

Terms of reference (ToR) for the procurement of services below the EU threshold

CONFIDENTIAL

Strategic Advisory on Humanitarian Programming

**Project number/
cost centre:
G-011233-001**
**Tender number
10044113a**

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0. List of abbreviations

AG	Commissioning party
AN	Contractor
AVB	General Terms and Conditions of Contract for supplying services and work
DG ECHO	Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EMPOWER	GIZ project “Strengthening Communities in War-Affected Regions in Ukraine through Localized Action”
FK	Expert
FKT	Expert days
HDP Nexus	Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus
KZFK	Short-term expert
ToRs	Terms of reference

1. Context

The Strengthening Communities in War-Affected Regions in Ukraine through Localized Action (EMPOWER) project aims to strengthen the resilience of vulnerable populations in the war-affected regions of Ukraine (primarily focusing on twelve oblasts – Sumska, Kharkivska, Dnipropetrovska, Zaporizka, Khersonska, Mykolaivska, Lvivska, Poltavska, Kyivska, Ivano-Frankivska, Odeska and Chernihivska) through a localized, multi-sectoral response. The project is financed by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and receives co-financing from the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO). With about 50 local implementing partners, EMPOWER operates in four key sectors – protection, health, education in emergencies, and shelter/NFI – while advancing localisation, Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus implementation, and capacity strengthening of local NGOs.

Given the strategic importance of GIZ's partnership with DG ECHO, this consultancy is envisioned as a key resource to:

- Facilitate stronger engagement between GIZ and DG ECHO, helping both sides better understand each other's priorities, expectations, and opportunities for programmatic partnership.
- Provide technical guidance on DG ECHO's strategic priorities to EMPOWER, particularly on localisation and donor eligibility requirements.
- Support GIZ senior management in navigating the humanitarian space, ensuring coherence between BMZ's and DG ECHO's approaches.
- Reflect on lessons learned from this consultancy, offering recommendations to strengthen institutional collaboration and positioning.

Additionally, the consultancy will support GIZ in identifying opportunities to multiply its localisation model across different regions and programming contexts, leveraging lessons learned from both Turkey and Ukraine.

The consultant(s) will **serve as a key advisor** to the **EMPOWER management team** (AV, Head of Components), ensuring that strategic decision-making reflects the evolving donor landscape, localisation commitments, and humanitarian priorities.

2. Tasks to be performed by the contractor

The contractor will provide strategic advice and technical backstopping to the project's management team (Project Director, Head of Components). These are expected to be aligned to the localisation agenda of the Grand Bargain, DG ECHO's strategic and context-specific priorities, the HDP nexus, humanitarian aid delivery and principles, and potential business development opportunities.

Specifically, the contractor is responsible for providing the following services:

A. Strengthening DG ECHO - GIZ Engagement & Strategic Partnership Development

- i. Provide monthly briefings on DG ECHO's institutional positioning on localisation, HDP nexus programming, funding policy shifts, and donor engagement priorities

- ii. Support GIZ in further positioning itself as a strategic partner, ensuring alignment with DG ECHO's eligibility and compliance frameworks.
- iii. Facilitate strategic engagement between EMPOWER and DG ECHO (at country, regional and HQ level), enabling strategic partnership building.

B. Strategic and Process-related Backstopping on DG ECHO commissioning

- i. Advise the overall program design and planning of the Action through feedback, written assessments and delivering concept notes.
- ii. Sectorial advisory during preparatory steps for HIP application(s)
- iii. Backstop the submission of e-single forms for HIP application(s), ongoing modification requests, interim reports and final report.

C. Technical Backstopping on Localisation Implementation

- i. Provide strategic input on DG ECHO's localisation agenda guiding EMPOWER in structuring its localisation efforts within DG ECHO's strategic framework.
- ii. Provide insights on local partner capacity strengthening, ensuring sustainability and eligibility for direct international donor funding.
- iii. Advise EMPOWER on optimising its compliance with DG ECHO's regulations and requirements while maintaining the localisation approach.

D. Documentation of Lessons Learned & Recommendations to GIZ

- i. Conduct a reflective analysis of GIZ's engagement with DG ECHO and BMZ.
- ii. Identify bottlenecks, institutional challenges, and best practices for strengthening partnerships.
- iii. Compile results in a reflective Lessons Learned & Strategic Recommendations Report on DG ECHO - GIZ interactions, institutional lessons learned, and strategic and practical recommendations for GIZ's strategic positioning with humanitarian donors and DG ECHO in particular.

