

Terms of Reference (ToR)

For

“Engagement of an International Service Provider in Public Sector Innovation: Framework and Workshop Series for Public Administration Use Cases”

Under

Challenge Fund, EU4Innovation 2023-2026 Project

Tirana, Albania
September 2026

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 of 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 19 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* programmes, *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 build 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; and d) financial support to 3rd 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.

A relevant component of the Challenge Fund project is to support **Innovation4Albania (I4A)**, the National Agency for Innovation and Startups established in 2026 under the Ministry of Economy and Innovation. I4A's mandate covers the start-up ecosystem, alternative finance, and, as a distinct pillar, innovation in public administration. The Directorate for Innovation in Public Administration is organised around seven problem-domain clusters (Economy, Finance and Business; Infrastructure and Energy; Tourism, Environment and Agribusiness; Property and Territory; Justice, Interior and Integrity; Health and Social Welfare; Education, Culture and Sport), supported by a horizontal AI and Emerging Technologies Lab.

Public sector innovation is already under way. The Government's AI pilot is testing the use of generative AI in the public administration, while I4A is designing a GovTech Accelerator through which startups will address challenges identified by public institutions. In this context, there is a need for a common and practical approach to identifying public-sector problems, framing them as concrete innovation use cases, assessing and prioritising them, and determining an appropriate route towards implementation.

Therefore, we are seeking to engage an experienced **International Service Provider**, which may be an **individual expert or a company** to design, test and transfer a framework and workshop methodology through which public officials can identify and develop innovation use cases, with I4A as facilitator. Where the Service Provider is a company proposing more than one expert, one expert shall be designated as the Team Leader and shall be responsible for the overall technical coordination and delivery of the assignment. The approach is guided by the OECD Declaration on Public Sector Innovation and by the European Commission Guidance on Innovation Procurement, which treats the public sector both as a user of innovation and as a launching customer for innovative solutions.

2. Objective of the ToR

The main objective of these Terms of Reference (ToR) is to engage a **qualified International Service Provider** to support **Innovation4Albania (I4A)** in establishing and operationalising a proven and reusable system for generating, assessing and prioritizing public administration innovation use cases, and for supporting their transition towards implementation.

The Service Provider will:

- **design a Public Innovation Use Case Framework** defining how use cases are identified, framed, assessed, prioritised and routed towards implementation;
- **design and facilitate, together with I4A, a series of workshops** with public administration officials that test the framework in practice;
- **produce a first portfolio of documented and prioritised use cases**, each with an owner institution, a productivity baseline and a delivery route;
- **train a core team of I4A staff** so that they can run future workshop cycles independently and set out a roadmap to institutionalise the approach in 2027.

The assignment will be carried out in a **hybrid format**, combining remote work with **one four-day mission** to Tirana, Albania. Travel, accommodation and per diem for the mission will be covered by the Contracting Authority and shall not be included in the Service Provider's financial offer. The working language of the assignment will be **English**, while participant materials used in the workshops will be translated into Albanian by I4A. The assignment will comprise up to **30 working days of professional effort** inclusive of all remote and in-person activities required to complete the tasks and deliverables set out in these Terms of Reference. The assignment shall be completed no later than **15 December 2026**, which shall be the final and non-extendable completion date.

Tenderers shall propose a **detailed work plan and calendar**, indicating the number of working days allocated to each task and phase, including the four-day mission to Tirana.

