



Terms of Reference

Consultancy to Conduct Organizational Capacity Assessments and Develop Capacity Development Plans for Local Civil Society Organizations in Israel and Palestine

1. Context

Over the past three years, the situation in Israel and Palestine has significantly deteriorated, with a marked escalation in violence, displacement, and humanitarian needs. Large-scale hostilities resumed in October 2023, resulting in civilian harm and significant destruction. Humanitarian access remains limited, and the space for civil society activity has narrowed in both contexts. Despite these challenges, Israeli and Palestinian organizations committed to peace and justice continue their work on the ground under growing political, administrative, and financial pressures.

In this context, the Empowering Palestinian and Israeli Civil Society and Media project led by Expertise France, in partnership with Canal France International (CFI) and with support from the European Union (EU), aims at strengthening the role of civil society and media. The project responds to the need for rapid response approaches that go beyond traditional models, which have often failed to address structural inequalities and entrenched power asymmetries. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to creating a more conducive environment for sustainable coexistence by strengthening Israeli and Palestinian civil societies and supporting independent media in advancing dialogue, mutual understanding, and collaboration.

2. About Expertise France

Expertise France is the French international development cooperation agency, created in 2015. Expertise France is part of the Agence Française de Développement (France Agency for Development, AFD) since 2022. It designs and implements projects which aim to contribute to the balanced development of partner countries, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

EF's Stabilization and Resilience Unit has been implementing programs in crisis and conflict settings since 2013, positioning itself as a leading organization in supporting the recovery, stabilization, and resilience of vulnerable populations in fragile contexts.

3. The Project

Expertise France, with support from the European Union's Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI), is implementing an 24-month project that aims at empowering Civil Society and Media to foster community resilience and social cohesion. The project aims at strengthening the role of civil society and media, both historically underutilized in the mediation and peace processes between Israel and Palestine in spite of their critical role in empowering diverse voices across Gaza, the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Israel, and the diaspora. The project responds to the need for inclusive, justice-oriented approaches that go beyond traditional models, which have often failed to address structural inequalities and entrenched power asymmetries.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to creating a more conducive environment for sustainable peacebuilding by strengthening Israeli and Palestinian civil societies and supporting independent media in advancing dialogue, mutual understanding, and collaboration.

The project is structured around two sub-objectives that focus on reducing immediate tensions and fostering gradual steps towards peaceful coexistence between communities in Israel and Palestine:

- Sub-objective 1 (SO1): to sustain and amplify the voices and actions of Israeli and Palestinian civil society - including community leaders, diaspora, youth, and women – through initiatives that promote dialogue, reduce tensions, and foster mutual understanding within their communities and amongst different communities.
 - Output 1.1: CSOs demonstrate strengthened capacity to lead and implement peacebuilding initiatives
 - Output 1.2: Peacebuilders have strengthened resilience and access to trauma support, enabling sustained engagement in conflict-affected environments
 - Output 1.3: Communities experience incremental progress toward peace through CSO-led collaborative projects and intra-community dialogue
- Sub-objective 2 (SO2): to support independent media actors in fostering a more pluralistic and informed public debate, combating disinformation, and facilitating collaboration with civil society to enhance peacebuilding efforts.
 - Output 2.1: Independent media actors maintain operational resilience and continue delivering unbiased information amidst external pressures
 - Output 2.2: Media actors produce and disseminate quality, fact-based information that counters disinformation and hate speech
 - Output 2.3: Palestinian and Israeli media stakeholders engage in exchanges, building trust and addressing shared challenges

The project currently funds 42 initiatives implemented by local civil society organizations registered and/or active in the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, and Israel. These organizations are the focus of the organizational assessment this consultancy aims to conduct.

4. Objective of the Consultancy

4.1 Overall Objective

The overall objective of this consultancy is to assess the organizational capacities of 42 local civil society organizations (CSOs) supported under the project and to develop tailored capacity development plans responding to the identified strengths, gaps, and priorities at both the individual organizational level and the portfolio level.

The consultancy is expected to contribute to strengthening the institutional resilience, operational effectiveness, sustainability, and compliance capacities of local organizations operating in Israel and Palestine in a complex and rapidly evolving environment.

4.2 Specific Objectives

The consultancy shall pursue the following specific objectives:

1. Develop and/or adapt organizational capacity assessment tools and methodologies suitable for the operational, political, and organizational context of local civil society organizations in Israel and Palestine;

2. Conduct Organizational Capacity Assessments (OCAs) for 42 local organizations through a participatory and context-sensitive methodology;
3. Identify organizational strengths, weaknesses, risks, and priority capacity gaps across key functional areas;
4. Develop tailored capacity development plans for each assessed organization, including prioritized recommendations and proposed support modalities;
5. Develop a consolidated portfolio-level capacity development plan identifying common trends, overlapping needs, and opportunities for collective capacity strengthening initiatives, including group trainings, peer learning, mentoring, communities of practice, and other joint support mechanisms;
6. Provide Expertise France with strategic recommendations regarding the prioritization, sequencing, and delivery modalities of future capacity development support under the project.

4.3 Scope of the Assessment

The assessment framework should cover, at minimum, the following organizational dimensions:

- Governance and strategic leadership;
- Financial management and internal controls;
- Procurement and compliance systems;
- Human resources management;
- Safeguarding and accountability mechanisms;
- Project management and operational systems;

The consultant/the Consultant firm may propose additional assessment areas deemed relevant to the operational context and profile of the organizations.

The consultancy shall target all CSOs funded under the project; these are local organizations registered and/or active in the West Bank, Gaza, Jerusalem, and Israel.