E. Strengthening DG ECHO Understanding within EMPOWER team

- i. Conduct up to 8 trainings and/ or advisory sessions for the EMPOWER team for orientation in humanitarian aid principles, safeguarding, programmatic cycle specificities of humanitarian aid, sectoral specifications, and expectations of DG ECHO as a donor from its implementing agencies and DG-ECHO's understanding of localisation.

To underpin and support the tasks described above, at least one **business trip to Ukraine** is presumably foreseen for both key experts (under consideration of the security conditions) while additional business trips to Poland, Belgium and within Germany will be defined based on the advisory needs and project's requirements.

Certain milestones, as laid out in the table below, are to be achieved during the contract term:

Milestones/process steps/partial services	Deadline/place/person responsible
Monthly briefings on DG ECHO's institutional positioning, funding policy shifts, and donor engagement priorities (see (A))	November 2026 – November 2028
Strategic advisory on GIZ's positioning as a strategic partner for DG ECHO and structured engagement (see (A))	November 2026 – November 2028

Strategic and process-related backstopping on DG ECHO commissioning (see (B))	November 2026 – December 2028
Technical backstopping on localisation implementation within DG ECHO's framework (see (C))	Upon agreement.
Compilation of a Lessons Learned & Strategic Recommendations Report (see (D))	November 2027 – January 2028
Delivery of up to 8 trainings and/ or advisory sessions for EMPOWER team (see (E))	Until November 2028 (the training format (in-person or online; duration etc.) will be identified depending on the identified needs and the principle of cost-efficiency)

Period of assignment: from 16.11.2026 until 31.12.2028.

3. Concept

In the tender, the tenderer is required to show *how* the objectives defined in Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed) are to be achieved, if applicable under consideration of further method-related requirements (technical-methodological concept). In addition, the tenderer must describe the project management system for service provision.

Note: The numbers in parentheses correspond to the lines of the technical assessment grid.

Technical-methodological concept

Strategy (1.1): The tenderer is required to consider the tasks to be performed with reference to the objectives of the services put out to tender (see Chapter 1 Context) (1.1.1). Following this, the tenderer presents and justifies the explicit strategy with which it intends to provide the services for which it is responsible (see Chapter 2 Tasks to be performed) (1.1.2).

The tenderer is required to present the actors relevant for the services for which it is responsible and describe the **cooperation (1.2)** with them.

The tenderer is required to describe the key **processes** for the services for which it is responsible and create an **operational plan** or schedule (1.4.1) that describes how the services according to Chapter 2 (Tasks to be performed by the contractor) are to be provided.

The tenderer is required to describe its contribution to knowledge management for GIZ (1.5.1) and to promote scaling-up effects (1.5.2) under **learning and innovation**.

4. Personnel concept

The tenderer is required to provide personnel who are suited to filling the positions described, on the basis of their CVs (see Chapter 7), the range of tasks involved and the required qualifications.

The below specified qualifications represent the requirements to reach the maximum number of points in the technical assessment.

Key expert 1

Tasks of key expert 1

See tasks to be performed by contractor in section 2.

Qualifications of key expert 1

- Education/training (2.2.1): university degree (German 'Diplom'/ Master) in Political Science, Sociology, Economics or Development Politics
- Language (2.2.2): C1 -level language proficiency in English (respective language skills are absolutely essential – absence of such skills will lead to technical exclusion of the entire bid)
- General professional experience (2.2.3): 15 years of professional experience in humanitarian strategic programming, strategic donor engagement and partnership development.
- Specific professional experience (2.2.4): 10 years of professional experience in strategic nexus programming of DG ECHO (6 points). 5 years of experience in providing strategic advice to complex projects with DG ECHO (co-) funding in fragile contexts (2 points). 5 years of proven track record in localisation and supporting local NGOs (2 points).
- Regional experience (2.2.6): 5 years of work experience with projects in Eastern Europe, of which at least one year includes projects in Ukraine (after Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022).
- Other (2.2.8): 10 years of professional experience at DG-ECHO.