3. Duties and Responsibilities

The Service Provider shall carry out the assignment through a combination of remote work and one four-day mission to Tirana to deliver four workshops, in close coordination with Innovation4Albania (I4A). The following tasks shall be carried out under the assignment:

Phase 1. Inception and framework concept (remote)

No.	Task	Output	Measure of completion
T1	Review relevant documentation (I4A mandate and structure, AI pilot materials, GovTech Accelerator concept, relevant strategies) and hold remote interviews with I4A management and staff.	Inception Report (D1)	at least 6 interviews held; contain context analysis, stakeholder map and detailed work plan.
T2	Draft the concept of the Public Innovation Use Case Framework, drawing on at least 4 international reference programmes (such as public innovation labs, GovTech and challenge-based programmes in EU Member States.).	Framework Concept Note, part of D1	Use case definition, lifecycle stages, draft assessment criteria and delivery routes set out; international references documented.
T3	Design the workshop series and the criteria for selecting participating institutions and officials.	Workshop series plan, part of D1	Objectives, agenda outline, participant profile and target number for each workshop; grouping of the seven clusters into thematic workshops agreed with I4A.

Phase 2. Alignment and design (remote)

No.	Task	Output	Measure of completion
T4	Hold consultation meetings with key institutions to test the framework concept	Consultation notes	Meetings with at least 8 central institutions,

	and secure participation.		including the Ministry of Economy and Innovation and the National Agency for Information Society.
T5	Facilitate the leadership alignment workshop (W0).	W0 delivered; workshop report	Senior officials from at least 8 institutions attend; each institution nominates at least one innovation champion for the series.
T6	Deliver the first Training of Trainers module to the I4A core team.	ToT module 1 (2 days)	At least 8 I4A staff trained in the framework and facilitation techniques; roles for each staff member in the series assigned.
T7	Finalise the framework and the facilitation toolkit based on the outcomes of the consultations, leadership alignment workshop and Training of Trainers module.	Draft D2 and draft D3	Delivered to I4A to translate participant materials in advance of the thematic workshop series.

Phase 3. Thematic Workshop Series – Mission to Tirana
(4 working days in Tirana, excluding travel days)

No.	Task	Output	Measure of completion
T8	Facilitate four full-day thematic workshops (W1 to W4), grouped by I4A's problem domain clusters, in which officials identify problems, map current processes, estimate productivity baselines and design use cases.	W1 to W4 delivered	Each workshop brings together 20 to 30 officials from at least 3 institutions and produces at least 6 use cases on standard canvas.
T9	Transfer facilitation responsibilities to I4A progressively: W1 led by the expert, W2 and W3 co-led, and W4 led by I4A staff with the expert as coach.	Facilitation debriefs	Written feedback provided to each I4A facilitator after each workshop; W4 fully led by I4A staff.
T10	Document each workshop.	Workshop reports, part of D4	Report for each workshop within 5 working days, covering participants, use cases produced, participant evaluation and lessons for the methodology.

Phase 4. Prioritisation, showcase and handover (remote)

No.	Task	Output	Measure of completion
T11	Consolidate all use cases, refine them with owner institutions and apply the assessment criteria of the framework.	Use Case Portfolio (D5)	At least 20 use cases documented; at least 8 prioritised, each with an owner institution, productivity baseline, delivery route and next step; 3 developed into pilot-ready briefs.
T12	Facilitate W5: Prioritisation with officials and a Public Challenge Showcase, where prioritised challenges suited to market solutions are presented to startups and ecosystem facilitators.	W5 delivered	At least 10 officials in the prioritisation session
T13	Finalise the framework and toolkit; present results and the 2027 roadmap to I4A management and the Ministry of Economy and Innovation.	Final D2, D3 and D6	Final presentation held; all files handed over in editable format.

I4A will provide the institutional coordination and operational support required for the successful implementation of the assignment including:

- designate a core team, led by a focal point from the Directorate for Innovation in Public Administration;
- secure the participation of institutions through official invitations;
- provide venues, logistics and materials for all workshops;
- translate participant materials into Albanian and provide interpretation during workshops where needed.
- and provide consolidated written comments after receiving each draft- deliverable.

4. Main deliverables

A deliverable is complete when it meets the measures above and is accepted in writing by **Partners Albania for Change and Development (PA)**, following confirmation by the I4A.

