



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Request for Proposals for two international experts and one national expert to develop a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap for the Republic of Moldova to safeguard freedom of expression against manipulation, disinformation, fake news, propaganda, and informational warfare.

Project:	“Legal Protection of the Freedom of Expression against Manipulation and Propaganda”, implemented by the Institute for Public Policy and funded by the Soros Foundation Moldova
Timeframe	November 2022 – March 2023
Country:	Republic of Moldova
Contractor:	Institute for Public Policy
Target group:	International and national consultants Single individuals / Team of experts / Legal entities holding relevant experience or any combinations of the above
RFP no. #	2022.IPP.02
RFP published on:	November 18, 2022



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INVITATION LETTER

Request for Proposals for two international experts and one national expert to develop a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap for the Republic of Moldova to safeguard freedom of expression against manipulation, disinformation, fake news, propaganda, and information warfare.

Launch date: 18 November 2022
Deadline: 20 December 2022

Procurement method: Public tender

Type of contract: Service agreement

CONTEXT

The Institute for Public Policy (IPP) is implementing the project “Legal Protection of the Freedom of Expression against Manipulation and Propaganda” that aims to contribute to the legal protection of freedom of expression against fakes, disinformation, and manipulation through adjustment of the legal framework and practices with a strong focus on law enforcement and courts of law. The half-year program is financed and implemented with the support of the Soros Foundation Moldova (SFM).

To achieve the project goal, IPP hereby invites interested candidates to submit a Proposal within this Request for Proposals (RFP) for the following 3 positions:

- **International expert on freedom of expression and information**
- **International expert on hybrid threats and informational warfare**
- **National expert on freedom of expression and information**

Three experts will be contracted to develop one joint document: **“Legal Needs Assessment, and a Roadmap for the Republic of Moldova to safeguard freedom of expression against manipulation, propaganda, and related information hybrid threats”**. (This title is provisional).

PROPOSALS SUBMISSION

Your Proposal, comprising a Technical and Financial Offers, shall be submitted in accordance with the requirements and procedure as set out in the Instructions for Applicants. Please make sure that your technical and financial proposals are submitted in separate files and separate e-mails, while the financial proposal shall be password protected. The password shall not be disclosed unless required in written by the Soros Foundation Moldova, at the stage of opening financial offers.

Technical proposals shall be submitted by e-mail to ipp@ipp.md.

Financial proposals shall be submitted by e-mail to mvarmari@soros.md.

Incomplete proposals will not be reviewed.

The deadline for application is December 20, 2022, at 17.00 (5p.m.) Chisinau time.



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After submitting the offers, please make sure that IPP and SFM have received your application. You will receive written confirmation by email. IPP and SFM are responsible only for confirmed offers.

CONTACTS

For Q&As about the Terms of Reference and how to submit offers, please contact Arcadie Barbarosie, project director, e-mail: arcadie_barbarosie@ipp.md, with CC to Victor Munteanu, Head of the Justice and Human Rights Department of the Soros Foundation Moldova, e-mail: vmunteanu@soros.md.

Clarification questions can be sent in writing to the email addresses indicated above until December 9, 2022, 5:00 p.m.

The answers to all the questions will be published on the Contest announcement page in the document: 2022. IPP.LR_Questions/Answers, until December 13, 2022, 5:00 p.m.

INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS

Request for Proposals for two international experts and one national expert to develop a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap for the Republic of Moldova to safeguard freedom of expression against manipulation, propaganda, and related informational hybrid threats.

CONTEXT

The Institute for Public Policy is seeking three experts to jointly develop a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap to efficiently protect freedom of expression against manipulation and propaganda in the Republic of Moldova. The activity is carried out within the project “Legal Protection of the Freedom of Expression against Manipulation and Propaganda”, financed and implemented with the support of the Soros Foundation Moldova. The goal of the project is to contribute to the legal protection of freedom of expression against fakes, disinformation, and manipulation through adjustment of the legal framework and practices with a strong focus on law enforcement and the justice delivery system.

WHO MAY APPLY?

