

Terms of Reference

IMPROVING the VISIBILITY of EPF

Objective of Consultancy

In seven years since its establishment, EPF's program focus has evolved, donor partnerships have developed, and interaction with local stakeholders and its position within Georgian civil society has advanced. EPF seeks to engage a communications consultant/s to review EPF's communications tools and assist the Foundation in formulating its new communications strategy.

The objective of this assignment is to develop a comprehensive and coherent communications strategy for the period of 2015-2019 that will make EPF's external communications more strategic, targeted and, thus, effective for its (1) collaboration with the general public, the media, government agencies, civil society and the private sector and (2) fundraising efforts *vis-a-vis* international and bilateral donors, and private corporations.

To achieve this objective, the new communications strategy must:

- (1) Refine the focus of EPF's communications and formulate a structured communication approach (including online and offline media), which allows EPF to use targeted and audience-specific messages to civil society, government, donors, the private sector, and the media.
- (2) Identify targeted and audience-specific messages that EPF can use for fundraising and collaboration with civil society, government, donors, the private sector, and the media, with clear emphasis on two main points (i) "EPF as knowledgeable entity in empowering society and strengthening institutions for inclusive governance", and (ii) "EPF as development partner for quality program implementation."
- (3) Help raise the public profile and visibility of EPF nationally, regionally, and internationally with identified audiences by highlighting how EPF is unique, and therefore uniquely placed to contribute to the development of civil society in Georgia.

Background

EPF's mission is to empower people to effect change for social justice and economic prosperity through hands-on programs, helping them to improve their communities and their own lives. To achieve its mission, EPF strives (1) to strengthen the capacity of individuals and institutions, empowering them to address pressing issues and (2) to mobilize relevant stakeholders in issue-based dialogue, through raising public awareness and creating various coalitions, platforms or working groups, so as to effect positive change.

Our work, both grant-making and program implementation, is guided by these program mandates and approaches:

- **Citizen Monitoring**
 The Foundation seeks to increase citizen action in monitoring the activities of government, businesses, and the donor community to effect positive changes. Policy formation and implementation, public and social service delivery and public works all have significant impact on society and the economic development of Georgia. The Foundation encourages CSOs to pursue work on setting and maintaining public accountability to international project and audit standards through civil sector involvement in infrastructure and legislative monitoring, as well as project evaluation. Direct citizen engagement constitutes a key component of all activities funded.
- **Corporate and Community Philanthropy**
 The Foundation seeks to encourage community volunteerism and activism in Georgia. Activities in this field include increasing the understanding and practice of local corporate philanthropy and developing the skills and vision for youth to become advocates for and implementers of social change.
- **Evidence-Based Advocacy and Policy Making**
 EPF seeks to promote evidence-based advocacy and policy making throughout all of its program areas. Recognizing that sound advocacy and policy making are built on the foundation of reliable and unbiased information, EPF supports survey research to inform its programming, as well as encourages its grantees and partners to utilize the existing data or generate new data to design advocacy campaigns and encourage public authorities to engage in evidence-based decision making.
- **Cross-Border/Cross-Community Cooperation**
 The Foundation is one of the leading program implementers in cross border/cross community activities within the South Caucasus region. Regional programming aims to contribute to security and stability by building links among individuals and civil society groups in different communities and countries that face similar problems and are working toward common goals. An essential component of public diplomacy efforts, cross community work focuses on the third sector and businesses to establish the essential social cohesion that builds confidence and prevents violent conflict.
- **Cross-Cutting Gender Policy**
 The Foundation is committed to the principle of gender equality and therefore promotes the use of gender mainstreaming in the design, implementation and evaluation of all operational programs and grant-funded projects. EPF fully supports equal rights and equality of responsibilities and opportunities for women and men, and girls and boys.
- **Open Door Grantmaking**
 The Foundation recognizes that smart people with good ideas can have significant social impact, especially working at the grassroots level. Social entrepreneurs bring fresh solutions and ideas to existing challenges and are the driving forces behind many of the most successful interventions. The Foundation's Open Door Grant Program is a tool to support sometimes risky pilot projects and to test new ideas on a small scale. When projects

supported through the Open Door Grant Program demonstrate success, the Foundation and its partners can help to replicate them at a larger scale or in different geographies.

