

**Accountability Project Final Evaluation**  
**Terms of Reference**  
*February 15, 2019*

**Summary**

Freedom House is seeking qualified applicants to conduct an impact evaluation for a closed environment advocacy project that was implemented from June 2016 - March 2019.

**Freedom House Overview**

For over 70 years, Freedom House has been dedicated to the expansion of freedom around the world through its unique combination of analysis, advocacy, and action. The organization's mission is founded upon the principle that freedom is possible only in democratic political systems where governments are accountable to their own people; the rule of law prevails; and freedoms of expression, association, and belief, as well as respect for the rights of minorities and women, are guaranteed.

Freedom House has assessed political and social developments around the world for more than 40 years through its annual publication, *Freedom in the World*, which now covers 195 countries and 14 territories. Through short-term emergency assistance and longer-term partnerships, Freedom House programs provide support for civil society organizations (CSOs) and human rights defenders (HRDs) advocating for the protection and advancement of fundamental freedoms.

**Project Background**

Freedom House, in partnership with several civil society consortium partners, is completing the implementation of a 33-month project funded by the US Department of State's Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor. The aim of the project is to equip CSOs working in a closed environment to safely implement advocacy initiatives designed to press government policy makers to make decisions that establish, protect, or promote the rights of citizens.

The project's objectives, and an illustrative list of activities, are outlined below:

- Objective 1: Consortium partners develop the capacity to distribute advocacy grants to CSOs working in a closed environment.
  - Consortium partners receive training in financial management, digital security, and monitoring & evaluation (M&E) for advocacy initiatives.
- Objective 2: CSOs safely and effectively conduct responsive, rights-based domestic advocacy.
  - CSOs submit proposals to consortium partners for short-term advocacy initiatives that respond to an urgent opportunity to press for government accountability.
  - CSOs receive digital security tools and funds from consortium partners to conduct domestic advocacy initiatives.
  - CSOs securely transmit M&E data from advocacy initiatives to consortium partners.
- Objective 3: Regional and international decision makers have field-based evidence to inform policies that benefit civil society in the target country.
  - Freedom House analyzes M&E data from CSOs to identify advocacy trends and produce analytical reports.

- Freedom House and consortium partners, and representatives from CSOs when safety permits, conduct regional and international advocacy.

**Beneficiaries:** The project's direct beneficiaries are consortium partners and CSOs that received financial and technical assistance, and the individuals and groups whose rights were defended through the advocacy initiatives. The indirect beneficiaries are citizens in the target country, who will in the longer term benefit from policies that protect or advance rights.

## Evaluation Overview

Through this evaluation, Freedom House seeks to assess the **effectiveness of the project's approach** in achieving its goal of enabling local CSOs to engage in advocacy that results in greater government accountability, and to identify **lessons learned** for future advocacy efforts. Key research questions include:

1. How did project design contribute to or hinder the achievement of the desired outcomes and goals? In what ways did international advocacy contribute to the overall project goal?
2. What knowledge and skills were essential to carrying out safe and effective advocacy in the target country? Which elements of the training program for consortium partners were transmitted to and applied by local CSOs?
3. Which strategies and tactics were most effective in influencing government decision makers? How were those affected by various contextual factors (e.g. rights issue, geographic location, level/branch of government targeted?) Did advocacy initiatives succeed in holding government to account for citizen rights?

The methods proposed by the evaluator(s) will be reviewed by Freedom House's staff and M&E Specialist, and will ideally include the following:

- A review of pertinent project documents and records (including the original project proposal, results framework, partner reports, quarterly reports, and the M&E tracker);
- An analysis of a project database that includes detailed information\* about all advocacy initiatives, including every action taken by CSO partners with response received.
- Primary data collection\*\*, which could include a survey of CSO grantees to obtain information about the longer term consequences and impact of their efforts, selected case studies, and interviews with consortium partners.

\*Project data will be provided in English. Country-specific language skills are not necessary.

\*\*The evaluator(s) may travel within the U.S. to interview project stakeholders, but it is not anticipated that international travel to the region will be necessary or recommended for security reasons. Freedom House will help to facilitate secure communication with project partners. Consortium partners will be available to work with the evaluator(s) to assist with data collection involving in-country partners and beneficiaries.

**Data limitations:** Data or methodological challenges include the limited ability of the evaluator to interview project beneficiaries in person, and the security constraints on communications with in-country beneficiaries. Proposals should include ample discussion of these data limitations, and include ways in which the evaluator will mitigate them (both in collection and reporting).

