

**Call for expressions of interest for consultancy services:
development of five policy papers for the Working Groups of the Eastern Partnership Civil
Society Forum**

[The Eastern Partnership Civil Society Forum](#) (EaP CSF) is looking for five consultants to develop five policy paper (one paper per consultant, per each of the five EaP CSF Working Groups).

Consultancy services: To provide the EaP CSF Working Groups (WG) with background research, interviews and consultations with the delegates (and members) to gather input and ensure that all findings are evidence-based and offer the perspective of the EaP CSF.

Closing Date: Friday, 6 September 2024

The EU continues to deepen its engagement and cooperation with the Eastern Partnership countries, focusing on resilience, sustainability, and integration as outlined in the [Joint Staff Working Document \(JSWD\) “Recovery, resilience, and reform: post-2020 Eastern Partnership priorities”](#). The EaP Policy, as defined in the JSWD, is time-bound and scheduled for revision leading up to the upcoming 7th EaP Summit. This revision period presents a critical opportunity for recalibrating the policy framework to address emerging challenges and leverage new opportunities for the region, for civil society in general and the EaP CSF in particular. The EaP CSF, a pivotal stakeholder in the multilateral track of the EaP Policy, can have a crucial role in shaping the agenda for the EaP Summit and the next EaP policy iteration post-2025.

The Policy papers aim to assess the implementation of the EaP priority post-2020 and to provide recommendations to the post-2025 EaP priorities and in view of the 7th EaP Summit.

The EaP CSF is a community of non-governmental organisations established in 2009, with the support of the European Commission. The EaP CSF is open to bona fide non-governmental organisations from the six partner states (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova, Ukraine) and to EU Member States civil society organisations (CSOs) which share the objectives of the Forum and value cooperation.

Every two years, up to 160 CSOs (20 from each EaP National Platform (total 120), and a maximum of 40 EU CSOs) are selected to participate in the life of the Forum as EaP CSF delegates. They are organised in the following **5 Working Groups**:

- Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability (WG1);
- Economic integration and convergence with EU policies (WG2);
- Environment, climate change and energy security (WG3);
- Contacts between people (WG4);
- Social and labour policies and social dialogue (WG5).

Each WG is managed by two coordinators, one representing EaP-based organisations and one representing EU-based organisations.

[For more information on the EaP CSF Working Groups, see the Annex at the end of this document.](#)



1. Title of the contracts:

Consultant for the development of a policy paper for the EaP CSF Working Groups

Duration: September 2024 – January 2025

2. Topics of the policy papers

Within each WG, the following thematic focuses and research questions have been identified by the WG coordinators.

Working Group 1

Thematic focus: Advancing democratization in the Eastern Partnership countries: the role of civil society in national reforms, and European Integration.

Research questions:

What are the main challenges faced by civil society in effectively participating in decision-making processes for national reforms aimed at democratization in the Eastern Partnership countries? To that end, what good practices can be employed to strengthen the role of civil society in promoting democratic transformation and rule of law reforms in all the EaP countries?

Working Group 2

Thematic focus: Advancing economic and digital transformation in the Eastern Partnership region – enablers and challengers. What is the role of civil society?

Research questions:

How do CSOs contribute to the advancement of digital transformation in the EaP region? What policies and frameworks facilitate the active participation of civil society in economic and digital transformation? What success stories can civil society tell? How can the success stories be replicated or scaled up across the region? What recommendations can be made to civil society, national authorities and donor community active in the area of digital and economic transformation in the EaP region?

Working Group 3

Thematic focus: Environmental security in the EaP countries: state of play, challenges and opportunities.

Research questions:

What are the main challenges in the field of environmental security in the EaP region? How can civil society contribute to environmental security in the context of green transformation in the EaP region? What is the role of civil society in promoting environmental security? To what extent do energy and climate change challenges impact environmental security in the region?



Working Group 4

Thematic focus: Resilient Democracies in the EaP and EU: Strengthening Capacities of the Civil Societies'

Research questions:

How can civil society's capacities be strengthened through education and youth empowerment?

What is the role of civil society in rethinking culture, youth and education as drivers for resilient democracies in the EaP and the EU?

How can media literacy and strategic communication be leveraged for youth empowerment?

Working Group 5

Thematic focus: Establishing a strong social dialogue for the implementation of social justice and decent work policies across the Eastern partnership countries

Research questions:

How can civil society play an active part in ensuring such a strong dialogue? What specific actions could civil society carry?