EPF's work is also guided by the following approaches: engaging youth and fostering public-private-NGO partnerships.

EPF's Theory of Change

EPF operates with the belief that societies function best when people take responsibility for their own social and economic prosperity. EPF's programs equip CSOs and individual civic activists to define and achieve outcomes of enduring benefit to themselves and their communities. We employ a demand-driven approach, which allows civil society actors to determine the issues that are of importance to their communities and to develop interventions that are effective in addressing identified needs - a critical factor in a vibrant democracy. At the same time, EPF mobilizes communities and/or interest groups around specific issue areas to create demand for change.

The Foundation's approach is driven by the conviction that CSOs need to build their own local constituencies if they are to contribute to Georgia's development in a meaningful way in the long term. To build such enduring constituencies, CSOs should work with citizens, informing them how to identify their communities' needs and interests and help them in linking these needs to appropriate policy initiatives, engaging communities and the government to make tangible progress. EPF believes that directly engaging citizens in translating their interests into viable public policy makes CSOs more effective advocates and more compelling interlocutors with the government.

EPF also believes that substantive and sustainable changes cannot be effected without issue-based partnerships between diverse groups of stakeholders. It is for this reason that EPF has made it its priority to nurture and promote public-private-NGO partnerships that contribute to consensus building and ensures participatory decision making. Such partnerships are also essential for fostering long-term CSO sustainability to address societal needs.

Through the programs described below, EPF strives towards its mission and, in the process, unites local civil society's efforts in the pursuit of our common goal: Georgia that is democratic, conflict-free, and with civically engaged citizens, socially responsible businesses, and sustainable, accountable, and effective third sector organizations.

Programs

The above-noted considerations are reflected in EPF's operational and grantmaking interventions. During the next five years (2014-2019), EPF focuses its attention to contributing to improved civil society capacity and long-term sustainability to address societal needs. To do so, the Foundation's *Engage and*

Monitor for Change Program works toward engaging local communities to enhance civil society influence on public decision-making process. At the same time, EPF's *European Integration Program* ensures that civil society is engaged in and contributes to participatory decision making to achieve convergence to European values, standards, and practices. Through its *Youth Integration Program*, the EPF continues to work with underserved youth to build their leadership capacity and enhance female and male youth volunteerism and civic engagement to address their own communities' needs. By putting the concept of social enterprise on the policy agenda, the Foundation's *Social Enterprise (SE) Development Program* ensures that CSOs are increasingly utilizing the SE concept as one of the ways of attaining their long-term sustainability so as to address the needs of their vulnerable constituencies. By providing longer-term institutional strengthening grant support to regional CSOs and funding demand-driven projects developed by local CSOs and civic activists. EPF's *Open Door Grantmaking Program* further contributes to improved civil society capacity and longer-term sustainability to address societal needs.

To this affect, EPF's *Engage and Monitor for Change Program* takes initiative to mobilize stakeholders to create a multi-stakeholder platform for enabling regulatory and policy environment for CSOs. In addition, EPF will mobilize regional CSOs and support the efforts to create a more institutionalized channel for participation and information exchange between regional CSOs and national authorities. EPF continues to provide grant support to CSOs to undertake civic monitoring and advocacy efforts, to enhance civic participation and to contribute to more accountable and transparent public policy making. EPF also continues with small institutional development grants to grassroots CSOs, but in addition consider taking a more long-term perspective, when the institutional performance so warrants.

The *European Integration Program* promotes civic participation in the process of Georgia's integration into the EU, by (1) facilitating improved policy and compliance with the European Integration commitments taken on by Georgian authorities and (2) building consensus on the implementation of the EU-Georgia Association Agreement. As part of these efforts, the Program continues to work on creating conditions for improved food safety and consumer protection in Georgia. In addition, EPF conducts annual assessments of the implementation of the Association Agreement or other relevant action plan commitments by the Government of Georgia (GoG) and, based on the results of the assessment, identify issue areas that require further attention in terms of increased transparency and civic participation.

