# **Section II: Schedule of Requirements**

**eSourcing reference: RFQ/2022/43637**

**Final Evaluation of the Support to Government Reform Agenda in the EU Accession Process - the Nordic Support for Progress of North Macedonia Project (UNOPS-SIDAPRO-2022-S-015)**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**provision of services for**

**Final Evaluation of the Support to Government Reform Agenda in the EU Accession Process - the Nordic Support for Progress of North Macedonia Project**

# Background

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is funding a project “Support to progress in North Macedonia - Government reform agenda in the EU-accession process” (working title Nordic Support for Progress of North Macedonia project or Nordic Support), implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The objective of the project, funded by Sida, is to support the enhancement of the EU integration capacity of the Republic of North Macedonia by providing technical assistance to government institutions during the accession period. Sida has allocated funding for the implementation of the project in North Macedonia, starting from January 2019.

The Overall Objective of the Swedish support to SEA provided through the Nordic Support for Progress of North Macedonia project intervention is to contribute to, and to effectively communicate with the public on the accession negotiations and government reform priorities in the Republic of North Macedonia.

The Theory of Change of the Nordic Support for Progress of North Macedonia project of the intervention is that by capacity development of responsible employees in the institutions, officials, parliamentarians and diplomats involved in the negotiation process, and, North Macedonia will be better prepared and positioned to start and to efficiently implement the negotiation process for EU accession. Moreover, the increasing of long-term capacities and skills of key Government personnel mandated for European Integration, presents an added value and further strengthening of the position of the country in the potentially initiated negotiation for accession with the EU. The transparent work of the public administration and the intensive public awareness raising on the challenges and gains of the EU accession process for the citizens of the country, is contributing to achieving an overall supportive environment to the EU accession process.

The implementation period of the Nordic Support for Progress of North Macedonia project is December 2018 – December 2022. The agreed project budget is 26.424 MSEK. The project facilitating partner invited by SEA is UNOPS. The above project is addressing the whole territory of the country.

The Specific Project Objectives are: 1) Enhanced capacity for EU integration of the Republic of North Macedonia and 2) Effectively communicate the benefits of a managed EU accession process to the general public, and of the effectiveness of SIDA support.

The project activities are divided into two results, as follows:

Result 1: Support the Government Reform Agenda in the Accession Process

Result 2: Awareness of and the Effects of EU Accession Communicated to the Public

More information is available on the website [www.nordiskapoddrska.org.mk](http://www.nordiskapoddrska.org.mk).

The project is implemented in coordination and with the active participation of the relevant institutions. These partnerships enable the achievement of sustainability of project results through shared responsibility, enabling long-term realisation of citizens' interests. The Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) is the Project key partner, responsible for the sustainability of the project results, directly responsible for planning and prioritisation of supported activities, while UNOPS is the process facilitator and project implementation partner. Direct beneficiaries of the Nordic Support for Progress of North Macedonia Project are SEA, the Deputy Prime Minister of EU affairs, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Parliament of the Republic of North Macedonia, civil society organisations (CSOs) and the media. The final beneficiaries are the citizens of North Macedonia.

EU Delegation and relevant responsible officers are the indirect beneficiaries and contributors to the monitoring and discussing of supported activities and achieved results under the intervention.

# Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation

The overall objective of the evaluation is to assess relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of results of the Swedish intervention, while focusing on the support provided directly to SEA and other beneficiaries, through the Nordic Support to Progress of North Macedonia Project. The evaluation will also assess the overall contribution of the project to the goals of the Swedish Government’s Reform cooperation with the Western Balkans and Turkey for 2021-2027 and the overall North Macedonia’s EU accession process.

The evaluation scope should focus on the intervention provided for EU accession support through institutional strengthening and capacity building of relevant administrative staff at the SEA, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Parliament, as well as on the awareness raising through cooperation with the CSOs, media and planned/ implemented public awareness campaigns. The evaluation should assess the progress made by the project in attainment of project set objectives, outcomes and indicators of success as outlined in the project document, the theory of change and the results framework providing recommendations on how a possible new support can be re-oriented to become even more meaningful. Furthermore, the gender sensitised approach shall be described and reflected in the findings, conclusions and recommendations along with other identified and relevant cross-cutting issues.

