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TERMS OF REFERENCE

For Final Evaluation of the Project

"Youth Empowerment for Digital Governance (Youth GO)"

Contract number: NDICI HR INTPA/2023/177230/4
Project donors: European Union, German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Country: Kyrgyzstan

1. Project summary

Title of the action	"Youth Empowerment for Digital Governance (Youth GO)"
Location(s) of the action	There are a total of 27 project villages and 2 small towns in 7 regions and 11 districts of Kyrgyzstan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chui (Districts: Tokmok, Kara-Balta) • Naryn (Districts: Ak-Talaa, Zhungal) • Issyk-Kul (Districts: Ton) • Jalal-Abad (Districts: Aksy) • Batken (Districts: Batken, Kadamjai) • Talas (Districts: Aitmatov) • Osh (Districts: Uzgen, Aravan)
Duration of the action	February 2024 – July 2026 (30 months)
Total budget of the action	895 000.00 €
Partners	Public Fund "Institute for Youth Development (IYD)"
Background information	<p>The project aligns with the global objective of promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms. It aims to fulfill the rights of youth to express their visions, be heard, and participate in decision-making. By empowering civil society—including formal CSOs and informal activist groups—the initiative contributes to transparent and responsive governance in rural areas.</p> <p>The action specifically addresses Specific Objective 1 (SO 1) by empowering rural youth to exercise their rights and gain equal access to decision-making processes. It also aligns with SO 2, which focuses on safeguarding fundamental freedoms in the digital sphere. This is achieved through:</p>

	<p>Digital Opportunities: Enhancing local tools like Youth Appeal Maps (YAM) and Local Passports of Transparency (LPT), alongside developing digital literacy.</p> <p>Local Initiatives: Supporting youth-led digital and media initiatives to increase participation in democratic governance.</p> <p>Public Awareness: Increasing engagement through "Caravans of Transparency" and presentations on using open data.</p>
Objectives of the action	<p>Project overall objective: To protect civil and political rights of youth in Kyrgyzstan, increase youth participation in local self-governance, empowerment, and engagement through digital tools and media.</p> <p>Project specific objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evidence-based documents on gaps and needs in enhancing youth participation in democratic governance will be developed, disseminated and discussed with partners, stakeholders and civil society at large for each target and stakeholder group. • Local government capacity to enhance youth participation and role in democratic governance will be strengthened and e-governance platforms will be established and piloted. • The role and participation of rural youth in democratic governance will be strengthened.
Target group(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least 580 employees of 9 district and 27 rural and urban administrations, village councils and village activists (youth committees, women's councils). • At least 430 members of 29 local Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and groups of activists (GAs). • Around 16700 young people in 29 project locations (2 small towns and 27 villages), including high school and college students.
Final beneficiaries	<p>The population of 29 project areas in all 7 regions of the country, amounting to about 275,000 people, will benefit from the transparency and democratization of local governance.</p>

2. Introduction

DVV International (the applicant) has been active in Kyrgyzstan in adult and youth education since 2002, including capacity-building measures for partner youth CSOs. Cooperation with the Institute for Youth Development (IYD) (co-applicant) dates back to 2010. Since then, the organizations have jointly implemented several projects focused on youth development and creating a conducive environment for youth to exercise their rights and freedoms.

Since February 2024, DVV International and IYD have been jointly implementing the project "Youth Empowerment for Digital Governance (Youth GO)". Over the past two years numerous activities were carried out, including seminars, trainings, roundtables, hackathons, assessments, a study trip, a mini-grant program and other initiatives aimed to advance the level of youth participation in governance and the digitalization of local self-government services, which are key factors in shaping democracy at the local community level.

As the project is coming to an end, DVV International is seeking (an) external consultant(s) to conduct an independent evaluation of the effectiveness and outcomes of the "Youth GO" project.

Brief information about the organizations implementing the project:

DVV International:

DVV International is the Institute for International Cooperation of the Deutscher Volkshochschul-Verband e.V. (DVV), the German Adult Education Association. DVV represents the interests of the approximately 850 adult education centres (Volkshochschulen) and their state associations, the largest further education providers in Germany.

As the leading professional organization in the field of adult education and development cooperation, DVV International has committed itself to supporting lifelong learning for more than 50 years. DVV International provides worldwide support for the establishment and development of sustainable structures for Youth and Adult Education.

DVV International is a professional partner in dialogue with the local people. To achieve this, it cooperates with more than 200 civil society, government, and academic partners in more than 30 countries across Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. DVV International finances its work through funds from the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Federal Foreign Office, the European Union, as well as other donors.