3. General qualifications of the consultant

Your responsibilities will involve conducting thorough research and analysis to develop evidence-based policy papers. You will undertake comprehensive research on the above thematic focuses. Through thorough data analysis and research, you will provide valuable insights that will inform the EaP CSF policy and advocacy initiatives.

Selection criteria:

- Postgraduate university degree (political science/ international relations/ development studies/ CSO management/ economics, etc.) with relevant thematic expertise and work experience;
- Proven expertise in similar tasks as required by the role, namely with applied research and/or policy experience related to one of the following areas: Democracy, human rights, good governance and stability (WG1); Economic integration and convergence with EU policies (WG2); Environment, climate change and energy security (WG3); Contacts between people (WG4); Social and labour policies and social dialogue (WG5), with a focus on the Eastern Partnership region;
- Proven expertise in quantitative or qualitative research methods; management of quantitative or qualitative data and information;
- Good understanding of the EaP policy and of the role of civil society in shaping it;
- Sound knowledge of the functioning of the EU institutions and EU's foreign affairs, in particular towards EU's Eastern Neighbourhood and any related flagship initiatives or programmes;



- Good understanding of organizational structures operations and policies of non-governmental organisations and familiarity with EaP CSF processes and structures;
- Capacity to understand and assess the opportunities, challenges and limitations of structures such as EaP CSF Working Groups;
- Good desk and participatory research skills coupled with good drafting and reporting abilities;
- Excellent command of English (mandatory) and of Russian (desirable);
- Ability to work independently;
- Flexibility and ability to work under tight deadlines;
- Prior experience working with the EaP CSF is a plus.

4. Structure and timeline of the policy paper

Length of the policy paper: between 4000 and 5000 words.

In terms of **structure**, the policy papers should include the following:

Executive summary (1 page)

Introduction (1-2 pages)

Methodology (aim and scope, methods, limitations)

Overview of the current state of play

Armenia

Azerbaijan

Belarus

Georgia

Republic of Moldova

Ukraine

Regional considerations

Review of the implementation of the EaP priority post-2020

Policy considerations and opportunities for improvement

Lessons learnt

Challenges going forward and mechanisms for mitigation

Recommendations aimed at providing input for the post-2025 EaP priorities and in view of the next EaP Summit

Conclusions

References

Appendix/Annexes

The suggested structure may be further adjusted; however, the style and methodology coherence of the EaP CSF Policy Papers series must be ensured.

Methodology and Timeline

- Consultants carry out consultations and interviews among at least 10 EaP CSF delegates (and members) by 15 October;



- Papers are submitted for peer review (done by the WG coordinators) by 15 January 2025;
- Up to two rounds of reviews are carried out (15 January-15 February);
- Papers are finalised by end of February 2025.

5. Duration and location of the assessment and estimated workload

Expected workload: between 2h/week and 5h/week

Duration of the assignment: September 2024 – January 2025

Location of the assignment: home-based

6. Recruitment process

Expressions of interest should be submitted in English by e-mail to the following address: applications@eap-csf.eu by **6 September 2024, 23:59 CEST**.

When applying, please mention ‘**Policy paper consultant – Working Group (NUMBER)**’ in the subject indicating which Working Group you are applying to.

Qualified experts should provide the following:

- CV (maximum 4 pages, in English),
- Motivation letter (maximum 1 page, in English),
- One page concept note proposal for their proposed research paper.

Only pre-selected candidates will be contacted for a brief interview that will take place by mid-September 2024.

EaP CSF applies a fair and transparent recruitment process that will take into account both the expertise and skills of the applicants.

7. What we offer

Each consultant will be hired under a contract for deliverables. A lump sum of **1.000 €** (including VAT) per each of the five consultants will be foreseen for completion of the expected deliverables.

8. References

For more information about EaP CSF Working Groups, please check: <https://eap-csf.eu/working-groups/>



Annex: The EaP CSF Working Groups

Working Group 1

EaP CSF Working Group 1 on ‘Democracy, Human Rights, Good Governance and Stability’ is the largest WG. It provides expertise on a range of topics, including rule of law and judiciary reforms, human rights, media freedom, enabling environment for civil society, public administration reform and local authorities, fight against corruption, gender equality policies, security, CSDP and civil protection, hybrid threats and propaganda. WG1 priorities include:

- Supporting creation of stable and robust democratic institutions and structures;
- Improving electoral frameworks;
- Transparent and accountable judiciary;
- Promoting stronger civil society’s participation in decision-making processes and improvements of enabling environment for civil society;
- Watchdogging the adherence of the EaP governments to human rights standards;
- Supporting the implementation of the Istanbul Convention, and gender equality;
- Advocating for support to free media, media literacy and fight against propaganda;
- Promoting decentralisation, gender and participative budgeting and participative decision-making at local level;
- Security, and impact of the conflicts in the region on human security; Countering hybrid threats; Supporting participation of interested EaP countries in Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP).