More specifically, the evaluation will:

* Analyse and document to what extent has the Programme met its objectives, purpose, planned outputs and results
* Independently assess the results and the impact achieved against the objectives and outputs specified in the project Description of Actions, the overall contribution to the EU accession process and the Swedish Government’s Reform cooperation in Eastern Europe, the Western Balkans and Turkey
* Assess implementation of the project against the five criteria of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the OECD: relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability[[1]](#footnote-0)
* Assess UNOPS’ project management structure and capacities, as well as the approach and the expertise of the project team
* To highlight any lessons learned and make recommendations to improve current projects and to contribute to future programming

The evaluation objective will respond to SEA’s learning needs and planning for further bilateral support provided to North Macedonia in the EU accession process, in light of the recent developments related to the start of the accession negotiations. It will also possibly help SEA to identify existing gaps and contribute with stock-taking for a possible new programme phase. Strengthening the role and position of SEA and other relevant institutions in mastering and self- leading the EU accession and negotiation process is the final target of Swedish support. The evaluation will also assess if there are other obvious gaps that Sida can support to further strengthen North Macedonia’s EU accession process, bearing in mind SIDA’s current portfolio of contributions.

If needed, the scope of the evaluation may be further elaborated by the bidder in the inception report.

# Methodology

It is expected that the evaluation service provider describes and justifies an appropriate evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection in the tender. The evaluation design, methodology and methods for data collection and analysis are expected to be fully developed and presented in the inception report.

The suggested approach/methodology should provide credible answers (evidence) to the evaluation questions. Limitations to the chosen approach/methodology and methods shall be made explicit by the bidder and the consequences of these limitations discussed in the tender. The bidder shall to the extent possible, present mitigation measures to address them. A clear distinction is to be made between evaluation approach/methodology and methods.

The initial evaluation questions are:

* To what extent has the intervention objectives and design responded to beneficiaries' needs relevant to the EU accession process and EU trends and decisions and international conventions and declarations that the Government of North Macedonia has signed, the country, and institution needs, policies, and priorities, and have they continued to do so when circumstances have changed?
* To what extent has the intervention achieved, or is expected to achieve, its objectives, and its results, including any differential results across groups?
* To what extent have the interventions delivered, or is likely to deliver, results in an effective and timely way?
* To what extent has the intervention generated, significant positive or negative, intended or unintended, effects that would slow down/intensify the country's EU accession process?
* To what extent are achieved results by the intervention sustainable?
* To what extent is the current model of supporting SEA through UNOPS sustainable and can a more sustainable model be identified? Is it feasible to build the capacity of SEA to manage the collaboration by itself and does SEA have the capacity to fulfil its mandate to facilitate the EU accession process?
* What key gaps can be identified in Sida’s support to North Macedonia’s EU-accession process through the Nordic Support for Progress of North Macedonia project and reflect on the relevance of the project towards the objectives of the Strategy 2014-2020? Are there any obvious “low-hanging” fruits and key gaps that can be identified?[[2]](#footnote-1)
* What is the level of ownership of the final beneficiaries in the projects? What measures have been taken to ensure local ownership?
* What mechanisms are in place to ensure coordination between UNOPS project team and beneficiaries, project partners and other donors/stakeholders? Is the level of coordination adequate for the purpose of achieving expected results?
* Is the support provided by UNOPS timely, adequate and relevant?

The questions are expected to be developed and further refined by the evaluation service provider during the inception phase of the evaluation.

A *gender* sensitised approach/methodology, methods, tools and data analysis techniques should be used[[3]](#footnote-2).

The bidder should facilitate the *entire evaluation process* with careful consideration of how everything that is done will affect the use of the evaluation. It is expected that the bidders, in their tender, present i) how intended users are to participate in and contribute to the evaluation process and ii) methodology and methods for data collection that create space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

In cases where sensitive or confidential issues are to be addressed in the evaluation, bidders should ensure an evaluation design that does not put informants and stakeholders at risk during the data collection phase or the dissemination phase.