Both individual/natural persons and legal entities (profit and non-for-profit, resident on non-resident) can apply for the announced three positions.

PREPARATION OF THE PROPOSALS

The Proposal shall include the following documents:

- Technical offer (using template Form A. Technical proposal).
- Financial offer (using template Form B. Financial proposal).

The offers shall be submitted in accordance with the requirements and procedure set forth in this Instructions for Applicants, section: How and where to apply?

When preparing the proposals, applicants shall review the RFP in detail. The lack of certain information requested in the Request for Proposals, may lead to the rejection of the proposal.

All the costs related to the preparation and/or submission of the application file will be covered by the applicant, regardless of whether their proposal is selected or not.

The proposals and related communication will be in English.

TIMETABLE

The following deadlines apply to this Request for proposals:

Action	Deadline
The Request for Proposals issued	18 of November 2022
Deadline for applicants' inquiries	09 of December 2022
Deadline for responses	13 of December 2022
Deadline for the applicant's proposals	20 of December 2022, 17.00 (5 p.m.)
Verification of the compliance of proposals with the Request for	24 of December 2022



Proposals	
Final selection of the expert	27 of December 2022
Contract start date	3 of January 2023

HOW AND WHERE TO APPLY

The applicant will submit the applications in separate LOTs, as follows:

LOT 1 International expert on freedom of expression and information

LOT 2 International expert on hybrid threats and information warfare

LOT 3 National expert on freedom of expression and information

One applicant, natural or legal person, may choose to apply under one, two or all three LOTs.

IPP and SFM may choose one, two, three applicants, or none of them. For example: for LOT 1, the winner is the company X with the expert Z; for LOT two the winner is the individual applicant B; for LOT 3, the winner is the applicant company C with its nominated expert D. The 3 individuals will build the experts' team. Therefore, the applicants are kindly requested to submit separate technical and financial offers under each LOT.

The proposals shall be submitted electronically, by email, to the following addresses:

Technical Proposal – arcadie_barbarosie@ipp.md, ipp@ipp.md

Financial Proposal – mvarmari@soros.md

Submission deadline: 20 of December 2022, 17.00 (5p.m.), Chisinau time

IPP and SFM will not consider proposals submitted after the deadline.

Please make sure that the technical and financial proposals are submitted in separate files and separate emails, and the financial proposal is password protected. The password shall not be disclosed unless required in written by the Soros Foundation Moldova, at the stage of opening financial offers.

For each separate LOT, a proposal should be submitted separately.

When submitting offers, please make sure that the following information is included in the email subject line:

- **for technical offer - Subject: TO_LOT no.XX_RFP.2022.IPP.02_Name of applicant**
- **for financial offer - Subject: FO_LOT no.XX_RFP.2022.IPP.02_Name of applicant**

After submitting the proposals, please make sure that IPP and/or the SFM have sent you a confirmation email. The Institute and the Foundation are only responsible for confirmed offers.

An applicant may withdraw, replace, or modify the proposal after it has been submitted at any time prior to the submission deadline, by sending a written notice to the IPP. The replaced or amended offer must be submitted with the notification.

All notices must be submitted in accordance with the submission procedure, clearly marking them by adding the words "WITHDRAWAL" "REPLACEMENT" or "MODIFICATION" to the subject line of the email.

The Proposals will be valid for 30 days from the moment of submission.

THE TECHNICAL OFFER (TO)

The Technical Offer (dated and signed by the applicant) will be presented in English, using Form A ([available for download as a separate file](#)).

The Technical Offer will include:

- The cover letter (max. 2000 words) shall reflect all qualifications required, but most important it shall demonstrate a genuine interest for the mission and dedication for the selected field of experience. A promising cover letter shall demonstrate the applicant's ability to "freely swim" in the pool of challenges edged by freedom of expression vs manipulation, information hybrid threats and warfare, security vs propaganda and the limitations of freedom of expression accepted under ECHR, ECtHR case law, and other international standards. An ideal candidate shall demonstrate knowledge of best ways to build balance between freedom of expression, free flow of information and safeguards against manipulation and related hybrid threats through legal means in courts of law, sanctions or other legal limitations imposed by law enforcement agencies. (see Terms of Reference)
- Proof of studies
- CV with the specification of the field of expertise
- List of research and reports in the field of freedom of expression or information hybrid threats
- List of publications with the link, if available
- Tentative activity plan with the detailed description of actions, in accordance with the Terms of Reference requests.