4.4 Methodology

The consultant shall propose a detailed methodology for the assignment. The methodology is expected to combine qualitative and participatory approaches, including:

- Review and adaptation of existing organizational assessment tools where relevant;
- Desk review of relevant project and organizational documentation;
- Review of organizational policies, procedures, and systems;
- Interviews and consultations with leadership, staff members, and where relevant board members;
- Organizational self-assessment exercises;
- Validation sessions with participating organizations;
- Comparative and cross-cutting analysis across organizations.

The methodology should ensure:

- Confidentiality and ethical handling of information;

- Conflict-sensitive and context-sensitive approaches;
- Participatory engagement with organizations;
- Practical and action-oriented recommendations.

The consultant is expected to adapt the assessment methodology and tools in consultation with Expertise France prior to implementation.

4.5 Expected Deliverables

The consultant shall deliver the following:

Deliverable 1 – Inception Report

An inception report including:

- Detailed methodology;
- Workplan and timeline;
- Proposed/adapted assessment framework and tools;
- Data collection methods;
- Stakeholder engagement approach.

Deliverable 2 – Organizational Capacity Assessment Reports

A separate assessment report for each of the 42 organizations, including:

- Organizational profile;
- Summary of findings;
- Analysis of strengths and capacity gaps;
- Risk analysis;
- Priority recommendations

Deliverable 3 – Individual Capacity Development Plans

A tailored capacity development plan for each organization, including:

- Priority capacity strengthening objectives;
- Recommended activities and modalities;
- Indicative timeline;
- Suggested sequencing and prioritization;
- Proposed indicators of progress.

Deliverable 4 – Portfolio-Level Capacity Development Plan

A consolidated portfolio-level plan synthesizing:

- Common strengths and weaknesses across organizations;
- Cross-cutting trends and systemic constraints;
- Overlapping capacity development needs;
- Recommendations for group-based capacity strengthening activities and collective learning approaches;
- Recommendations regarding prioritization and sequencing of support activities.

Deliverable 5 – Final Consolidated Analytical Report and Presentation

A final report and presentation summarizing:

- Key assessment findings;
- Major organizational and portfolio-level trends;
- Strategic recommendations for Expertise France;
- Proposed implementation considerations for future capacity development support.

5. Expected Timeframe

The consultancy is expected to start mid September and be completed within approximately 6 weeks.

The indicative timeline is expected to include:

- Inception phase;
- Data collection and organizational assessments;
- Draft reporting and validation;
- Finalization of reports and capacity development plans.

The consultant is expected to propose a realistic implementation schedule in the technical proposal.

6. Required Profile

The consultant or consulting firm should demonstrate the following qualifications and experience:

Mandatory Qualifications

- Advanced university degree in organizational development, international development, public administration, social sciences, management, or another relevant field;
- Minimum of 5-7 years of demonstrated experience conducting organizational capacity assessments and/or organizational development processes for civil society organizations;
- Proven experience designing capacity development strategies and action plans;
- Strong analytical, facilitation, and report-writing skills;
- Experience working with civil society organizations in fragile, conflict-affected, or politically sensitive contexts;
- Demonstrated understanding of donor compliance and accountability requirements, particularly those of European institutional donors;
- Excellent command of English, both written and spoken.

Desirable Qualifications

- Previous experience working in Israel and/or Palestine;
- Knowledge of Arabic and/or Hebrew;
- Experience working with organizations focused on human rights, media, peacebuilding, social cohesion, civic space, or community resilience;
- Experience working with EU-funded projects or with Expertise France.

7. Application Process

Interested consultants or consulting firms are invited to submit:

1. A technical proposal including:
 - Understanding of the assignment;
 - Proposed methodology;
 - Proposed workplan and timeline;
 - Description of the assessment framework and tools.
2. A financial proposal including:
 - Detailed budget in EUR;
 - Daily rates and estimated level of effort;
 - Any additional operational costs.
3. CV(s) of the consultant(s);
4. Contact details of at least two professional references OR two samples of past assignments.

Applications should be submitted by 10 September through Expertise France portal.

8. Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated against the following criteria:

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Maximum Score
1. Understanding of the Assignment and Technical Approach	Demonstrated understanding of the context, objectives, and scope of the consultancy	5
	Relevance and quality of the proposed methodology and assessment approach	20
	Quality and feasibility of the proposed workplan and implementation strategy	15
	Conflict-sensitive, participatory, and context-adapted approach	5
Subtotal – Technical Approach		45
2. Experience and Qualifications of the Consultant/Firm	Demonstrated experience conducting organizational capacity assessments for CSOs/NGOs	15
	Experience designing and implementing capacity development plans and organizational strengthening processes	10
	Experience working in fragile, conflict-affected, or politically sensitive environments	5
	Experience working with EU-funded programmes and/or institutional donor compliance frameworks	5
	Qualifications and expertise of the proposed consultant(s)/team members	10

Criteria	Sub-Criteria	Maximum Score
Subtotal – Experience and Qualifications		45
3. Financial Proposal	Cost-effectiveness, clarity, and value for money of the financial proposal	10
Subtotal – Financial Proposal		10
TOTAL		100

Additional Considerations

Preference may be given to applicants demonstrating:

- Previous experience in Israel and/or Palestine;
- Knowledge of Arabic and/or Hebrew;
- Experience supporting organizations working on civic space, media, human rights, peacebuilding, or social cohesion;
- Availability to conduct in-person consultations in Israel and the occupied Palestinian territory, subject to access and security conditions.

Evaluation Process

The evaluation committee may invite shortlisted candidates for an interview and/or request additional clarifications regarding the technical and financial proposals before final selection.

9. Contact Details

For any question related to this study, please contact Stepha Rouichi, Project Director Expertise France (stepha.rouichi@expertisefrance.fr).