Limitations to the methodology and methods and the consequences of these limitations for findings and conclusions shall be described.

The bidders shall specify how quality assurance will be handled by them during the evaluation process.

# Timeline of Intervention

It is expected that a time and work plan is presented in the tender and further detailed in the inception report. The evaluation shall be carried out within nine weeks from the start of the engagement. The timing of any possible field visits, surveys and interviews need to be settled by the bidder in dialogue with the main stakeholders during the inception phase.

Regular communication and consultation shall be kept with UNOPS.

The table below lists key deliverables for the evaluation process. Alternative deadlines for deliverables may be suggested by the consultant and negotiated during the inception phase.

The selected candidate is expected to ensure that the following milestones, performance indicators and reporting requirements are met:

* Inception Report produced within two weeks upon start of the Assignment, provides detailed description of the methodology and work plan, and is approved by UNOPS;
* Field work/data collection completed within seven weeks upon start of the Assignment. Validation workshop organised with Sida, SEA, UNOPS and other stakeholders if needed.
* Draft Evaluation Report produced timely and presented to the project within eight weeks after the start of the assignment;
* The Evaluation Report, produced timely and in line with the requirements within ten weeks of engagement, has taken into consideration comments provided by stakeholders. The findings documented and evidence based.

The indicative time framework for the conduct of the task is as follows, but activities should end not later than first half of December 2022:

| Evaluation phase | Key output(s) | Indicative time framework |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Preparatory activities | Introductory meetings and desk research completed, and Inception Report produced and approved | First two weeks of start of assignment |
| Field work | Meetings with the stakeholders conducted | Four weeks from start of assignment |
| Analysis/Report writing | Draft Evaluation Report produced, and circulated for comments | Seven weeks from start of assignment |
| Feedback/editing/finalisation | Feedback to stakeholders who commented on the Draft provided. Editing completed and the Report produced | Two weeks upon receiving of Draft Evaluation Report |
| Report presentation | The Final Report will be presented to stakeholders | Ten weeks from start of assignment |

5. Qualifications and Experience

The contracted entity and/or the proposed team of bidders should demonstrate experience in implementing similar evaluation and monitoring activities. The contracted entity should be a duly registered legal entity in continuous business for the past three years with a minimum turnover of 15.000 USD per year.

Minimum three years of experience in project/programme evaluations, including impact assessments, is required with at least three evaluations of similar size in UN, EU, Sida or other donor funded projects/programmes in North Macedonia.

The dedicated team for the implementation of this task should consist of at least two professionals (senior and junior) with at least three years of experience in project/programme evaluations, the senior should hold at least a Master’s Degree preferably in social science, public administration, economics, finance or other relevant subjects. Both team members should possess a professional level of knowledge of the English language, knowledge of North Macedonia and the history of the EU Accession process. Inclusion of additional team members is welcomed.

A CV for each team member shall be included in the proposal. It should contain a full description of relevant qualifications and professional work experience.

It is important that the competencies of the individual team members are complementary. The bidders must be independent from the evaluation object and evaluated activities, and have no stake in the outcome of the evaluation.

# Important Considerations

The entire process should be closely coordinated with the UNOPS office. The UNOPS office will support the contractor in coordination and guidance in the implementation of the activities. Please note that the services defined in this ToR should pay particular attention to the Government recommendations and protocols related to COVID-19. Some activities might be altered/adapted depending on the epidemiological situation in the country. Relevant Sida documentation will be provided by Senior Programme Manager, Development Cooperation Unit, Embassy of Sweden, Skopje, North Macedonia

Contact details will be provided by UNOPS. The contractor will be required to arrange the logistics like: communicating the relevant counterparts, booking meetings, organising travel in the country, including any necessary security arrangements, and organising interpretation when necessary.

# Monitoring and Reporting

The contracted entity will remain in close contact with appropriate UNOPS personnel and will discuss and agree upon all relevant matters during the implementation of the activities.

