in their communities. Youth engagement and entrepreneurship are important instruments for overcoming social exclusion and poverty. What is needed are effective mechanisms for involving young people in innovation and entrepreneurship, improved dialogue among various actors in the process of supporting entrepreneurial activity, local strategic plans for involving youth in rural areas in entrepreneurial activity, including young women and people with disability and taking into consideration the global trends of climate change and digitalization.

This is what the joint action of Hilfswerk International (HWI) and the Tajik CSOs “MIR- Office for Initiatives Development” (MIR), and Union of Professional Consultants of Tajikistan (UPCT) -“ProYouth” strives to achieve. Their complementary experience, competence, regional coverage, and active involvement in the civic development of Tajikistan make the action highly responsive to the needs of the target regions.

#### **4. Objectives, expected outputs and activities of the project**

**Overall Objective:** The action seeks to make a considerable contribution to strengthening civil society organizations (CSOs) in RT as competent and reliable actors of governance and accountability in promoting youth participation in social and economic life.

**Project Outcome:** CSOs in 24 communities (jamoats) in 8 districts in Sughd and Khatlon regions, and Dushanbe are empowered to promote youth participation and sustainably improve social and economic self-development of young people (focussing on rural and vulnerable young women and men) and their involvement in decision making. This will be achieved through Output 1) strengthened capacity of local civil society actors through tailor-made trainings in high demanded topics; Output 2) improved knowledge and best-practise exchange among youth CSOs by applying digital tools and innovative approaches; Output 3) more effective multi-stakeholder partnerships among decision makers and CSOs and mutually developed mechanisms to ensure accountability. Output 4) As a result capacitated civil society actors will apply the obtained skillset, the launched partnerships, and elaborated tools to implement social and business-oriented community youth activities. Output 5) Systematized knowledge, including the adaption of successful manuals and good practice from international and local projects guarantees that the approaches can be publicly accessed and replicated.

#### **Expected outputs:**

**Output 1 (OP1):** Selected CSOs and YCG strengthened their expertise in fostering an enabling environment for youth participation in social and economic life.

**Output 2 (OP2):** Selected CSOs and YCG share knowledge and best-practise in newly established/reactivated online and live platforms/ knowledge hubs.

**Output 3 OP3:** Effective multi-stakeholder approaches and platforms among policy & decision makers, CSOs (incl. YCG) and private sector are established to develop mechanisms ensuring accountability of local government and make a considerable contribution to the implementation of the Youth Policy Strategy and other policy documents in Tajikistan.

**Output 4 OP4:** Strengthened and collaborating CSOs implement social and business-oriented community activities aiming at inciting youth civic engagement and fostering entrepreneurial opportunities for youth.

**Output 5 OP5:** Systematized, adapted and documented project outputs on youth participation and entrepreneurship ensure knowledge exchange and long-term impact.

**Activities:**

**A.1.1: Contact and involve youth CSOs in the target communities, incl. establishing YCG and assessment of organisational needs.**

A.1.1.1. Two information sessions on national/regional level.

A.1.1.2. Eight Focus group discussions.

A.1.1.3. 24 youth group discussions and individual interviews.

**A.1.2.: Conduct training modules for CSOs & YCG**

A.1.2.1. Trainings for CSOs and YCG in (strategic) planning & financial literacy.

A.1.2.2. Trainings for CSOs and YCG in entrepreneurship.

A.1.2.3. Trainings for CSOs and YCG in gender equality.

**A.1.3.: Conduct ToT course in for mentors in leadership, negotiation, and networking**

**A.1.4. Conduct the First National Bloggers' Forum in the Republic of Tajikistan in cooperation with the Committee for Youth and Sports under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan**

A.2.1. Establish a Youth Online knowledge hub & networking platform with tailored learning tools.

A.2.2. Webinars for civil society actors, youth, and relevant stakeholders.

A.2.3. Conduct online exchange meetings among the CSOs and YCG.

A.3.1. Conduct 8 discussions on young women's empowerment on district level.

A.3.2. Conduct 2 Regional Round Tables for CSOs and local and national authorities.

A.3.3. Organize meeting with the Scientific Entrepreneurial Platform (SEP)<sup>1</sup>, supported in the frame of HWI CANDY V project.