No.	Deliverable	Minimum content
D1	Inception Report	Context analysis, stakeholder map, framework concept, workshop series plan, work plan. Maximum 15 pages.
D2	Public Innovation Use Case Framework	Definitions, lifecycle, assessment criteria, delivery routes, governance and measurement.
D3	Workshop Methodology Toolkit	Facilitator's playbook, session designs and all templates.
D4	Workshop reports	One report per workshop (W0 to W5) and ToT records.
D5	Use Case Portfolio	At least 20 documented use cases, at least 8 prioritised, 3 pilot ready briefs.
D6	Final Report and 2027 Institutionalisation Roadmap	Results against indicators, lessons learned, proposed cycle of workshops for 2027, champions network, links to the AI programme and GovTech Accelerator, resource needs.

The Public Innovation Use Case Framework (D2) shall, at minimum, cover the following:

- **Definitions:** what constitutes a use case, and the difference between process improvement, digital and AI solutions, and market solutions.
- **Lifecycle:** stages from problem identification to framing, design, assessment, prioritisation, piloting, measurement and scaling, with the decision taken at each stage and by whom.
- **Assessment criteria:** value for citizens and businesses, productivity gain (time, cost, error rates), feasibility, data availability, legal feasibility, cost, and potential to create demand for innovative companies.
- **Delivery routes:** internal process redesign, AI and digital solutions, the GovTech Accelerator, innovation procurement, and collaboration with universities.
- **Governance:** roles of I4A, owner institutions and the network of innovation champions; how the use case pipeline is managed and reported.
- **Measurement:** a small set of indicators to track use cases and the productivity gains achieved.

The Workshop Methodology Toolkit (D3) shall be a practical facilitator's playbook allowing I4A staff to run a complete workshop cycle without external support. It shall include session designs with timing and exercises, preparation and follow up steps, participant recruitment guidance, and templates including a problem canvas, a use case canvas, a process mapping template, a productivity baseline sheet, a scoring matrix and a participant evaluation form.

The Service Provider shall apply the following **methods** throughout the assignment:

- **Participatory design-** Workshops use proven methods such as design thinking, service design, process mapping and challenge framing, adapted to the Albanian administrative context;
- **Learning by doing-** The framework is tested in real workshops and refined between missions, so that the final version reflects what works in practice;
- **Progressive handover-** I4A staff move from support to co facilitation to leading a workshop, with written feedback at each step;
- **International benchmarking-** At least 4 international reference programmes inform the framework, adapted rather than copied.

5. Experience and qualifications

The experts (individuals or engaged by a company, as applicable) shall meet all requirements below:

- Master's degree in public administration, public policy, design, innovation management or a related field;
- at least 10 years of professional experience in public sector innovation, including leading or advising a public innovation lab, GovTech programme, innovation unit or comparable initiative;
- proven experience facilitating workshops with senior public officials, using methods such as design thinking, service design or process redesign;
- proven experience designing frameworks or methodologies subsequently adopted by public institutions;
- experience with challenge-based programmes, innovation procurement or AI use case development in the public sector;
- experience with training trainers and transferring methodologies to national teams;
- experience in the Western Balkans or other EU candidate countries is an asset;
- fluency in English (oral and written); knowledge of Albanian is an asset.

6. Timeline of the assignment

The assignment will start upon contract signature and shall be completed no later than **15 December 2026**, which is the fixed final completion date. The assignment shall comprise up to **30 working days of professional effort**, inclusive of all remote and in-person activities required to complete the tasks and deliverables set out in these Terms of Reference.

The experts shall ensure their availability throughout the agreed implementation period. They must be independent and free from any actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest in relation to the responsibilities they undertake.

7. Contracting Authority

The Service Provider shall work under the supervision of Partners Albania for Change and Development (Partners Albania), which shall also serve as the primary reporting and coordination point for the assignment. All deliverables, including the framework, toolkit, templates and use case documentation, shall be the exclusive property of I4A, which may use, adapt, translate and publish them without restriction.

8. Submission of the documents

The deadline for submitting the application is 19 October 2026 at 09:00 hrs.

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.