DVV International has been actively operating in Central Asia since 2002. It currently maintains offices in Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Tashkent (Uzbekistan), and Dushanbe (Tajikistan).

Public Fund "Institute for Youth Development (IYD):

The Institute for Youth Development is a leading organization working with young people and promoting youth policy development in the Kyrgyz Republic. IYD brings together active and committed young people who are dedicated to the development of Kyrgyzstan. Their joint efforts enable the foundation to serve as a navigator and leader in existing and emerging opportunities for young people in Kyrgyzstan.

3. Evaluation goal and objectives

The "Youth GO" project and its implementing partner are committed to a learning-oriented and evidence-based approach, aiming to strengthen youth participation in democratic governance and digital transformation processes at the local level. In this context, the final evaluation is conceived not only as an accountability mechanism towards the donor, but also as a strategic learning exercise to inform future youth, governance, and digital participation initiatives.

The overall goal of the final evaluation is to independently assess the extent to which the Youth GO project has achieved its objectives and expected results, as defined in the approved project proposal and Logical Framework Matrix, and to analyse the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability in the context of youth participation and digital governance in Kyrgyzstan.

More specifically, the evaluation shall:

- Assess the relevance of the project design, objectives, and interventions in relation to the needs and capacities of young people, civil society actors, and local self-government bodies in the target regions;
- Examine the effectiveness of project implementation in achieving planned outputs and outcomes related to youth empowerment, civic engagement, and participation in local decision-making processes through digital and offline mechanisms;

- Analyse the efficiency of resource use, management arrangements, and coordination mechanisms between the lead applicant, partners, local authorities, and other stakeholders;
- Assess the extent to which the project has contributed to strengthening the capacities of youth CSOs, informal youth groups, and local administrations in the areas of digital governance, open data use, transparency, and participatory decision-making;
- Evaluate the effects of project activities on young people’s awareness, skills, attitudes, and opportunities to engage in democratic governance processes at the local level, including through digital platforms and tools;
- Analyse the project’s contribution to improving interaction and trust between youth and local authorities, including the use of digital governance instruments such as participatory platforms, digital feedback mechanisms, and transparency tools;
- Assess the sustainability of project results, including the likelihood that digital tools, participatory practices, and strengthened capacities will be maintained and further developed beyond the project’s lifetime;
- Identify key success factors, challenges, risks, and contextual constraints that influenced project implementation, as well as mitigation measures applied during the project;
- Document lessons learned and good practices related to youth participation, digital governance, and cooperation between civil society and local authorities, with particular attention to inclusiveness and accessibility;
- Provide clear, actionable, and evidence-based recommendations for DVV International, project partners, local authorities, and other stakeholders regarding future programming, scaling-up, and policy-relevant approaches in the field of youth empowerment and digital governance.

The findings and recommendations of the evaluation are expected to serve as a practical reference for DVV International, its partner organisations, local self-government bodies, and the donor, as well as to contribute to broader learning on youth participation and digital governance in similar contexts.

4. Subject and focus (scope)

The subject of the evaluation is the project “**Youth Empowerment for Digital Governance (Youth GO)**”, implemented by DVV International and its partners in Kyrgyzstan. The evaluation will cover the entire implementation period of the project and will assess the relevance, quality, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability of the project activities in relation to its objectives and expected results.

The evaluation will focus on:

- The project’s contribution to strengthening youth participation in democratic governance and local decision-making processes;
- The effectiveness of digital and participatory tools and mechanisms introduced by the project to enhance interaction between young people and local authorities;
- The quality and results of capacity-building activities for youth CSOs, informal youth groups, and local self-government bodies;
- The effectiveness of project management, coordination, and cooperation among implementing partners and stakeholders;
- The sustainability and potential for further use of project results, including digital governance tools and strengthened capacities.

The assessment will be based on the objectives, expected results, and indicators defined in the approved project proposal and Logical Framework Matrix.

5. Main Evaluation questions

The evaluation shall be conducted in line with the **OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria**¹ and shall provide clear and evidence-based answers to the following key questions:

Relevance

- To what extent were the project objectives and activities relevant to the needs and capacities of young people, youth CSOs, and local self-government bodies in the target areas?
- How appropriate was the project design and methodology for promoting youth participation in democratic governance through digital and participatory mechanisms?

Effectiveness

- To what extent were the planned outputs and outcomes achieved, as defined in the project proposal and Logical Framework Matrix?
- To what extent did the project strengthen youth participation in local decision-making processes, including interaction with local authorities?
- How effective were the digital and offline tools introduced by the project in facilitating youth engagement and civic participation?