Note: The legal entity applicant will additionally submit the CV of the organization and make proof of experience in conducting comparable missions, by adding a selected list of previously implemented projects and references, if available. IPP and SFM might require additional information, which will demonstrate the organization's capacities and reliability, (ex. recent audit reports).

However, IPP and SFM will primarily focus on the quality and experience of the individual expert/experts nominated by the legal entity. Therefore, even if the applicant is a legal entity, IPP and SFM will first evaluate the individual expert/s' capacity nominated by the legal entity. The capacity and experience of the legal entity is subsidiary. When the application of the legal entity is successful, the service agreement is signed with the legal entity, which bares the whole responsibility for the successful completion of the given tasks.

THE FINANCIAL OFFER (FO)

The applicant will use **Form B. Financial Offer** ([available for download as a separate file](#)).

The **Financial Offer** will include the **amount requested in USD for conducting the research**.

The offer must be dated and signed by the applicant, then scanned and submitted.

All the amounts stated in the Financial Offer are considered Gross Amounts, meaning Fee Before Tax.

These amounts are subject to:

- 12% Income Tax and 9% Medical Insurance for residents.
- 12% Income Tax for non-residents.



Note: Applicants (non-residents) able to provide a Certificate confirming their tax residence, officially issued by the Tax Authority of their country of residence, in order to apply the Convention/Agreement for the avoidance of double taxation between their state and the Republic of Moldova (in case of existence of such a Convention/Agreement), will be exempted from paying local income tax in the amount of 12%.

EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

The evaluation score (maximum 100 points) will represent a sum of the score obtained by the Technical Offer (maximum 75 points) and the Financial Offer (maximum 25 points).

The evaluation of the proposals will be carried out in two stages:

1. Review of the technical offers in accordance with the scoring criteria, including verification of compliance with the request for proposals.
2. Review of financial offers and calculation of the score, in accordance with the calculation formula.

In the **first stage**, the Technical Offer (TO) submitted by each applicant, will be checked to determine whether they are complete in compliance with to the minimum compliance requirements.

After the applications have been validated by the Institute procurement committee members, they will be submitted for evaluation.

The Technical Offers will be evaluated by independent experts and employees of the Institute and the Foundation, and the results of the evaluation will be presented at the stage of opening the financial offers, in an online meeting with applicants invited to participate. The applicants will be additionally notified about the date, time, and the online platform of participating in the meeting.

The Technical Offers scoring criteria:

#	Evaluation Criteria	Points to be given	Maximum points
1.	<i>Qualifications of applicants</i>		10
1.1.	University degree in Law, Security studies or other relevant discipline. Advanced degrees in Int. Human Rights Law is an asset (please focus on the selected LOT)	University Degree – 2 pts Master's /Ph.D. up to 3 pts	5
1.2.	Strong analytical, organizational, and teamwork skills	Up to 2 pts	2
1.3.	Excellent command of English, knowledge of Romanian/Russian is an asset	English – 1 pt for LOT 1 and LOT 2, and up to 2 pts for LOT 3. Romanian and/or Russian – up to 2 pts for LOT 1 and LOT 2, and 1 pt for LOT 3.	3
2.	<i>Relevance of specialized knowledge and experience</i>		25
2.1.	At least 3 years of professional experience at the international level (LOT 1 and 2) or at national level (LOT 3), on freedom of expression and information hybrid threats	3 years – 2 pts Each additional 3 years – 1 pt Up to max 4 pts	4
2.2.	Progressive experience in counteracting propaganda via mass-media, social	Up to 8 pts	8