A.3.4. Organise a National Round Table.

A.3.5. Initiate the establishment of Youth Think Tank (informal structure).

A.4.1. Joint working session for the elaboration of action plans for youth community events (youth business and social oriented events).

A.4.2. Conduct business-oriented youth community events.

A.4.3. Conduct social youth community events.

A.4.4. Conduct a National Youth Forum.

A.4.5. Conduct an Advanced Training on business planning.

A. 4.6. Provide technical support to most successful business plans, elaborated in the frame of A.4.5.

**A.5.1.: Adapt HWI Toolkits and Manuals for trainings for CSOs, YCG, local authorities and young people.**

A.5.1.1. Adapt the HWI Gender Equality Toolkit.

A.5.1.2 Adapt the HWI Start-up Toolkit.

A.5.1.3 Adapt the HWI Manual for Youth-Oriented Community Events.

5.2 Systematize & document project outputs/deliverables on youth participation and entrepreneurship.

5.3 Conduct Project Steering Committee Meetings (remote/online).

## **5. Purpose of the evaluation**

The purpose of assignment is to conduct the final evaluation of the project, namely to

- find out if and / or to which extent the project activities contributed to meeting the specific objectives,
- analyse the achievement of expected results within the planned time period,
- identify the impact of the project upon the target groups,
- cover probable challenges/problems in course of the project implementation and how they had been addressed,
- seek lessons learnt and to

- generate credible and useful information and recommendations for the Donor(s), partner institution(s) and the implementing organisations that can be incorporated into each organisation's decision-making process.

The evaluation generally aims at the assessment of the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the project activities based on the understanding of these concepts according to the DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance<sup>2</sup>:

- *Relevance (OECD/DAC)*: The extent to which the objectives of a development intervention are consistent with beneficiaries' requirements, country needs, global priorities and HWI's and donors' policies.
- *Effectiveness (OECD/DAC)*: The extent to which the development intervention's objectives were achieved, or are expected to be achieved, considering their relative importance. Note: Also used as an aggregate measure of (or judgement about) the merit or worth of an activity, i.e., the extent to which an intervention has attained, or is expected to attain, its major relevant objectives efficiently in a sustainable fashion and with a positive institutional developmental impact.
- *Efficiency (OECD/DAC)*: A measure of how economically resources/ inputs (funds, expertise, time, etc.) are converted to results.
- *Impact (OECD/DAC)*: The positive and negative, primary, and secondary long-term effects produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended, or unintended.
- *Sustainability (OECD/DAC)*: The continuation of benefits from a development intervention after major development assistance has been completed. The probability of continued long-term benefits. The resilience to risk of the net benefit flows over time.

The main address of this final evaluation is the Donor (European Commission, Austrian Development Agency) and the programme implementers, Hilfswerk International as the lead implementing organisation and its partners in Tajikistan.

## 6. Scope of the evaluation

The scope of this final evaluation shall be the following:

- **Time period and/or phases of the intervention to be covered by the evaluation:** The entire project shall be evaluated: 01.04.2021 – 31.05.2023.
- **Place of evaluation:** The evaluation needs to take place on site, meaning in Tajikistan. Interviews and meetings with stakeholders, partners and beneficiaries can be partly conducted virtually via Zoom, MS Teams, and Skype.
- **Timeframe of evaluation:** The evaluation shall be carried out not later than end of September 2023, including the elaboration and submission of an evaluation report.
- **Potential/ expected interview partners:**

The sample of persons to be interviewed out of all target groups and final beneficiaries needs to be suggested by the evaluator in the proposal and outlined in the inception report. Potential interview partners include:

- Representatives of project implementing partners.
- Representatives of HWI, project management staff.
- Representatives of CSOs, Youth Contract Groups.
- Representatives of relevant national, regional, district and jamoat authorities/agencies
- Representatives of donor organizations (EU-Delegation to Tajikistan)
- Experts & trainers who have been involved in the project.
- Representatives of other organizations implementing complementary projects for evaluation of synergies

## 7. Main evaluation questions

The following main questions must be addressed based on the mentioned evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability) as well as in accordance with other aspects related to the coordination and participation issues. Below list is to be regarded as non-exhaustive and should be complemented by the evaluator until the inception report.

