

EU4INNOVATION



Terms of Reference (ToR)

For

Pool of Experts

under

Challenge Fund, EU4Innovation 2023-2026

Project

Tirana, Albania
July 2024



The 'EU for Innovation' project, funded by the European Union, the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) is implemented by Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and Embassy of Sweden Tirana.

Implemented by



Cooperation Partner



TERMS OF REFERENCE AND SCOPE OF SERVICE

1. Background

Partners Albania for Change and Development (PA) is an Albanian NGO, established in 2001. PA's mission consists in the support of civil society and the facilitation of inter-sector cooperation to strengthen democratic institutions and advance economic development in Albania. PA is a member of Partners Global, a network of 20 independent organizations in Europe, the Americas, Africa, and the Middle East, working for peaceful and democratic change.

PA has built its operations in four key programmatic areas, namely:

- 1. Enabling Environment and Sustainable Development of CSOs**, contributing to the empowerment of civil society actors and civic engagement through *capacity building* programs, *monitoring and advocacy* for an enabling legal and practical environment for CSOs operation, and *financial support* for the sector.
- 2. Entrepreneurship and Social Innovation**, developing and supporting the ecosystem of entrepreneurship and social enterprises (SEs) through research, advocacy, financial support mechanisms, expertise, and networking opportunities.
- 3. Philanthropic Activity and Support Infrastructure**, developing and promoting philanthropic activity in the country through research, advocacy actions for an enabling environment, awareness raising, and promotion activities on the economic and social value of philanthropy.
- 4. Transparent and Accountable Participatory Governance** contributing to the development and growth of civil society practitioners and public administration officials in their efforts to building strong institutions, manage open and transparent processes and overcome corruption.

PA has vast experience in designing and managing EU-funded projects and sub-granting schemes in the frame of EU projects. Since 2012, PA has implemented **more than 20 projects funded by the EU**. The organization also works for the *development of Social Enterprises* (SEs) and start-ups, generating social impact through a) research; b) advocacy; c) education and public awareness; d) financial support to 3-rd parties.

Since June 2023, Partners Albania is the Cooperation Partner of SIDA for the implementation of the Challenge Fund, under the framework of the EU4Innovation Phase II, 2023-2026.

The Multi Donor Action EU4Innovation Phase II, 2023-2026 is jointly co-financed by the EU, the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), and Sida and implemented by GIZ and Embassy of Sweden in Tirana.

The aim of the Challenge Fund is to improve and diversify finance opportunities for Albanian start-ups and MSMEs, with innovative solutions (e.g., products, services, business models, processes) and (ii) start-ups with prominent tech content with the potential for global expansion and rapid growth.

Within this framework, Challenge Fund will launch three different calls for proposals during the project implementation period 2023-2026, for funding of a minimum of 50 (fifty) start-ups and innovative micro, small and medium-sized enterprises with the potential to expand locally or internationally, around 16-17 successful applicants under each call.

In conjunction with the grant, Challenge Fund will offer comprehensive technical assistance to grantees throughout the entire grant period. To facilitate this, PA is creating a Pool of Experts to support the diverse needs that both the project and the grantees may encounter during the implementation of the project. The experts will be available to offer guidance, answer questions, and deliver tailored solutions, ensuring the successful implementation and progress of the project.

2. Objective of the ToR

Partners Albania for Change and Development through this call aims to identify experienced experts at the national level, to extend the network of collaborators in various fields of services, and offer support to the project and start-ups awarded from the Challenge Fund.

