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TERMS OF REFERENCE

for selection of a Sociological Company to conduct two national public opinion surveys on integrity in the justice sector and two focus groups with justice actors

Public tender announcement published:	July 24, 2023
Deadline for submitting offers:	August 25, 2023, 23:59 (Chisinau time)
Contract period	September 2023 - February 2026

I. BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE PROJECT:

The Institute for European Policies and Reforms (IPRE), as the lead partner, in consortium with the Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR), implements of the project “Securing integrity, efficiency and independence of the justice system in Moldova - #Justice4Moldova”, funded by the European Union and co-funded by the Soros Foundation Moldova.

Donor: European Commission and Soros Foundation Moldova

Implementation period: March 2023 – February 2026

The general objective of the project is to contribute to an increased role of civil society and media to support independence, integrity, efficiency, and accountability of the justice system in the Republic of Moldova.

Specific objectives:

1. Enhance the capacity of the civil society and policy experts to advance the implementation of justice sector policies in a transparent and accountable manner in line with European rule of law and human rights standards and Association Agreement.
2. Increase the independence, integrity and efficiency of justice and anti-corruption actors through scrutiny and support by civil society, policy and media organizations.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSIGNMENT:

IPRE (hereinafter referred to as the Beneficiary) requests offers from sociological companies from the Republic of Moldova to conduct **two national public opinion surveys (polls)** on the integrity in the justice sector and **two focus groups with justice actors**. The public surveys will ask questions that will focus on the key challenges, expectations and priorities in the implementation of justice and anticorruption sector reforms as well as perceptions about justice and anticorruption actors. The focus groups will be conducted among justice actors (judges and prosecutors) on assessment of needs, constrains and policy measures in ensuring integrity, independence and resilience in the justice system.

III. TASKS OF THE SERVICE PROVIDER:

The sociological company (hereinafter referred to as the Service Provider) is required to conduct during September 2023 – February 2026: a) **two national public surveys** and b) **two focus groups among justice actors**.

III.A. Opinion polls:

The provider shall conduct two opinion polls by Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing method. The 1st opinion poll will be conducted, presented and published between September 2023 and February 2024, and the 2nd between September 2025 and February 2026.

General parameters for conducting surveys:

- The sample shall correspond to the principle of national representativeness and shall comprise at least 1100 persons with a minimum of 100 sampling points.
- The questionnaire shall be developed, tested, piloted by the Service Provider in cooperation with the Beneficiary.
- The data will be collected based on the same questionnaire, through interviews by Computer Assisted Personal Interviewing (CAPI) method.
- The company will conduct research and internal verification of data accuracy with its own networks of operators.
- Data will be representative of gender, residence environment, age (4 groups), ethnic group, education, socio-economic level and other relevant indicators.
- All completed questionnaires will be encoded, stored, systematized and analyzed by the provider and handed over to the beneficiary on electronic support or, as the case may be, on paper.
- The survey results will include quantitative and qualitative analysis and will be presented in electronic format, word, .pdf, frequencies in Excel file, primary database.
- The provider that will carry out the opinion polls will be the author of the surveys and interpretation of the data.
- The Provider will present together with the Beneficiary the surveys at a public event.

III.B. Focus Groups:

The provider will also carry out between September 2023 and February 2026 two thematic focus-groups among justice actors (judges and prosecutors) on assessment of needs, constrains and policy measures in ensuring integrity, independence and resilience in the justice system.

General parameters for conducting the focus groups:

- The calendar, questionnaire and target groups will be prepared by the Service Provider in agreement with the Beneficiary.
- The Provider shall moderate and ensure the representative participation of the representatives of the target group, their recruitment, audio and video recording of the discussions.
- The focus group results will be included in a report, accompanied by transcripts and data processing from focus group discussions.

IV. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA:

Companies must meet the following formal eligibility criteria:

- Must be a registered entity in accordance with the legislation of the Republic of Moldova, independent and impartial.
- Must have proven experience in the field of sociological research and conducting evaluations, opinion surveys, questionnaire design and operation, interviews, data collection and processing, analytical work, and reporting (minimum 5 years).
- Must have their own network of operators, proficient in Romanian and Russian languages.