Efficiency

- To what extent were financial, human, and organisational resources used efficiently to achieve the project results?
- How effective were project management, coordination, and communication arrangements among DVV International, partners, and stakeholders?

Impact

- To what extent have the activities had an impact on the target groups?
- What changes, if any, occurred as a result of the project in terms of youth awareness, skills, attitudes, and opportunities to participate in democratic governance?
- To what extent did the project contribute to improved transparency, accountability, and trust between young people and local authorities?
- Were there any significant unexpected positive or negative results?

Sustainability

- To what extent are the benefits of the project, including digital governance tools and strengthened capacities, likely to continue after the end of the project?
- What factors support or hinder the sustainability of project results, and what measures could enhance their long-term use?

6. Evaluation approach and methods

The evaluation will apply a **mixed-methods approach**, combining qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, in order to ensure triangulation of findings and the credibility of conclusions.

The evaluation is expected to include, but not be limited to, the following methods:

¹ The OECD DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance are a widely used framework established by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

- Desk review of key project documents, including the project proposal, Logical Framework Matrix, narrative and financial reports, monitoring data, and selected project outputs;
- Collection of primary data through qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews and/or focus group discussions with key stakeholders, including project staff, partner organisations, representatives of local self-government bodies, youth CSOs, and project participants;
- Where feasible, collection of quantitative data through surveys or structured tools to assess changes in youth participation, capacities, and engagement in local governance processes;
- Analysis of the implementation and use of digital governance tools and participatory mechanisms introduced by the project.

The evaluator(s) shall propose a detailed methodology and data collection plan, including sampling and tools, in an inception report. The methodology should be gender-sensitive, inclusive, and appropriate to the local context.

Ethical considerations, including informed consent, confidentiality, and data protection, must be respected throughout the evaluation process.

7. Indicative Timetable

Tendering (until April 10, 2026):

Tenderers are requested to submit their application documents by March 20, 2026. The successful candidate or company will be selected beginning of April, contracted by mid-April, 2026.

Briefing via ZOOM (after contracting in April 2026):

Online briefing with representatives from DVV International Headquarters and DVV International Kyrgyzstan to receive more information about the project, clarify remaining questions and discuss the detailed evaluation plan.

Document review (desk study) and inception report (until May 10, 2026):

Reviewing and analysing project documents such as the proposal, logframe, narrative reports (annual report, internal mid-term self-assessment report, monitoring reports, etc.), project publications.

Preparation and finalization of inception report after receiving comments from DVV International.

Field study (within the period May 15 - June 5, 2026):

The evaluator(s) will undertake a field mission to selected project locations to consult with all relevant actors and stakeholders and to carry out the evaluation in accordance with the agreed methodology. The exact locations and interview partners will be decided upon in the briefing and preparation phase. Some interviews can also be conducted online.

Report drafting (until June 15, 2026):

The evaluator(s) will draft a report in English, which should contain a maximum of 30 pages without annexes. The draft report will be provided within 10 days after the end of the field study. Consolidated comments received from project stakeholders will be provided by DVV International Headquarters within three weeks after the receipt of the draft report.

Report finalization (latest by July 15, 2026):

The evaluator(s) will finalize the report within another 7 days according to the comments received. The final version should not require any additional editing.

The tentative timeline is 20 working days and remains open to specific changes and suggestions from the prospective evaluator(s):

- Online briefing with DVV International Bonn/ Bishkek (via ZOOM): 0,5 day
- Document review, desk study (2 days)
- Preparation of inception report (1 day)
- Integration of comments by DVV International and agreement on detailed methodology and itinerary for the field visit (0,5 day)
- Design of data collection instruments (1 day)
- Field visit to selected project locations in Kyrgyzstan (9 days)
- Preparation of draft report (5 days)
- Preparation of final report after integrating comments (1 day)

Please take the indicative distribution of working days into account in your suggestions regarding the evaluation methodology.

8. Target group of the evaluation results

The primary target group of the evaluation results will be **DVV International**, including the country and regional project management teams, as well as headquarters. The evaluation results will also be shared with the **project partner organisations**, relevant **local self-government bodies**, and the **Institute for Youth Development (IYD)** as a key stakeholder involved in youth policy development, methodological support, and dissemination of good practices related to youth participation and digital governance. Furthermore, the final evaluation report will be submitted to the **donor** and will serve as a key reference for reflecting on the project's achievements, challenges, and lessons learned, as well as for informing future programming and scaling up of similar initiatives.