## Evaluation Implementation

The evaluation should take place in March - May 2019, with the final deliverables due no later than **May 31, 2019**. Please note the proposed dates may change due to unavoidable circumstances, in which case a revised timeframe will be established with the mutual agreement of both parties.

Proposed evaluations should include approximately **30-35 working days** and include:

- *Evaluation preparation* (including working with Freedom House to finalize the evaluation design, performing the initial review of project materials, creating and testing data collection instruments, and compiling an inception report);
- *Data collection* (with support from FH staff and consortium partners) ; and
- *Data analysis and synthesis* (including transcription, data aggregation, writing a draft report, presenting findings to Freedom House staff in DC staff in person or by phone, incorporating feedback from Freedom House DC and consortium partners into a final report).

The **final deliverables** for this evaluation will include:

- An *inception report and evaluation plan* including the approach to the proposed methodology, lines of inquiry, possible data limitations, and timeline (due to Freedom House for approval within the first 10 working days and prior to data collection);
- One *oral presentation of findings*, in person or through secure communication with relevant Freedom House DC staff before submitting the draft report;
- A *draft report* detailing key findings, supporting evidence, and practical recommendations (date to be proposed in draft evaluation plan); and
- A *final report* incorporating relevant feedback from Freedom House (**due by May 31, 2019**). The final report will be shared with Freedom House staff, consortium partners, and the funder. It will not be released or made available publicly.

Note that the draft and final reports should be presented in English and be no longer than 30 pages (excluding any relevant annexes), and contain a concise Executive Summary of core findings and recommendations. Said recommendations should be specific and action-oriented, and tailored to relevant stakeholders, including Freedom House, consortium partners, and funders.

Freedom House's DC-based staff will provide logistical and technical support as needed throughout the evaluation, including facilitating access to materials and partners, reviewing the inception plan/report, and reviewing the draft report.

## Application Guidelines

Interested applicants must provide all materials outlined below to Freedom House with the contact information provided at the end of this document by **5:00 pm EST March 1, 2019**. Candidates selected for an interview will be notified, and a final decision will be made by **March 8, 2019**.

Individuals, teams, as well as consultancy firms with the requisite experience are eligible to apply. The selected consultant(s) should have demonstrated expertise in results-based project evaluation. *Experience with democracy promotion projects in closed operating environments is considered essential*. Additional information about desired qualifications is listed below:

- Master's degree in social sciences, international relations, human rights, or related field;

- Minimum 4–6 years of experience in designing, overseeing, and implementing project M&E or combination of education, training and experience;
- Experience with qualitative and quantitative M&E data collection and analysis methods;
- Familiarity with principles-focused or experimental evaluations desirable;
- Experience conducting evaluations for US federal funding agencies;
- Excellent inter-cultural communication skills/cultural sensitivity and the ability to forge strong cross-cultural relationships and build trust demonstrated through previous intercultural experience;
- Strong facilitation, presentation, and communication skills;
- Strong ability to communicate effectively in English, both verbally and in writing;
- Team player with the ability to closely collaborate with DC-based Freedom House staff, local partners, and stakeholders.

**Interested applicants should provide:**

- A *current CV* that outlines the candidate’s relevant skills and experience, as well as any key principles that inform his or her work.
- A *2-page statement of interest/abridged proposal* that includes a concise description of the proposed evaluation approach and an identification of possible data limitations and ways to mitigate them.
- A *short cost justification* – including salary history and/or daily rate for your last 3 consultancies – and the names and contact information for 2 recent references. Note that Freedom House may request examples of previous work after reviewing the application materials.

**Budget Guidelines**

The projected budget for this evaluation is **\$20,000 USD**. This figure includes all costs relevant to the evaluation, including the daily rate(s), M&IE and travel if necessary, translation, etc. The daily rate will be negotiated with the consultant(s) upon selection and before signing of the contract. Please note that payment in full will not be made until all project deliverables have been received and verified as meeting Freedom House's expectations.

**Contact Information**

Please refer any questions and submit all application materials to the Freedom House staff listed below. Only candidates selected for further consideration will be contacted.

**Freedom House point of contact:**

*Lauren Galacia*  
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 Freedom House  
[Galacia@FreedomHouse.org](mailto:Galacia@FreedomHouse.org)