Key expert 2

Tasks of key expert 2

- Sectorial advisory for HIP processes (see work package B, section 2)

Qualifications of key expert 2

- Education/training (2.3.1): university degree (German 'Diplom'/ Master) in Political Science, Sociology, Economics, Humanitarian Assistance or Development Politics
- Language (2.3.2): C1 -level language proficiency in English (respective language skills are absolutely essential – absence of such skills can lead to technical exclusion of the entire bid)
- General professional experience (2.3.3): 15 years of professional experience in the humanitarian sector including multisectoral operations, cash or voucher interventions and consortia.
- Specific professional experience (2.3.4): 9 years of professional experience in designing, analysing and advising on humanitarian strategies, approaches and guidelines (above project level) and in strategic reviews of humanitarian projects/ programmes.
- Regional experience (2.3.6): 10 years of work experience in contexts with high fragility levels.

- Other (2.3.8): 8 years of professional experience in the identification of humanitarian responses of DG ECHO, the design or development of DG ECHO guidance and strategies and coordination with DG ECHO departments.

Soft skills of key experts

In addition to the specialist qualifications, the following qualifications are required of the key experts:

Team skills

Initiative

Communication skills

Socio-cultural skills

Efficient, partner- and client-focused working methods

Interdisciplinary thinking

5. Costing requirements

Assignment of personnel and travel expenses

Per diem allowances are reimbursed as a lump sum up to the maximum amounts permissible under tax law for each country as set out in the country table in the circular from the German Federal Ministry of Finance on travel expense remuneration (downloadable from the [German Federal Ministry of Finance – tax treatment of travel expenses and allowances for international business travel as of 1 January 2026 \(GERMAN ONLY\)](#)).

Accommodation allowances are reimbursed as detailed in the specification of inputs below.

With special justification, additional Accommodation costs up to a reasonable amount can be reimbursed against evidence.

All business travel must be agreed in advance by the officer responsible for the project

Sustainability aspects for travel

GIZ has undertaken an obligation to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (CO₂ emissions) caused by travel. When preparing your tender, please incorporate options for reducing emissions, such as selecting the lowest-emission booking class (economy) and using means of transport, airlines and flight routes with a higher CO₂ efficiency. For short distances, travel by train (second class) or e-mobility should be the preferred option.

CO₂ emissions caused by air travel must be offset. GIZ specifies a budget for this, through which the carbon offsets can be settled against evidence.

There are many different providers in the market for emissions certificates, and they have different climate impact ambitions. The [Development and Climate Alliance \(German only\)](#) has published a [list of standards \(German only\)](#). GIZ recommends using the standards specified there.

Specification of inputs

Fee days	Number of experts	Number of days per expert	Total	Comments
Key expert 1	1	85	85	
Key expert 2	1	20	20	
Transport	Quantity	Number per expert	Total	Comments
Fixed travel budget	1	1	20.000.-€	A budget is earmarked for travel to the following countries: Poland, Belgium, Germany, Ukraine. A fixed budget of EUR 20.000 is earmarked for settling travel expenses against evidence. You can find further information on the travel expense budget in the 'Price schedule' document. Please use the 'Explanations' column in the price schedule to break down the individual items. Settlement is possible only until the budget is depleted.
CO ₂ compensation for air travel	10		50.-€	A fixed budget of EUR 500 is earmarked for settling carbon offsets against evidence.
Other costs	Number	Price	Total	Comments
Flexible remuneration	1	10.000.-€	10.000.-€	A budget of EUR 10.000 is foreseen for flexible remuneration. Please incorporate this budget into the price schedule. Use of the flexible remuneration item requires prior written approval from GIZ.

6. Requirements on the format of the tender

The structure of the tender must correspond to the structure of the ToR. In particular, the detailed structure of the concept (Chapter 3) should be organised in accordance with the positively weighted criteria in the assessment grid (not with zero). The tender must be legible (font size 11 or larger) and clearly formulated. It must be drawn up in English.

The complete tender must not exceed 10 pages (excluding CVs). If one of the maximum page lengths is exceeded, the content appearing after the cut-off point will not be included in the assessment. External content (e.g. links to websites) will also not be considered.

The CVs of the personnel proposed in accordance with Chapter 4 of the ToRs must be submitted using the format specified in the terms and conditions for application. The CVs shall not exceed 4 pages each. They must clearly show the position and job the proposed person held in the reference project and for how long.

Please calculate your financial tender based exactly on the parameters specified in Chapter 5 Quantitative requirements. The contractor is not contractually entitled to use up the days, trips, workshops or budgets in full. The number of days, trips and workshops and the budgets will be contractually agreed as maximum limits. The specifications for pricing are defined in the price schedule.