

Call for Tenders - Feasibility study for a Project to Develop A Transnational Media Network and Three Thematic Platforms for Resilient and Independent Online Journalism in Eastern Partnership Countries

Berlin, 21 Dec 2020

For our upcoming 4-year project “*A Transnational Media Network and Three Thematic Platforms for Resilient and Independent Online Journalism in Eastern Partnership Countries*”, the international media NGO **n-ost** is inviting tenders for an independent feasibility study preceding its implementation. Based on an assessment of the initial objectives and planned methodology, we are looking for recommendations on how to maximize the project’s impact while minimizing risks.

The study must be carried out by independent experts with technical, methodological, and practical expertise as well as regional knowledge who provide a detailed report of max. 30 pages (final report to be submitted until April 4th 2021). It is intended as a basis for the cooperation with international partners in the region, and for the common planning and implementation of the project activities. This project is funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

About n-ost

n-ost is a media NGO, agency and journalistic network with headquarters in Berlin and more than 290 members across Europe. Since our establishment in 2006, we have been engaged in cross-border and investigative journalism with strong expertise particularly in Eastern Europe. n-ost’s mission is to contribute to a European integrated media sphere which is transnational and collaborative. We strive to connect journalists to counter the shrinking space of free media and the polarized public discourse especially in Eastern Europe. We are currently implementing several joint projects funded by a variety of donors with media outlets and media NGOs across Europe, including the countries of the Eastern Partnership.

About the project

Over the course of 3,5 years, a collective of independent online media from Eastern Partnership countries builds a network and works collaboratively on three thematic platforms. Curated by n-ost, editors and journalists from independent media (focus countries: Ukraine and Georgia) come together with freelancers and experts to exchange and synchronize resources, participate in capacity building activities and produce content along three thematic areas (health, climate, information society).

Planned time frame: May 2021 - Dec 2024 (44 months) Total budget: approx. 1,000,000 €

Project countries: Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine

A detailed project description will be provided upon application.

Requirements for the feasibility study

- The study should present the context on several levels (micro, meso, macro).
- An overview of existing structures (institutions, networks, umbrella associations, etc.) relevant to the project and its activities should be given.
- An analysis of the approach to solving the problem situation of the target groups and other actors should be carried out on this basis to examine and evaluate the planned project critically with regard to the [OECD DAC criteria](#).
- On this basis, tangible recommendations for adjustments to the specific project concept, including the target system and measures are to be formulated, taking into account the actors and stakeholders to be involved, suggestions for areas of observation of the results and impact measurement as well as the opportunities and risks.

Guiding questions for the study report *(further details will be provided upon application)*

- What is the current situation in the respective countries and wider region, which needs and problems can be identified?
- Which challenges do the project and its various components face, and how can these be addressed? Are there alternative approaches?
- Are the local organisations adequate partners for this project? Are there alternatives?
- Who are the target groups and relevant actors on various levels (micro, meso, macro)?
- Independent online media play a crucial role in the project countries, but are working under difficult circumstances. What are the most significant structural needs and obstacles to overcome in order to fulfill their potential in civic society?
- How would you assess the potential for intensified cross-border co-operation of media in the project countries? What are the major obstacles and shortcomings in this regard?
- What are the needs, strengths & deficits in the reporting on the three projects topics (health, climate, information society)? Which publishing projects or networks exist already in these fields?
- What is the (national) audience's interest in the societies of their neighbouring countries (based on interviews, not quantitative analyses)?
- What are the major potentials and needs regarding professional (journalistic) development in the project countries that should be addressed by the project?

Applications

In order to apply for this tender, please send a short E-Mail, indicating your interest and shortly outlining your strategy and resources to Andreas Schmiedecker (schmiedecker@n-ost.org) as soon as possible, but no later than **25 Jan 2021**, 23:59 CET.

We will accept full applications/offers (to be sent in after invitation) until **8 Feb 2021**.

For the full application the following documents will be requested:

- A detailed outline of the objectives and methods to be deployed in the feasibility study;
- A list of products, deliverables, and activities that will be provided, including timeline and specification of costs;
- A structural framework for the final report based on the feasibility study;
- Proof of independence of the evaluators, as well as their technical, organizational, methodological and other capacities, composition, roles and tasks of all those involved;
- A list of sources, such as national strategy / policy papers and briefings, references to other studies and further readings, documents from prior projects, guidelines on the methodology to be deployed etc.;
- A presentation of the team members and their relevant experience for this study.

The successful applicants will be selected by mid-February. We expect to receive the final study until **4 April 2021**.

Any questions can be directed to Andreas Schmiedecker (schmiedecker@n-ost.org).