Terms of Reference (TOR)

**For provision of Election HELPLINE for the Central Electoral Commission of Moldova and created the Centre for Continuous Electoral Trainings during**

**2016 electoral period (Elections of the President)**

##### Project title

Moldovan Elections Administration: Election helpline

##### Project Description:

USAID will support the strategic development of the Central Electoral Commission of Moldova (CEC) with the aim to strengthen the capacity of electoral administration to deliver professional, transparent and efficient electoral processes. The overarching goal of this activity is to improve the democracy in Moldova through modernization of the electoral processes, through free and fair elections representing the will of the people and which are fully in line with the international standards and best practices. A vendor is required to provide IT and call services to support an elections helpline.

##### Background information

Planning and conducting elections is a complex and challenging task that places heavy legislative, political, social and logistical demands on all participants involved in elections. It is essential that these people have the adequate skills, knowledge, and experience to successfully carry out their electoral responsibilities.

Since 2008 CEC has been working to improve the design and implementation of training programs for temporary electoral officials. To meet increasing need for effective trainings and further certification of electoral officials of all levels and other key stakeholders, in 2011 CEC created the Centre for Continuous Electoral Trainings (CCET). The main goal of the CCET is to provide trainings for various electoral officials, electoral bodies’ staff members, judges, NGOs representatives, electoral observers, mass-media, political parties representatives and voters.

One of the basic tasks of the CEC, stipulated in the Electoral Code of the Republic of Moldova, is the creation and maintenance of the State Register of Voters. SRV serves as a key source data on identity and voting rights of Moldovan citizens in the required constituency, being already used by CEC for the Parliamentary Elections in 2014 and General Local Elections in 2015. SRV was developed as part of a more complex IT System named State Automated Information System “Elections” (SAISE).

At this regard CEC is planning to have a common election helpline facility to respond to queries related to elections processes and procedures and to serve central and local elections management bodies and administrators of Moldova, by providing informational support services (through both inbound and outbound calls) particularly for the use of the SRV and SAISE.

USAID agreed to support CEC and CCET in implementation of this activity through procurement these helpdesk/election helpline services.

1. ***Scope of Services, Expected Outputs and Target Completion***

The election helpline is expected to work on outsourcing model to be set up by and at contractor premises, with backup data link / information link from CEC and CCET. The election helpline should be a single location customer contact solution, situated preferably in vicinity of CCET location[[1]](#footnote-1), which will handle In-bound as well as out bound voice based phone call services.

The election helpline operators will respond to incoming queries from the election helpline beneficiaries.

1. ***Specification for calls handling:***

During the pre-elections period (September 15 – October 27, 2016)): the contractor is expected to provide service as per following requirements of the CEC: 20 operators available from 08.00 -17.00, including week-ends.

During the SRV testing periods (exact dates to be agreed) and electoral periods (October 28-31, 2016): the contractor is expected to provide service as per following requirements of the CEC: 60 operators available 24/24.

In case the second round of elections is organized, the contractor is expected to provide the following services: 10 operators available from 08.00 -17.00 during November 1-13, and 60 operators available 24/24 during November 14-15. A separate contingency budget should be submitted as part of this proposal.

The contractor should allow for possibility for operators to work in shifts and should be able to provide, upon request, more technical and operational staff. Operators must attend all the training required by the CEC and CCET.

1. ***Requirements regarding operators:***

All operators should satisfy the following requirements:

1. Experience in handling and managing in bound and out bound calls;
2. Ability to handle and track calls in a timely manner;
3. Excellent communication skills (verbal – Languages: Romanian, and Russian are required on the operators);
4. Experience working under high pressure and in a demanding environment.

Operators should be organized so as to handle the operations efficiently:

1. Regular operators (inbound and outbound): These operators would respond to routine questions;
2. Supervisors (inbound and outbound): These operators will respond to complex questions; will identify the problem, interact with the backend and monitor the process until it completes its cycle.
3. ***Requirements for the election*** ***helpline functionalities:***

The election helpline is supposed to provide information services. Information services will provide callers with information desired by them from provided by CEC and CCET informational resources.

The contractor is expected to deploy adequate IT technology in the election helpline (e.g. automatic call distribution; computer telephone Integration etc.)

Proposed solution should include but not be limited to the following features:

* Handle high call volumes efficiently;
* Support multiple groups for all call types;
* Support for 20 simultaneous phone calls in pre-election period;
* Support for 60 simultaneous phone calls during election day;
* The desired quality of voice should be as follows:
  + Jitter buffer: no more 1,5% meaning that:
  + Latency: no more than 180ms (maximum);
  + Packet loss: less than 1%.
* Provide highly configurable system for adding/removing users;
* Allow calls to be transferred within the election helpline;
* Support the relaying of the information messages (marketing messages) to voice callers waiting in queues or on hold.