Through its *Youth Integration Program*, EPF continues to promote youth volunteerism and civic engagement by building their capacity as civic leaders and community philanthropists, providing opportunities to engage as active citizens in identifying and addressing local needs. To this end, EPF plans to continue to support the already created Youth Banks (YB) in 25 municipalities of Georgia (including Abkhazia) by training local youth in YB methodology and providing them with small grants to support micro projects developed by their peers for responding to community needs. EPF fosters network building among

the YBs from different parts of Georgia by supporting cross-community initiatives that are designed to enhance youth civic engagement across the country. To foster the spirit of volunteerism and tap into the resource of former YB committee members, EPF continues to engage with “graduated” YB members. EPF puts additional emphasis on communicating the YB model to the public, as well as to broader list of stakeholders to garner their support. As part of the external communications efforts and in line with its declared approach to enhance public-private-NGO partnerships, EPF targets local businesses for providing support to the YBs of their choice.

EPF’s *Social Enterprise Development Program* continues to promote the concept of social enterprise (SE) as one of the ways for CSOs to ensure their long-term sustainability and in this process to foster improved socio-economic integration of vulnerable groups and contribute to job creation. While EPF fosters business community’s engagement in all of its programs, input from local businesses is particularly sought out in the effort to promote the SE concept and support CSOs in diversifying their funding. During the implementation, EPF’s efforts focus on engaging national and local authorities, CSOs, and business community through a multi-stakeholder platform that (1) develops concrete proposals on how to improve regulatory environment and practice to support the creation of SEs and (2) lobbies relevant public authorities to see through these proposals. EPF also continues its successful practice of engaging youth, namely business school students, in its efforts to promote the SE concept, through conducting annual competitions and connecting the winning teams with actual SEs.

The Foundation’s flagship *Open Door Grantmaking Program* continues to provide CSOs with one of the very few opportunities to be proactive in identifying and addressing local needs, developing fresh solutions and ideas to existing challenges. EPF continues to support pilot projects that foster civic engagement and have the potential to be replicated either in geographic terms or across various issue areas. EPF puts more emphasis on providing Open Door grant support to regional CSOs that either serve as resource to other local CSOs and civic activists. EPF encourages potential grantees to develop longer-term projects, up to 18 months, and set concrete benchmarks for fund disbursements. For those CSOs that serve as resource centers in their regions and are awarded Open Door grants, EPF offers to provide organizational development (OD) support, so as to promote further institution building and longer-term sustainability. Following the grantee feedback, EPF is considering to develop auxiliary online application tool, through which applicants will be able to send in their applications and receive status updates from EPF.

Scope of Work

The communications strategy review must include the following features:

- Review of the EPF’s Strategic Directions, 2015-2019, and all external evaluation reports.
- Review of current communications tools with view to enhance their role as communications techniques if relevant.

- Meet with relevant partners to interpret how they see and envisage EPF's role in developing civil society in Georgia.
- Following the above, conduct focus group/s with the Board of Trustees and senior management to identify consensus and areas of concern in developing the communications strategy. EPF views these meetings as essential. It is expected that the consultant's findings from the meetings will significantly impact the draft and final strategy.