	networks and/or other online platforms, building resilience against manipulation, propaganda, and other hybrid threats.		
2.3.	Previous experience in evaluation of implementation and/or development of policy documents on counteracting manipulation and fakes, and development of related legislation, training programs for law enforcement and/or legal community	Up to 13 pts	13
3.	<i>Proposed Approach and Implementation Plan</i>		40
3.1.	Knowledge of the country or regional context (Eastern Europe and Eurasia) and current challenges in counteracting propaganda and manipulation, hybrid information threats.	Up to 8 pts	8
3.2.	Description of the Applicant's approach and methodology for meeting the requirements of the Terms of Reference	Up to 12 pts	12
3.3.	Description of relevant experience in designing and implementing programs that address disinformation, manipulation, and propaganda, or strengthening human rights across the digital ecosystem, and how it can be applied and used for the Terms of Reference requirements	Up to 12 pts	12
3.4.	Understanding the specifics of the international human rights protection mechanisms, as well as concepts of propaganda and manipulation methods applied in the target region.	Up to 8pts	8
Total			75

The minimum qualification score for the Technical Offer - 40 points.

In the **second stage**, the Procurement Commission will review only the Financial Offers (FO) of the applicants that meet the minimum qualification score following the evaluation of the technical offers, mentioned above. Applicants will receive an e-mail from the Soros Foundation Moldova, requiring to submit the password for their financial offer to the following address: mvarmari@soros.md.

During a public meeting (videoconference), the results of the evaluation of the technical offers will be presented and the financial offers of each applicant will be announced.

The evaluation of the financial offer is carried out in accordance with a unique calculation formula, as follows:

Variables:

Σ_{offer} the amount proposed in the financial offer;
 Σ_{max} amount proposed in the highest financial offer;



Σ_{min} the amount proposed in the lowest financial offer;
 P_{fin_max} the maximum value of the financial offer (% of the financial offer) from the total score;
 P_{teh_max} the maximum value of the technical offer (% of the financial offer) from the total score.
Financial offer score = $P_{fin_max} * \Sigma_{min} / \Sigma_{offer}$
The maximum total score is equal to **Max total score = $P_{teh_max} + P_{fin_max}$** ;

SIGNING THE SERVICE AGREEMENT AND THE PAYMENT

The proposal evaluated with the highest score (Technical Offer + Financial Offer) will be declared the winning offer.

Based on the results of the competition, the Institute will sign a service agreement with the applicant that submitted the winning proposal. The agreement will have legal effects starting from January 3, 2023 and will end in March 31, 2023 at the latest.

Payments will be made by bank transfers in the currency of the contract, in 1 installment, only upon the Institute's acceptance of the work performed. The terms of payment shall be within thirty (30) days, after receipt of invoice and certification of acceptance of work issued by the proper authority of the Institute for Public Policy.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND PROTECTION OF PERSONAL DATA

The offers entered in the competition will contain, directly or indirectly, personal data. The Institute for Public Policy and the Soros Foundation Moldova will ensure the confidentiality of personal data in the process of collecting, processing, and storing them. The Institute and the Foundation will process personal data under the conditions provided by the Law on the Protection of Personal Data.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The fundamental principles that the Institute for Public Policy wishes to emphasize regarding conflict of interests are:

- All potential or actual conflicts of interest must be declared;
- No person should be in a position to decide on his/her case;
- Self-dealing is prohibited.

ANTIFRAUD AND CORRUPTION

The Institute for Public Policy Moldova and the Soros Foundation Moldova strictly apply the policy of zero tolerance to prohibited practices, including fraud, corruption, complicity, unethical or unprofessional practices, and obstruction of bidders. The Institute requires all applicants to adhere to the highest standard of ethics during the procurement and contract implementation process.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Request for Proposals for two international experts and one national expert to develop a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap for the Republic of Moldova to safeguard freedom of expression against manipulation, propaganda, and related information hybrid threats.

Context.

The Institute for Public Policy is a leading Moldovan NGO which provides independent analysis and encourages open debates to support the development of the Republic of Moldova in the spirit of a democratic, participatory, and pluralist society.