9. Right of use

The Principal has the exclusive and unlimited right to use the results fulfilled by the contract. The transfer of this Right of Use is complete with the payment made to the Contractor.

The Contractor has the Right of Use permission strictly limited for personal, non-commercial purposes. The transfer of the Right of Use to third parties is excluded.

10. Contractual Conditions

The legal basis for this contract is provided by the „General terms and conditions for the implementation of Services" (VOL/B). These general terms and conditions are not attached to this contract; however, an exemplary service contract is part of these Terms of Reference for perusal.

11. Tasks of the evaluator/ evaluation team

The evaluator(s) will be requested to fulfil the following tasks:

- Methodological design and planning of the evaluation in communication with DVV International;
- Desk Study of relevant project documentation (application and logframe, project reports, monitoring documents, teaching and PR material etc.);
- Design of data collection instruments for the field phase;
- Preparation of an Inception Report;
- Conducting the field phase with participation and involvement of all relevant stakeholders;
- Compiling preliminary evaluation report, integrate comments, and finalize the report;
- De-briefing session with Youth Go project team and DVV International staff.

12. Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected:

- **Inception report:** The expert/ team of experts will present a report giving detailed information about methods and specified questions. This report will be presented to DVV International, discussed and, if need be, amended.
- **Debriefing:** By arrangement with DVV International, the (team of) expert(s) will present the preliminary results of the evaluation and will answer questions in this regard, documenting the discussion, which must form part of the final report.
- **Draft evaluation report:** DVV International will receive a first draft of the final report, which will be examined on the basis of the DAC Evaluation Quality Standards; on this basis, comments will be made on the rough draft before it is returned to the expert(s).
- **Final evaluation report:** The final report will take into account the comments on the rough draft about the entire evaluation process and all results and recommendations.

The evaluation report should be produced **in English** and submitted to DVV International **electronically**.

13. Responsibilities and logistics

DVV International will be the contracting authority for this evaluation.

The DVV International office in Kyrgyzstan will provide all relevant documents and logistical support for the field visit.

The final report will be accepted by the DVV International Headquarter in Bonn.

14. Evaluator eligibility criteria

The selected evaluator/s need/s to demonstrate profound experience in evaluating development projects as well as experience with organisational development and capacity building. Previous experience in the Central Asian countries and knowledge of Kyrgyz or Russian language will be considered an asset.

The consultant/s we are looking for should

- have at least 5 years of experience in the field of evaluation of development projects (please, provide proof of this experience);
- be able to demonstrate sound knowledge of evaluation methods and instruments;
- possess strong analytical and writing skills;
- have experiences with stakeholder participation and transparent knowledge management;
- have previous work experience in the field of youth engagement, local governance, adult education and/or Central Asia;
- be fluent in English, knowledge of Kyrgyz or Russian is an asset.

15. Budget

The estimated cost should indicate all honoraria costs, transport and travel costs, and any other relevant costs. All costs should be clearly detailed and broken down on the submitted budget. The budget should indicate the number of working days.

16. Application package

Experts participating in the tender for this evaluation should send the application package by **March 20, 2026**, by e-mail to Ms. Paulina Kellersmann, M&E Focal Point in the DVV International Regional Office for Central Asia (kellersmann@dvv-international.de), Ms. Maja Avramovska, Senior Manager M&E at DVV International Headquarters (avramovska@dvv-international.de), and Ms. Meike Woller,

Senior Desk Officer for Central Asia at DVV International Headquarters (woller@dvv-international.de).

Late submissions will not be accepted.

The application package should include the following documents:

1. CV(s) of proposed expert(s), including references to previous evaluations (please use attached template);
2. A technical proposal outlining the suggested approach and methodology and including a draft work plan with timelines covering the following aspects (maximum of 8 pages):
 - a. Show understanding of the task;
 - b. Methodological approach;
 - c. Work Plan / steps of implementation with timeline (including proposed number of working days);
 - d. Consideration of specific requirements of the context of the evaluation;
 - e. Internal Quality Management.
3. A detailed cost estimate (please use attached template).

17. Evaluation criteria of proposals

The proposals will be assessed according to the following criteria:

- **Qualification and experience of evaluator/s (counts one third)** (based on criteria mentioned above);
- **Technical proposal (counts one third)** (based on criteria mentioned above);
- **Financial proposal (counts one third)** (best price-service relation).

18. Request for clarifications

If you have questions concerning this tender, please send your questions to Ms. Maja Avramovska (avramovska@dvv-international.de) or Ms. Paulina Kellersmann (kellersmann@dvv-international.de). The latest date for submitting questions is March 10, 2026.