Working Group 2

EaP CSF Working Group 2 on ‘Economic Integration & Convergence with EU Policies’ provides expertise on a range of topics, including trade, convergence with EU policies and standards, harmonisation of digital markets, structural economic reforms. Working Group 2 also takes an active interest in the implementation of bilateral trade agreements signed between the EU and individual EaP countries. WG2 priorities include:

- Creating a favourable regulatory and economic environment for SMEs through the implementation of structural reforms;
- Addressing dysfunctionalities in the financial sector and gaps in SME access to finance;
- Supporting the creation of job opportunities at national, regional, and local levels;
- Supporting equal employment opportunities for both men and women;
- Fostering the harmonisation of partner countries’ digital markets;
- Supporting easy and affordable access to the internet, namely in rural areas, through the development and implementation of broadband strategies;
- Promoting the participation of consumer protection organisations in developing, implementing and monitoring new national action plans;
- Mainstreaming the principles of sustainable development across all policy areas and introducing adequate responses to climate change;
- Supporting partner countries’ efforts to become members of the World Trade Organisation (WTO).



Working Group 3

EaP CSF Working Group 3 on 'Environment, climate change and energy security' provides expertise on a range of topics, including environmental governance issues, climate change, and green economy, energy efficiency and security, transport and road safety and sustainable development goals, advocating for policy reforms in EaP countries. WG3 priorities include:

- Achieving good environmental governance by improving government's accountability, transparency, stakeholders' participation in environmental decision-making, effectiveness and coherence of environment, energy, transport, climate change policy;
- Supporting creation of stable and robust institutions and structures to deliver the above policy goals;
- Ensuring the implementation of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on projects and infrastructures, particularly hydropower plants;
- Promoting climate change mitigation and adaptation efforts in EaP countries; Reducing Greenhouse Gas emission;
- More secure energy supply via enhanced gas and electricity interconnectivity; energy efficiency; increased use of renewable energy (RES);
- Road safety and improvements of pedestrian and cycling infrastructures;
- Developing sustainable agriculture, in particular extending the organic lands area and integrating nature protection objectives into the agriculture policy.

Working Group 4

EaP CSF Working Group 4 on 'Contacts between People' is the second largest Working Group and focuses on areas that include Education, Youth, Culture, Research and Innovation. It aims to contribute to the improvement of the educational quality offered, advance modern youth policies, and promote inclusiveness across the EaP and EU countries. WG4 priorities include:

- Promoting and disseminating information on EU issues and the opportunities provided by the EU by developing an information society and by enlarging the network of European Information Points;
- Addressing specific situations and levels of development of civil society in each EaP countries, in particular through using existing leaders' networks for strengthening common understanding, sharing of values and co-operation between NGOs from EaP and EU Member States;
- Facilitating non-formal education and increase funding for internships and volunteer opportunities, school exchange programmes and distance learning;
- Enhancing active participation of young people in decision-making processes at all levels and developing mechanisms for involving them to achieve the EaP goals;
- Developing special programmes for peace and intercultural education for young people in post conflict areas;
- Fostering cultural exchanges and co-operation between the EU and EaP countries and encouraging ratification/fostering implementation of the UNESCO Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions in the EaP countries.



Working Group 5

EaP CSF Working Group 5 on 'Social & Labour Policies and Social Dialogue' focuses on promoting social and decent employment matters as stand-alone priorities in the EU-EaP relations. Working Group 5 provides expertise on a range of issues, including social policies, labour migration, labour rights, gender equality and fair pay, and social dialogue. WG5 priorities include:

- Establishing a new EaP policy pillar focusing on social dialogue, labour migration and employment policies as priorities in their own right;
- Promoting stronger social dialogue as an essential dimension and moves toward sustainable, resilient and integrated economies;
- Promoting the adoption and implementation of European norms and international standards defined by the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union, the European Social Charter, the European Pillar of Social Rights and the International Labour Organisation;
- Raising awareness on the benefits of strong social dialogue among EaP governments and civil society and promoting fundamental social values such as social justice, cohesion and equality;
- Supporting a fair labour mobility between the EU and EaP countries as well as among the EaP countries, focusing on a fair pay and decent working conditions.

To find out more about EaP CSF WGs, its membership, projects and publications, please check <https://eap-csf.eu/working-groups/>