The Content of the 2015-2019 Communications Strategy

The final report, subject to approval by EPF, should set out:

- A review of research findings identifying most important communications aspects.
- Concise analysis and assessment of current state of EPF communications activity (weaknesses, strengths and areas of potential).
- Presentation of EPF 2015-2019 Communications Strategy containing the following features:
 - Outline of EPF's core positioning and consequently the unique identity that will be reflected in all communications materials.
 - Proposals, in outline, of the types of core informational tools (both online and offline) and materials to be disseminated as part of the communication strategy.
 - Chart timetabling the roll-out of the strategy.
 - Development and presentation of key communication messages, methods, tools, and the optimum time for their release. Cost estimates of various techniques should also be provided.
 - A feature outlining how the new communications strategy dovetails with the EPF's Strategic Directions, 2014-2019.
- Public Relations Procedures: the consultant should suggest a set of practical procedures, ensuring that the communications activity is nuanced and responds effectively to the needs of beneficiaries, partner NGOs, donors, the media, and the private sector. The procedures should serve as a guideline to EPF's program management staff and should suggest:
 - Media outreach techniques specific to EPF's requirements.
 - Annual, standardized calendar of core informational materials suggested for use as part of the communication strategy, and present procedures for pro-active as well as reactive communications with target groups.
 - Templates for developing, writing, and designing a media kit that can be used at a variety of events and for different target audiences. The consultant is expected to suggest the right mix of media tools that can be packaged as media kits and will be used in fundraising events as well as part of the communications activity.

Deliverables

- An Inception Report with details on the work plan, methodology, and a draft skeleton of the strategy. The inception report should be submitted

within 2 weeks of signing of a contract, and should not exceed 10 pages. The inception report should be approved by EPF before the consultant proceeds with the assignment.

- A Comprehensive Assessment Report of EPF's programs and communications tools (including, organizational culture, fundraising strategy and communications activity; report of consultation process as outlined in 'Scope of Work'). The Assessment report should be submitted within 4 weeks after the approval of the inception report, and should not exceed 15 pages.
- A PowerPoint Presentation to EPF of the draft communications strategy. The presentation should be presented in person to the Board of Directors, senior management, and relevant staff within 2 weeks after the approval of the Assessment report.
- A Final English-language Communications Strategy, including monitoring and evaluation instruments for measuring the achievement of the goals and targets of the strategy, and media and public relations plan. The final strategy should be submitted within 2 weeks after presenting of a draft, and should not exceed 30 pages, excluding annexes.
- Training of relevant staff and members of the Board of Directors in new communication tools and methods. Coaching and role-playing should be employed. Focus on how to interact with the written and visual media, the delivery of speeches, press releases, interviews, responses to accusations, how to formulate communications work plans, and utilize online new media techniques. The training can take up to 2 full days in the last week of the assignment.

Payment Schedule

20%	Upon submission and approval of the Inception Report
20%	Upon submission and approval of the comprehensive Assessment report of EPF's programs and tools.
40%	Upon submission and approval of the final communications strategy.
20%	Upon delivery of training.

Consultant Qualifications

This assignment should be undertaken by an expert/s with the following qualifications:

- Academic background in media, communications, management or related field.
- 10+ years of experience working on relevant media and communications assignments, preferably for the NGO sector.
- Demonstrable success in conducting communications needs analysis as well as managing public relations and media campaigns for development projects.
- Advanced analytical and research skills, ability to absorb and analyze large quantities of data in short periods of time.
- International work experience.

- Advanced English language fluency, Georgian is a plus.

Expected Time Frame

It is anticipated that the assignment will commence from late February, 2015 and last for up to 4 months.

Budget

The budget should include consultant's fee as well as communication expenses and expenses for transportation to and within Tbilisi. Price competitiveness will be a consideration during the selection process, and all proposals exceeding USD15,000 (gross) will be declined.

Submission

EPF seeks bids from individuals or organizations to conduct this assignment. Application must be submit in English that includes:

- Detailed description of consultant's qualifications.
- Description of approaches and tools to be used to collect and analyze information.
- Draft work plan.
- Budget.

Proposals can be submitted to the EPF office at 3 Kavsadze Street, Tbilisi 0179, Georgia to the attention of Nino Sutidze, Program Coordinator, or alternatively, by email to nsutidze@epfound.ge. Please indicate *Communications Strategy* in the subject line of your email.

The deadline for submission of applications is **February 20, 2015** by 17:00 (Tbilisi time). EPF will notify applicants about the selection results by February 27, 2015.