The purpose of the Call is to identify qualified and experienced experts to join the Pool of Experts for providing services for the startups in 3 categories (Idea and Validation stage, Growth stage, and Scale-up stage¹) in the following areas:

- a) Legal expertise (contractual and agreements frameworks, regulatory compliance and legal requirements, structuring partnerships and collaborations, guidance on employment law and labor contracts, data privacy compliance, and other related issues);
- b) Licensing, standards, registration at the Office of Registrar of Trademarks, Branding, patent protection and other related issues;
- c) Leadership development;
- d) Business SWOT analysis;
- e) Value proposition, and Customer Feedback and Validation;
- f) Product Development and Go-to-Market Strategy;
- g) Performance Metrics and KPIs to measure product performance and market fit;
- h) Price and Sales Strategies;
- i) Operational management;
- j) Financial, Technology, and Human resources management;
- k) Marketing and Advertising;
- l) Digital transformation and e-commerce strategies;
- m) Community, Partnerships, and Network Building;
- n) Sustainability Practices;
- o) Market Expansion strategies;
- p) Supply chain management;
- q) Business sector-related expertise (sectors such as Sustainable Agriculture, Food Processing, Forestry and Fishing, Green and Digital Transition, Circular Economy, Wood Processing, Clothing and Textile Industry, Footwear and Leather Processing Industry, Renewable Energy, Waste Management, and Remediation Activities, Recycling and Upcycling).

¹ <https://challengefund.euforinnovation.al/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/factsheet-CHF-thirja2.pdf>

Interested applicants can apply to one or more fields of expertise from the above-mentioned areas.

The experts will be contracted to deliver their services based on the need and according to the project plan. The services will be delivered online and onsite, in Tirana and other cities of Albania. Therefore, the experts must be available for travel during the contractual period. In case of travel required, all costs related to travel and accommodation will be covered by the project and should not be included in the financial offer.

The expertise will be provided in the **Albanian language**.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

The experts are expected to fulfill the following duties and responsibilities related to the above-mentioned areas:

- Assist in preparing necessary documents and templates (for example templates/tools for maintaining necessary data for reporting, manuals on reporting obligations, etc., in accordance with the type of expertise provided).
- Aid in creating internal management systems (for example impact measurement systems, etc.).
- Provide advice on business daily operational activities (for example customer relationship management (CRM) systems, management of suppliers, framework on effective competitive advantages, etc.).
- Develop frameworks for one-on-one coaching and mentoring of startup leaders.
- Provide assistance on legal and financial compliance.
- Offer strategic guidance on business development and growth strategies.
- Assist in the development of sustainable business practices and social responsibility initiatives.
- Facilitate workshops and training sessions on relevant topics.
- Provide support in organizational development and change management.
- Other duties and responsibilities based on the related field of expertise.

4. Experience and qualification of the Experts

The desired qualifications of the Experts for this assignment are the following:

- At least 7 years of proven working experience in one or more of the above-mentioned topics, at the local, national level, and/or international level;
- Master's degree in the relevant field/s;
- Similar experiences related to the duties and responsibilities outlined in Section 3 of this ToR;
- Experience with the innovation and startup ecosystem is preferred;
- Fluent in Albanian, both oral and written;
- Strong communication skills;
- Excellent analytical and reporting skills;
- Good problem-solving skills.

5. Contracting Authority

The experts will work under the supervision of Partners Albania for Change and Development, to which the experts will directly report with regard to the implementation of the task.

6. Contractual Arrangements

Partners Albania for Change and Development will contact the successful candidates after the evaluation of the applications. Being included in the Pool of Experts does not imply the obligation of Partners Albania for Change and Development to engage any expert or to establish any contractual relationship between Partners Albania for Change and Development and them.

The successful candidates will be included in Partners Albania for Change and Development Pool of Experts for the period of 2 years (September 2024 – June 2026). Entry into the Pool of Experts' system does not necessarily mean that a contract with Partners Albania for Change and Development is guaranteed. This will depend on forthcoming needs.

Where a request for services arises, PA shall directly contact the expert from the pool without the need for a further selection process. A specific Term of Reference (ToR) outlining the outputs for each assignment shall be provided and an Individual Contract will be issued to the expert, detailing the time frame for the engagement.

7. Submission of the documents

The deadline for submitting the application is August 23rd, 2024.

Application documents must be in English and sent via e-mail to the following address:

partners@partnersalbania.org

Partners Albania for Change and Development embraces diversity in its hiring, welcoming individuals of all religions, ethnicities, genders, and orientations to apply.