V. DELIVERABLES AND COMMITMENTS:

V.A. For the Opinion polls:

- a. The final questionnaire in Romanian and Russian;
- b. The approved methodology for conducting the public opinion survey;
- c. Two public opinion polls conducted;

- d. Delivery of completed questionnaires, stored and systematized by the Service Provider (in electronic format);
- e. Database of the study in Excel format, corrected, labelled, including all questionnaire items, after data collection. Open-ended questions will be presented together with coded variants;
- f. The results of two completed opinion polls, published and presented in the form of survey research report in Romanian and translated into English, accompanied by the complete research methodology (including detailed sampling and data analysis), graphical representation of questionnaire responses, frequency distributions, contingency tables, statistical analyses, interpretations, and explanations of the presented data. The report must include consistent sections presenting the analysis and conclusions of the research.
- g. Power Point Presentation of the key findings of the opinion surveys;
- h. Participation in the event for presenting the survey results.

V. B. For the Focus groups:

- a. The final questionnaire in Romanian and Russian for the focus groups;
- b. Transcripts of focus group discussions;
- c. Research report reflecting the results of the group discussions for each group discussion.

VI. OFFERS FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE TENDER:

Deadline for submitting the offer: The offer should be sent by email to: procurari@ipre.md until August 25, 2023, 23:59 and should include:

1. TECHNICAL OFFER:

- a. General information about the bidder (name, contact details, website, client portfolio, and other relevant data about the bidder);
- b. Copy of the registration certificate/Extract from the State Register of Legal Entities and CVs of experts involved in monitoring the research process and data analysis;
- c. Sampling methodology for the opinion survey, including a description of data collection and processing methods, along with an indicative timetable;
- d. Methodology for conducting focus groups;
- e. Examples of sociological research (opinion surveys, focus groups) conducted by the bidder in the past 3 years (relevant to this announcement) to confirm previous experience in conducting similar research, statistical analysis of collected data, and report preparation.
- f. In case of any real or potential conflict of interest with the Executive Director of IPRE, the company is obliged to declare it based on a completed declaration in a free form.

2. FINANCIAL OFFER (detailed budget).

- a. Prices should be indicated in EUR, excluding VAT.
- b. The offered prices should remain fixed and cannot be changed after the submission of the participation offer. Financial offers will be compared in EUR.
- c. Offers presented in a different currency will be converted into EUR using the official exchange rate of the National Bank of Moldova on the deadline for submitting offers.

NOTE: Clarification questions and requests for additional information can be sent via email to Ms. Ecaterina Popșoi, Project Manager at: ecaterina.popsoi@ipre.md by 25 august 2023, 23.59 (Chisinau time).

VII. EVALUATION AND SELECTION:

Stage 1: Formal Evaluation

At the first stage, all applications will be formally assessed to determine whether the complete package of documents has been submitted, according to the terms of reference, including whether the tenderer meets the formal eligibility and selection criteria. The formal evaluation is carried out by the IPRE Project Coordinator.

Stage 2: Technical Offer Evaluation

At the second evaluation stage, the technical offer will be analysed by the members of the Selection Committee. The cumulative method will be applied at this stage, and for each criterion scores will be awarded as follows:

Evaluation Criteria	Points
Survey sampling methodology developed, including description of data collection and processing methods	30
Methodology for conducting focus groups	5
Experience of the bidder and experts who will be involved in monitoring the research process and analysing the collected data	25
Technical capacity of the bidder to conduct surveys and focus groups	20
Reputation and experience of the bidder	20
Total - Technical Offer	100

Stage 3: Financial Offer Evaluation

All offers that have accumulated a minimum of 75 points in the technical evaluation will qualify for the financial evaluation. The price offered by participating companies must be competitive, ensuring a good price-quality ratio.

Results of the evaluation and selection:

In determining the final scores, the accumulated score for the technical offer will have a weight of 70%, while the financial offer will have a weight of 30%. Therefore, the Final Score = Technical Offer Score * 0.70 + Financial Offer Score * 0.30.

All bidders who submit their documents will be notified of the decision regarding the selected offer after the completion of the selection process. The selected sociological company will provide the contracted services within this competition based on a service contract, during the period of September 2023 - February 2026.