Since its establishment in April 2000, the Institute has become a leading organization in Moldova in the field of policy analysis. Its publications are popular among political leaders, decision-makers, academia, students, political analysts, and journalists. The Institute is one of the main “focal points” for foreign experts visiting the country. The main policy papers and analysis developed by IPP’s experts have been accepted as official policy documents and are quoted extensively by many academia and university researchers, postgraduate and Ph.D. students and are presented in different international fora.

The “**Legal Protection of the Freedom of Expression against Manipulation and Propaganda**” project is a half-year programmed action supported by the Justice and Human Rights Department (JHRD) of the Soros Foundation Moldova that aims to contribute to the legal protection of freedom of expression against fakes, disinformation, and manipulation through adjustment of the legal framework, practices, and procedures in courts of law.

The program has the following *objectives*:

1. To contribute to the development of an efficient and well-balanced system of legal protection of the right to freedom of expression by conducting an in-depth assessment of the legal framework and practices deployed to protect it against manipulation and disinformation, propaganda, and other hybrid information warfare threats, which is currently being spread with impunity via mass-media and social networks.
2. To advance the findings of the assessment and the recommendations/roadmap of actions through a national and/or international advocacy campaign.

Background

The observance of the right to freedom of expression and access to information is a key milestone towards the development of a true democracy. Under a democratic system, citizens and free media have the right to speak, write, and publish information freely, while the tentative of spreading manipulative news and disinformation is prevented.

The recent studies¹ and opinion polls² on media culture and freedom demonstrates that the Republic of Moldova is one of the most exposed and vulnerable to propaganda country in Central and Eastern Europe. Both the society and media have the lowest index of resilience against the foreign-led disinformation campaigns. There is only a small percentage of the population that is aware of the possibility to report fake news and propaganda, while more than a half see the media as being monopolized and deprived of freedom

¹ <https://east-center.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/DRI-report-2021.pdf>

² https://consulting.md/files/reports/46/INTERNEWS_Final_report_24.11.20_RO.pdf

of expression. At the same time, television and online media are the main source of information for Moldovan people about the events of national and international interest.

The continuous and uncontrolled spreading of fake news and manipulation leads to the distortion of reality in the public mind. It became distinctly evident after the Russian Federation attacked Ukraine on February 24th. The socio-political barometer for April 2022³ shows that 43% of Moldovan population consider that Western countries and NATO are responsible for the war in Ukraine, and only 41% - that Russia started the invasion. In the context of the invasion, in March 2022, the Republic of Moldova officially applied⁴ for the EU membership and became an accession candidate, but half of the population consider the application to be no more than a PR show as opposed to a publicly endorsed choice. Thus, propaganda and fake news heavily impact democratization and development by spreading lies and mistrust for European values and benefits.

Legal and institutional resilience against disinformation, manipulation, fake news and propaganda, is very low, as the decision-makers are lacking proper knowledge and competence to safeguard freedom of expression against the falsehood spread with complete impunity in various formats. In 2018, the Moldovan Parliament voted the so-called “anti-propaganda law”⁵. Even though the main purpose was to hinder local TV channels to rebroadcast propagandistic content, the law had several shortcomings, as it targeted exclusively television and avoided online and print platforms with manipulative content. The law was repealed in 2020. In June 2022, the parliament made the second attempt to find a legal way of protecting the population against fake and manipulative news, by developing and presenting to the public discussions a draft Law on information security⁶. The draft law introduced the notion of “disinformation” and prohibited the audio-visual programs that justify war and deny crimes against humanity. However, it was strongly criticized by the civil society since it had a very weak mechanism of implementation.

The legal community needs more comprehensive instruments to combat fakes and manipulative content. It is challenging for judges to analyse and issue decisions in cases related to propaganda and fake news dissemination, as they risk suppressing freedom of expression.

Objectives. IPP will hire a team of experts (two international and one national) to jointly develop, submit, and publicly present a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap for the Republic of Moldova to effectively protect its people against propaganda, manipulation, disinformation, and fakes currently spread with impunity, and suggest best routes to establish a sustainable balance between the right to freedom of expression and information, on one hand, and legal barriers in front of manipulation, disinformation, and fakes’ avalanche. IPP and its donor consider that the current status-quo represents a major security risk for which no adequate legal response is immediately available.

