



## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

For experts ('assessors') to assist in the evaluation of grant applications received in the framework of the call for proposals

Reference: EuropeAid/171607/DD/ACT/AL

**Toka Jone – Re-use of confiscated assets for social agriculture  
Social Agriculture Development Fund (SADF)**

Deadline: December 15th, 2023

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## 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

The Social Agriculture Development Fund - SADF call for proposals is developed under the EU funded TOKA JONË project EuropeAid/171607/DD/ACT/AL under the Civil Society Facility & Media Programme for Western Balkans and Turkey 2020 (CSF), a programme which was introduced in 2008 to strengthen civil society in the IPA Countries.

Toka Jone project through **SADF sub-granting scheme** is fully in line with main priorities of EU support to civil society, in particular: 1) to achieve an environment that is conducive to civil society activities; and 2) to build the capacity of CSOs to be effective and accountable independent actors. To foster the diversification of revenue sources and strengthen the financial capacities of CSOs, as well as encourage good practices in terms of good governance and the promotion of a culture of legality - from a multidimensional perspective - the EU has consistently supported the reuse of abandoned assets for social purposes.

Confiscation of criminal assets, therefore, is a key aspect to prevent criminal organisations from remaining in their illegal activities. To that end, Toka Jone aims at contributing to some of most pressing Albanian national priorities on social re-use of confiscated assets as an effective solution for the growth of non-profit organisations and social enterprises combined with the strengthening of Albanian enforcement agencies and local government units.

Social re-use of confiscated assets is permissible in Albania to its law enforcement agencies, local government units and non-profit organisations whose objective is to protect and rehabilitate victims of organised crime. The alienated confiscated assets can be used, in the specific case of non-profit organisations, for the provision of loans, based on a request from the beneficiary with a substantiated and motivated interest. Supervision, in these cases, is carried out by the Agency for the Management of Seized and Confiscated Assets, based on instructions provided by the Minister of Finance and Economy. At present, Albania has little experience with the social re-use of confiscated assets. It should continue to monitor its efforts in this field with a view to establishing trends and assessing the effectiveness of the system, in order to make changes to it over time. Furthermore, the agricultural sector is attracting increasing interest and represents a field with enormous potential for the country. **Therefore, the Project is addressed in particular at young people, women, vulnerable groups and relatives of organized crime victim, with the scope to provide piloting innovative green entrepreneurial activities based on social farming activities and by networking and engaging the local communities.**

In this context, will be selected and supported, through a sub-granting scheme, **three social agriculture initiatives** that will benefit from financial and technical assistance to consolidate the economic activities. The involvement in social agriculture entrepreneurship activities and programs will provide new and innovative economic opportunities for youth, particularly those from poor households and rural areas, as well as rural women.

The project proposals of applicants that will be funded should address the following outputs:

- (1) Innovative and sustainable social agriculture initiatives established or supported.
- (2) Increased level of proactiveness and capacities of target actors in developing sustainable reuse proposals of confiscated assets from AAPSK.
- (3) Raised awareness on re-use of confiscated assets for social purposes among economic actors and other relevant stakeholders.

## **2. OBJECTIVE, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS**

### **2.1. Overall objective**

The objective of this ToR is to recruit **three (3)** assessors to assist the contracting authority in the selection of the best proposals received under **Toka Jonë – Re-use of confiscated assets for social agriculture** and to achieve a high-quality, complete and coherent selection process of projects in line with the criteria set in the guidelines for applicants.

### **2.2. Results to be achieved by the contractor**

Assessors will carry out the technical and financial assessment of full applications in accordance with guidelines to be provided by the contracting authority and which are based on the published evaluation grids. Each full application has to be assessed individually by at least 2 assessors.

These assessments will be used by the evaluation committee in the process of selecting the best proposals.

## **3. SCOPE OF THE WORK**

### **3.1. General**

External assessors will be engaged to carry out detailed examination/evaluation of all those applications that after submission are considered as administratively compliant under the Sub-granting scheme of Toka Jonë – Re-use of confiscated assets for social agriculture. The assessors should provide written technical and financial assessments to the contracting authority of full applications. This includes the verification of the budget proposed by the applicants for the action, assessing its overall coherence and particularly its cost-effectiveness, with an emphasis on the identification of potential anomalies and/or overpriced items or budget lines.