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<sup>2</sup> OECD/DAC (2002): Glossary of Key terms in Evaluation and Results Based Management; Development Assistance Committee Working Party on Aid Evaluation: Paris, retrievable under <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/21/2754804.pdf>

## **Relevance**

- What is the relevance of the intervention regarding local and national requirements and priorities with regard to strengthening the capacities of civil society actors and enhancing youth participation in RT?
- To what extent was the project sensitive and responsive to the specific beneficiary groups and subgroups (e.g., women, youth, disadvantaged persons) and to what extent does it address their needs and interests?
- Are the activities and outputs of the programme consistent with the overall goal and the attainment of its objectives?

## **Effectiveness**

How can we interpret the planned activities in comparison to the achieved results?

- Did the project achieve the objectives and results defined in the logical frame (will be forwarded with the signed Service Contract)?
- To what extent will the objectives of the project be (most likely) achieved?
- What were the major factors influencing the achievement or non-achievement of the objectives? Which were the success factors? Have there been encountered any problems or unintended results that hindered the implementation of the project?
- Are there any individuals or groups excluded from participation? How was the exclusion of certain individuals or groups addressed?

## **Efficiency**

Are the objectives achieved in a cost-efficient manner by the development intervention?

- Is the input – output relation reasonable and justifiable? Were the activities cost-efficient?
- Were objectives achieved on time?
- Was the project efficiently managed and coordinated?
- To what extent have individual resources been used economically?
- Were all items procured under this project purchased as planned and distributed and used appropriately?
- Are there any alternatives for achieving the same results with less inputs/funds?
- Has the potential for synergies with other initiatives been sufficiently exploited?

## **Impact**

What has happened as a result of the project?

- To what extent have there been real changes for the beneficiaries?
- To what extent have beneficiaries' capacities been strengthened?
- What benefits did beneficiaries gain from the project – disaggregated by gender or other relevant social groups, such as minorities?
- Did women and men contribute equally to the realization of the intervention?
- Do women and men equally benefit from the intervention?
- Were capacities of beneficiaries strengthened as a result of the project?
- How many people have really been affected by the project?
- Are there any unintended (positive or negative technical, economic, social, cultural, political, or environmental) effects that occurred due to the project?

## **Sustainability**

How is the sustainability or the continuity of the intervention and its effects to be assessed?

- To what extent will activities, results and effects be expected to continue after donor intervention has ended?
- Which strategies have been used to ensure long-term local ownership and a commitment to social equity?
- To what extent does the intervention reflect on and consider factors which, by experience, have a major influence on sustainability like e.g., economic, ecological, social, and cultural aspects?
- What are the local perceptions on sustainability (beneficiaries, community members, civil society organisations, manager of partner organizations)?

- What are the major factors that influenced the achievement or non-achievement of sustainability of the project?

## **8. Evaluation approach and methodology**

The evaluation shall be undertaken by applying a combination of field visits, desk studies and consultations with the project team. The evaluation method must be participatory, with the active involvement of all key stakeholders.

The process of the evaluation will include:

- a) consultations with the project team, specifications of the ToR and desk study.
- b) conduction of an inception meeting with project staff to discuss evaluation methodology and main evaluation questions.
- c) field visits.
- d) preparation of draft evaluation report.
- e) discussion of preliminary evaluation results with project team.
- f) preparation of final report.
- g) quality control and approval of the final report by contracting body.

The collection and interpretation of information need to be conducted in a sex-disaggregated manner.

## **9. Deliverables**

The evaluation process should produce the following reports:

- Inception report in the form of a PPT-presentation or Word document including, but not limited to, detailed questions, hypothesis and indicators to the individual evaluation questions, suggestion of concrete evaluation methods and instruments for the analysis of the evaluation questions, cross-cutting issues and intervention logic (e.g. desk research, field studies, interviews, etc.); presentation of preliminary results and hypotheses; suggestion on organizational issues (e.g. time schedule and interview and/or visitors' list) and its presentation in a meeting with the project team.
- Draft of final evaluation report
- Final report  
The findings shall be summarized in a concise report, including an executive summary, background information, description of methodology and approach, evaluation findings, conclusions, lessons learnt, significant quotes of interview partners, recommendations, and annexes, if necessary. The report should also include a list of all surveyed respondents. The report shall be delivered in English. It is expected that the OECD DAC Evaluation Quality Standards or similar international standards are applied, and the compliance of the latter is comprehensible in the evaluation.