Under the direct supervision of the Institute for Public Policy and the Justice and Human Rights Department of the Soros Foundation Moldova, the international expert, assisted and consulted by a national expert, will develop and present a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap to improve effective legal protection of freedom of expression against manipulation, disinformation, and propaganda according to best international practices, European practices, ECHR standard, and ECtHR case law. The Needs Assessment will assess the quality and efficiency of Moldovan legal instruments, and the capacity of the justice delivery sector and the law enforcement to counter propaganda, manipulation, disinformation, and fakes. The target group will consist of judges, prosecutors, SC actors and law enforcement agencies relevant for the field. The other part

³ [https://imas.md/pic/archives/36/\[imas\]%20barometru%20socio-politic_aprilie%202022-ENG.pdf](https://imas.md/pic/archives/36/[imas]%20barometru%20socio-politic_aprilie%202022-ENG.pdf)

⁴ <https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/moldovan-president-says-moldova-applies-eu-membership-2022-03-03/>

⁵ https://www.legis.md/cautare/getResults?doc_id=33713&lang=ro#

⁶ <https://www.parlament.md/LegislationDocument.aspx?Id=bff896ee-03ad-4bb4-88a4-aeba9d2085bd>



of the Needs Assessment will target security and safety sectors. It will assess the breaches and brakes produced by fakes, disinformation, and manipulative content in the security sector, and propose short-, medium-, and long-term resilience measures.

To achieve the project's goal, IPP hereby invites interested candidates to submit a Proposal for this Request for Proposals (RFP) for the following 3 lots (see detailed terms of references below):

- **LOT 1: International Expert on freedom of expression and information**
- **LOT 2: International expert on hybrid threats and information warfare**
- **LOT 3: National Expert on freedom of expression and information**

LOT 1: International Expert on Freedom of Expression and information to develop a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap towards effective protection of freedom of expression against manipulation, disinformation, fake news, and propaganda in the Republic of Moldova.

The Institute for Public Policy hereby invites an individual International Expert on Freedom of Expression and information to develop a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap towards effective protection of freedom of expression against manipulation, disinformation, fake news, and propaganda in the Republic of Moldova.

The selected international freedom of expression and information expert will have the following tasks:

- develop the initial concept and methodology (methods and work techniques). The methodology will include at least desk reviews, interviews, and focus groups with relevant stakeholders, recommended by IPP and SFM. The national expert will advise the international expert on best candidates for in-depth interviews and meetings (ex., public officials, private persons, journalists, lawyers, law enforcement agents, judges, prosecutors, SC leaders and human rights defenders)
- analyze available relevant national documents (laws, by-laws, case law, academic research papers, collection of journalists' investigations) for a qualitative desk review
- analyze data according to the developed methodology
- develop the Draft Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap and present them for consultation to IPP and SFM for review and feedback
- Following the feedback received from IPP and SFM on the draft Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap, adjust and review them, if necessary
- conduct individual interviews, focus groups and other meetings as necessary for the successful completion of the mission
- present preliminary findings and conclusions to a limited number of stakeholders in a closed online meeting, collect and insert relevant feedback and proposals for improvement of the draft documents
- develop the final version of the Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap (the final document will not exceed 80 pages, except attachments: size A4, Calibri 11, line spacing – 1.0 pt, spacing before – 0 pt, after – 8 pt)
- present the findings of the Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap in a public offline event

The specific objectives of the Legal Needs Assessment are:

- to analyze national relevant legislation and practices of protecting freedom of expression against the dissemination of fakes and propaganda in comparison with applicable international legal standards. The analysis will mainly focus on prevention and sanctioning.
- to conduct interviews and focus groups with mass-media representatives, National Audiovisual Council, civil society representatives, judges, prosecutors, and other relevant stakeholders.
- to identify potential gaps, shortcomings, and solutions for resilience focused on policies, legal framework, criminal and non-criminal proceedings aimed to protect Moldova and its people against fake news, propaganda, and related hybrid threats.
- to develop a Roadmap that will form the basement for national policies to efficiently protect against fakes and propaganda.