Assessors must familiarise themselves with the documents related to the call for proposal. The information below refers to certain key points, but does not substitute a thorough reading of e.g. the Guidelines for Grant Applicants, their annexes and the FAQs published for the Calls for Proposals within COSV. COSV is responsible for coordinating the evaluation process in accordance with the procedures in the practical guide and for ensuring its impartiality and transparency.

The proceedings of the evaluation are confidential and all parties involved are bound to adhere to the principles of confidentiality, impartiality and no conflict of interest. The experts must sign a declaration to this fact.

Only COSV representatives are authorized to have contact with an applicant during and after the evaluation process. This includes communications related to clarifications, announcement of the results of each phase as well as dealing with requests for information and questions raised by any applicant about the results.

The evaluation of project proposals will be conducted respecting relevant Guidelines for Applicants i.e. evaluation grids and checklists of the application form contained within the Application Package. To ensure impartial, professional and smooth assessment process, experts will be given proper documentation and guidelines.

The evaluation grids should be completed in English language.

### **3.2. Specific activities**

Assessors are bound by a declaration of impartiality and confidentiality<sup>1</sup> to be signed before starting each phase of the assessment. If an assessor believes there might be a situation of conflict of interests

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<sup>1</sup> A standard document will be made available by the contracting authority.

in relation to one or more applicants, he/she must inform the contracting authority immediately. In addition, strict confidentiality is required from the experts involved in the implementation of this contract, notably on the assessments of individual applications.

Assessors, which comprise an odd number, are part of the Evaluation Committee which has in its structure also a non-voting chairperson and a non-voting secretary.

### **(1) Role and tasks of assessors**

Assessors should provide written technical and financial assessments to the contracting authority of full applications. ( this includes the verification of the budget proposed by the applicants for the action, assessing its overall coherence and particularly its cost-effectiveness, with an emphasis on the identification of potential anomalies and/or overpriced items or budget lines.

At least 2 assessors must assess each full application, working independently of each other.

The assessments must be undertaken in accordance with the guidelines and instructions provided by Contracting Authority. These are based on the published evaluation grids in the guidelines for applicants. The overall assessment should be based on the scores obtained under each subheading, added up by heading and the final score is the arithmetical average of the scores given by the assessors.

Each application must be assessed on its own merits and not by comparing different applications. External assessors are expected to bring their own experience of the sector and project implementation to bear in the analysis of each proposal.

The assessors will be invited by the Contracting Authority to justify and discuss his/her assessment of the proposals.

**The Contracting Authority (CA) will serve as the Chairperson of the Evaluation Committee. Each assessor should liaise directly with the CA only. The assessors are required to submit their evaluations to the CA.**

Assessors should conclude the evaluation of one full application within one working day. The total numbers of the working days will depend on the number of the application submitted.

Assessors shall participate in any necessary meeting organised by the Contracting Authority before the evaluation process starts. This meeting shall clarify the contractual terms of their engagement and provide them with all the relevant information/annexes and documents needed to fulfil the evaluation of the applications.

In case the need arises assessors shall be invited by CA throughout the evaluation process to address any issues and/or discrepancies.

### **(2) Role and tasks of the evaluation committee**

The evaluation committee is appointed by the contracting authority comprising a non-voting chairperson, a non-voting secretary and an odd number of voting members which are the External Assessors (minimum of three). Its role is to advice the contracting authority on contract award in accordance with pre-established criteria. The chairperson and secretary will be assigned by COSV.

**The chairperson** is responsible for coordinating the evaluation process in accordance with the procedures in the practical guide and for ensuring its impartiality and transparency, without compromising the principle of individual assessments

**The chairperson** should ensure that every assessor is familiar with the relevant working documents provided the contracting authority such as the guidelines for applicants and the guidelines for assessors, which provide for the application of a standard methodology when evaluating the applications.

**The chairperson** should ensure that the evaluation grids and standard format are strictly followed, agreed deadlines respected and the evaluation reports are in conformity with the evaluation guidelines.

**The chairperson** should pay special attention to the fact that the written appraisals are consistent and coherent with the given score under each section of the evaluation grid (i.e. that a high score is not associated to negative comments, and vice), and that they are written in a way that clearly allows the evaluation committee to use them directly in the selection process as well as for communicating the assessment results to the applicants.

**The secretary** of the committee is responsible for carrying out all administrative tasks connected with the evaluation procedure. These include circulating and collecting the declarations of impartiality and confidentiality and keeping the minutes and any other relevant records and documents.