The draft and final evaluation report should:

- Fulfil the terms of reference.
- Contain a comprehensive and clear summary.
- Be structured according to the OECD/DAC or any other recognized evaluation criteria and the evaluation questions.
- Indicate cross-cutting issues (e.g., poverty reduction, gender, environment, good governance, social justice and human rights, conflict prevention) separately.
- Describe and assess the intervention logic (logframe).
- Clearly state the conclusions and recommendations based on findings.
- Clearly differentiate between conclusions, recommendations and lessons learnt.
- Show how the evaluator has achieved his/her findings.
- Make realistic recommendations and derive lessons learnt and indicate to whom the recommendations are addressed.
- Document the methods and processes of the evaluation.
- Include information from involvement of / consultations with the most significant stakeholders.
- Consider the most important project documents, such as the project application, logical framework, timetable and budget of the action.
- Present the information contained in a presentable and clearly arranged form, free from spelling mistakes and unclear linguistic formulations.

- Be presented in a format that is distributable to the donors and stakeholders involved.

## 10. Timetable

Event	Timeline
Deadline for offers	19.06.2023
Announcement of award of contract	28.06.2023
Submission of inception report & meeting with the project team	17.07.2023
Field visits in target region, incl. online meetings & interviews	18.07.- 30.08.2023
Submission of draft evaluation report	11.09.2023
Submission of final report	30.09.2023
Quality control by contracting body and approving of final report	10.10.2023

## 11. Expected qualifications of the evaluator

The evaluator shall fulfil the following qualifications:

- A professional background in social sciences, incl. academic degree in economic and/or social sciences. Additional training or academic degree and/ or trainings in the field of youth work and civic education, entrepreneurship, gender equality will be considered as an asset.
- At least 5 years of work experience in evaluating technical cooperation projects, preferably related to youth participation, strengthening of CSOs capacity, entrepreneurship, and gender equality.
- A good gender expertise and knowledge of evaluations methods needed for gender specific analysis.
- An extensive experience in interviewing, data processing.
- Familiarity with the OECD/DAC evaluation quality standards and/or the ones of the Gesellschaft für Evaluation (DeGeval) is necessary.
- Geographic expertise regarding Tajikistan is an asset.
- Previous experience in evaluating regional projects (through own team and/or partnership network)
- Strong communication skills in English; language skills in Russian and/or Tajik are considered as important for the successful data collection, incl. taking and evaluating interviews and focus groups discussions.

## 12. Deadline for offers

The evaluation shall be carried out within the framework of a **Service Contract** concluded between the contracting body (Hilfswerk International) and the evaluator.

Offers of qualified experts have to be submitted in English latest by 19.06.2023, 18:00 Austrian time, by e-mail to [Stoyanka.Manolcheva@hilfswerk-international.at](mailto:Stoyanka.Manolcheva@hilfswerk-international.at) including the following information / documents:

- CV of the expert and any other member of the evaluation team (if necessary)
- Evaluation proposal (description of suggested methodology, approach and timeframe including number of the total working days planned and number and duration of field trips)
- List of evaluation experience including information on the project content, the Donor, the project budget, and the project country.
- Expected remuneration (lump sum) in Euro including all taxes (VAT), travel and subsistence costs and all other expenses, connected to the completion of the tasks as described in above sections. As this lump sum is to cover all expenses arising with the described service no additional costs can be reimbursed next to the submitted offer.
- Suggestions and recommendations to the Terms of References, if necessary.

Offers not containing above stated documents and information and arriving after the deadline cannot be considered. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

## 13. Coordination/Responsibility

The evaluator will be provided with:

- Project documents
- All reports compiled to the project.
- List of contacts containing all persons involved in the implementation of the project (with function, task, contact data and information on language skills) as well as all local partners (including representatives of the target group, as far as feasible). The main contact persons for the evaluator will be the HWI Regional Manager Central Asia, the Overall Project Coordinator in HWI Tajikistan, as well as the coordinators of the project partners; to clarify further operational questions, the main contact persons may be the Local Project Coordinators.