1. ***Requirements for the election helpline facility:***

The election helpline provided by the contractor should be fully operational for two months: from September 15 to November 15, 2016.

Specifically, the contractor is required to provide the following:

* Desks & chairs for operators;
* Computers with internet access and adequate internet connection;
* A telephone line for each operator;
* Soft phone (displaying caller line identification) + Headset connected receiving calls from the switchboard;
* MS Word and MS Excel allowing election helpline staff to log all calls coming into the helpline;
* On-site Technical Support.

1. ***Requirements for handling calls:***

The election helpline must be able to handle the following call capabilities:

* All land line and mobile network received (in-coming/out-going) at election helpline;
* Call charge to be the same regardless of originating network;
* All out-going from election helpline network to mobile and land line numbers.

Recording of all calls is to be provided. The recording should contain detailed call information and the solution must provide advanced searching capabilities.

Calls must be stored and preserved and should be made available to CEC alongside the regular activity reports. The media for archival (tapes) shall be provided by the contractor.

1. ***Clarifications to requirements:***

Services provided must adhere to the following requirements:

1. Adequate computers and headphones that enable operators to function effectively are provided.
2. All computers are networked.
3. Separate headphones for supervisors to be able to intervene and control the operators are provided.
4. Computer software to allow recording of all conversations are provided.
5. Paperwork for authorization of using phone number for the helpline must be the responsibility of the contractor and there must be a deadline for it.
6. Technical problems are fixed ASAP.
7. A message is given to waiting calls to inform the caller that the lines are busy and must give basic election information while on hold.

NOTE: CCET will provide training on SRV peculiarities to all operators of the election helpline during the inception phase of the assignment: the first half of September 2016. Trainings shall take place in election helpline premises. Concrete dates, training curricula, number of training sessions etc will be agreed immediately after contract signature.

1. ***Language requirements****:*

The election helpline staff must support both Romanian and Russian languages.

All communication with CCET, and documentation should be in Romanian (hard and electronic copy). A brief English version of the final report shall be also submitted.

##### Deliverables

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| **Key deliverables to CEC and USAID** | **Indicative timelines** |
| Work plan drafted and submitted for approval | August 1, 2016 |
| Testing period of the election help line | 01 September to 15 September |
| High quality voter helpline services. | 15 September to 15 November 2016 |
| Weekly quantitative (frequency depending on CEC needs) activity reports. | 15 September to 15 November 2016 |
| Final report (quantitative and qualitative).Please note that the final report should also contain data on incoming and outgoing calls (total number of calls, their duration, calls origin, etc.) | November 30 2016 |

##### Management Arrangements

Selected contractor will work under the guidance of the designated CEC and CCET officials. For administrative aspects the contractor will coordinate with the designated USAID Project Management Specialist.

CEC and CCET staff will be available to work with the selected contractor throughout the scope of work.

***Timeframe***: The assignment is expected to be carried out in the period September 1 through November 30, 2016.

##### Qualifications of the Successful Service Provider at Various Levels

Bidders should submit their offers with a detailed budget in English.

Résumés of key project personnel must be included in the offer, résumés for other personnel may be included as deemed applicable by the Bidder. Bidders agree that named staff will participate on the project at the level and duration specified unless agreement is provided in writing by USAID to allow substitutions.

Descriptions of subcontractor staff members, if applicable, should follow the format utilized for the Bidder organization. The résumés submitted for project personnel should be detailed and comprehensive. Specifically, résumés should include:

* Anticipated role and level of participation in the project;
* Previous experience relevant the assigned role in the project (e.g. participation in setting up and management of helpdesks/election helplines etc.);
* Education, training and certification details;
* Contact information (name, title, organization, mailing address, phone, and email) for a minimum of three business references;
* Linguistic skills.

Bidders should describe, in detail, previous experience of the organization and its staff in successful implementation of similar engagements, relevant to the scope and size to the current Project.

Please note that the selected Bidder will have to register with the U.S. Government Award Management System at [https://www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/##11#1](https://www.sam.gov/portal/SAM/)

**Eligibility**: Successful bidder must meet the following qualification requirements:

1. Have at least 2 years of relevant experience. Experience in setting-up and running election helplines desirable;
2. Have technical capacities to ensure smooth implementation and high-quality outputs.

Failure to comply with the above mentioned minimum requirements may constitute a reason for disqualification.

1. Have proven experience in conducting similar works/projects relevant to the scope and size of the current project;
2. Have a pool of trained and qualified (certified) staff;
3. Having previous experience in working with Moldovan state institutions will be an asset;
4. Working experience with international organizations will be an asset.

1. Str. Vasile Alecsandri 119, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)