Assessors work under the supervision of the chairperson of the evaluation committee.

Should the assessments not satisfy the quality expected by the contracting authority, it may return the applications to the contractor and ask for a re-assessment by the same or another expert.

## **4. LOGISTICS AND TIMING**

### **4.1. Location**

The assessors will work remotely.

The assessors are expected to be part of the briefing meeting prior and after the evaluation process conducted, which will take place in the premises of COSV in Tirana, Albania.

### **4.2. Start date and period of implementation**

Upon selection of assessors as well as submission of applications, a precise table of the assignment will be defined.

Expected number of working days will be calculated based on the number of applicants that have applied for SADF sub-granting scheme.

The assessors are required to conduct project evaluation process impartially, in a totally independent and confidential manner, in his/her personal capacity and apply to the best of his/her abilities and professional skills, knowledge and ethics, in accordance with the guidelines and time-schedules provided by the Contracting Authority.

Each assessor shall sign a statement of exclusivity and availability for the period of implementation of this assignment at the moment of signing his/her contract. Whenever an expert is not available, any more for the execution of the tasks for which he/she was hired, the Contracting Authority will

replace him/her with one or more of the candidates at the top of reserve list compiled after the recruitment procedure.

## 5. REQUIREMENTS

### 5.1 Assessors

#### Qualifications and skills

- Master's degree in Agriculture, Economics, Agribusiness, Social Sciences or other relevant educational background.
- Good command in English language both in written and speaking.
- Excellent communication skills
- Excellent report drafting (writing, editing)
- Proficiency in MS Office

#### Specific professional experience

- Required a minimum of 6 years of proven experience in grant-managing, proposal assessment and project evaluation, ideally of social and agriculture initiatives;

#### General professional experience

- A strong knowledge of the political, economic and social situation in Albania, specifically related to the most vulnerable categories such as young people from poor households, rural women, relatives of victims of organised crime.
- Familiarity with the civil society sector and existing local, national and regional social-agriculture initiatives.
- Ability to produce well written reports based on strong analysis;

## 6. REPORTS

To summarise, in addition to any documents, reports and output specified under the roles and tasks of the assessors, the contractor shall provide the following documents and reports:

Name of report/ Document	Time of submission
Annex 1 - Declaration of conflict of interest'	Before starting the Evaluation Process
Annex 2 - Declaration of impartiality and confidentiality in the evaluation of applications	Before starting the Evaluation Process
Annex 5 - Individual evaluation grid per each application	To be decided
Annex 6 - List of applications ranked by score	After the Evaluation Process
Annex 7 - Final evaluation report of applications	After the Evaluation Process

All the above mentioned annexes needed for the assessment process shall be provided to the assessors by Contracting Authority.

All the documents shall be submitted electronically and in hard copy to the Contracting Authority within the deadline that will be set on basis of the number of applications.

## 7. Application process

Interested candidates are requested to submit the following documents to the following address: [cosvbalkans@cosv.org](mailto:cosvbalkans@cosv.org) by December 15th, 2023.

- Curriculum Vitae in English (Euro-Pass format) with detailed information on relevant experience
- Motivational Letter
- Further relevant documents proving their skills and expertise i.e. for example list of previous assignments where proposal assessment skills were applied, including former supervisors/colleagues in the respective organizations who may be contacted as references (please include name, function, phone number)
- Financial offer (experts' fee) per one full application assessment.

## 8. Selection process

The assessors shall be selected on the basis of their professional and technical ability to perform the assessment tasks. All applications will be treated with the strictest confidence.

The evaluation of the candidates shall be based on the Technical Requirements 60% and Financial Proposal 40%. Three of the highest scored candidates will be selected.

Requirements	Evaluation
<b>Technical requirements</b>	<b>60%</b>
- Master's degree in Agriculture, Economics, Agribusiness, Social Sciences or other relevant educational background.	10%
- Required a minimum of 6 years of proven experience in grant-making, proposal assessment and project evaluation, ideally of social and agriculture initiatives;	15%
- A strong knowledge of the political, economic and social situation in Albania, specifically related to the most vulnerable categories such as young people from poor households, rural women, relatives of victims of organised crime	10%
- Familiarity with the civil society sector and existing local, national and regional social-agriculture initiatives	10%
- Ability to produce well written reports based on strong analysis;	10%
- Good command in English language both in written and speaking.	5%
<b>Financial Proposal</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

Only successful candidates will be contacted.