The electronic copies of all reports or any other materials pertained to the services will be made available to UNOPS in English. In particular, but not limited to:

* Inception Report
* Draft Evaluation Report
* Presentation materials

**The inception report** shall be very brief and will form the basis for the continued evaluation process and shall be approved by the Swedish Embassy and Sida before the evaluation proceeds to implementation. The inception report should be written in English language and cover evaluability issues and interpretations of evaluation questions, present the evaluation approach/methodology, methods for data collection and analysis as well as the full evaluation design, including an evaluation matrix and a stakeholder mapping/analysis. A clear distinction between the evaluation approach/methodology and methods for data collection shall be made. All limitations to the methodology and methods shall be made explicit and the consequences of these limitations discussed.

A specific time and work plan, including number of hours/working days for each team member, for the remainder of the evaluation should be presented. The time plan shall allow space for reflection and learning between the intended users of the evaluation.

**The final report** shall be written in English language and be professionally proofread. The final report should have clear structure and follow the layout format in Annex I[[4]](#footnote-3): Evaluation Report Outline and Considerations. The executive summary should be a maximum of three pages and must cover key findings and recommendations.

The report shall clearly and in detail describe the evaluation methodology for data collection and analysis. The report shall describe how the Project stakeholders, including beneficiaries have participated in and contributed to the evaluation process and how methodology and methods for data collection have created space for reflection, discussion and learning between the intended users. Furthermore, the gender sensitised approach shall be described and reflected in the findings, conclusions and recommendations along with other identified and relevant cross-cutting issues. Limitations to the methodology and methods and the consequences of these limitations for findings and conclusions shall be described.

Evaluation findings shall flow logically from the data, showing a clear line of evidence to support the conclusions. Conclusions should be substantiated by findings and analysis. Evaluation questions shall be clearly stated and answered in the executive summary and in the conclusions. Recommendations and lessons learned should flow logically from conclusions and be specific, directed to relevant intended users and categorised as short-term, medium-term and long-term.

# Other Considerations

Working language when contacting UNOPS is English and all official correspondence should be in English. Reports on progress of activities as well as the final report will be submitted in English language. The activities will be conducted in Macedonian (translation services may be used when conducting the activities if needed) as the main language for the delivery of outputs. The Evaluation Report should be produced in English and have a maximum 40 pages, excluding Annexes. The report language should be clear and concise. It should be written in one of the two following fonts: Arial 10 or Calibri 11. The chapters may include simple graph illustrations and tables in order to enhance quality of presentation of the Report findings.

**Annex I: Evaluation Report Outline and Considerations**

1. Executive Summary: clear language, maximum four pages, and should be usable as a standalone document. It should among others include a summary of key findings, lessons learned, and recommendations. not longer than 3 pages with findings description of methodology
2. Introduction: describing basic details of projects that were included in the Evaluation, identifying evaluation objectives and scope, methodology and other relevant elements of the process (e.g. obstacles, highlights, support received and similar).
3. The Context: includes description of the policy context, development context, including socio-economic, political and cultural factors; institutional context and stakeholder involvement.
4. Analysis: presents findings, conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned. This part of the Report should address all the questions detailed in the TOR and the submitted methodology and evaluation design as approved with the inception report.
5. Acknowledgments
6. Annexes

**ANNEX II**

**DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance[[5]](#footnote-4)**

**Relevance:** the extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient and donor.

**Effectiveness:** a measure of the extent to which an aid activity attains its objectives.

**Efficiency:** measures the outputs -- qualitative and quantitative -- in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible in order to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.

**Impact:** the positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions.

**Sustainability:** is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally as well as financially sustainable.

1. The description of the DAC criteria is available as Annex to this TOR. [↑](#footnote-ref-0)
2. This is a question related to the overall Sida’s portfolio in support to EU accession process, and it should not be a subject of a too detailed analyses. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
3. See for example UNEG United Nations Evaluation Group (2014) Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluations <http://uneval.org/document/detail/1616> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
4. See below. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
5. DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance, available online at: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/evaluation/daccriteriaforevaluatingdevelopmentassistance.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)