The document will have the following tentative structure:



- Summary
- Introduction
- Description of methodology
- International framework analysis
- National framework analysis, with shortcomings, gaps and challenges identified
- Conclusion and recommendations
- Roadmap with detailed action plan to efficiently protect freedom of expression against manipulation and propaganda. The roadmap shall focus on policies/legal framework and means of implementation.

Expected deliverables:

- The experts will jointly submit one document, tentatively entitled “Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap for the Republic of Moldova to effectively protect its people against propaganda, manipulation, disinformation, and related hybrid threats” consisting of two parts: 1. Critical Legal Needs Assessment report on existing national instruments, legislation, and practices; 2. A Roadmap to propose necessary measures and/or plan of actions for national stakeholders including but not limited to the Legislators, Government, Judiciary, Prosecution service, National Audio-Visual Council;
- A final detailed activity report to reflect on the work conducted during the proposed timeframe.

Teamwork

The international expert on freedom of expression will work in collaboration with the second international expert on hybrid threats and information warfare and will be assisted by a national expert (both to be selected). The team members will have the same number of working days and joint deliverables.

Arrangements

The international expert on legal protection of freedom of expression will report to the Executive Director of the Institute for Public Policies and the Head of the Justice and Human Rights Department of the Soros Foundation Moldova.

IPP, SFM and the national expert will facilitate team meetings, focus groups, and interviews with relevant national stakeholders. IPP and the JHRD will analyze and provide feedback on every deliverable.

The international expert is expected to travel two times to Moldova: the first time- for field work for a maximum of 5 days and the second time - for the public presentation of the findings and recommendations. IPP will cover travel and accommodation costs.

Timeframe

The expert should start working in January 2023 and end no later than end of March 2023, for maximum of 20 working days.

Job knowledge:

- In-depth knowledge of international standards on freedom of expression.
- Excellent knowledge of international human rights protection mechanisms.
- Good knowledge of propaganda concepts, manipulation, and disinformation methods applied internally or exported by countries with low media freedom index.
- Knowledge of the country or regional context (Eastern Europe and Eurasia) and current challenges in counteracting/building resilience against propaganda, manipulation, and disinformation.

Required experience



- University degree in European Law, International Human Rights law, or other relevant discipline. Advanced degrees in related socio-legal fields are a strong asset.
- At least 5 years of professional experience at the international level in human rights work focused on expression and information.
- Progressive experience with research, analysis, field work, focused on protecting freedom of expression and/or counteracting propaganda.
- Previous experience in evaluation of implementation and/or development of policy documents on expression, information, media.
- Strong analytical, organizational, and teamwork skills.

Excellent command of English, knowledge of Romanian/Russian is an asset.

Performance indicators

The expert's work will be evaluated based on the following performance indicators:

- The expertise delivered with accuracy and top-level responsibility.
- Compliance with the established timelines.
- Demonstration of excellent cooperation with IPP, JHRD and other counterparts. Act as a team member rather than as an external expert.
- Demonstration of proactive attitude and interest and keeping constant interaction and communication with stakeholders and partners.
- Deliver "Aha moment" conclusions and recommendations for national policy and decision makers.

LOT 2: International Expert on hybrid threats and information warfare to develop a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap towards effective protection of freedom of expression against manipulation, disinformation, fake news, and propaganda in the Republic of Moldova.

The Institute for Public Policy hereby invites an individual international expert of hybrid threats and information warfare to submit a Proposal to this Request of Proposals (RFP) to conduct a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap towards effective protection of freedom of expression against manipulation, disinformation, and propaganda in the Republic of Moldova.

The selected international expert on hybrid threats and information warfare will have the following tasks:

- develop the initial concept and methodology (methods and work techniques). The methodology will include at least desk reviews, interviews, and focus groups with relevant stakeholders, recommended by IPP and SFM. The national expert will advise the international expert on best candidates for in-depth interviews and meetings. (ex., public officials, private persons, journalists, lawyers, law enforcement agents, judges, prosecutors, SC leaders, and human rights defenders)
- analyze available relevant national documents (laws, by-laws, case law, academic research papers, collection of journalists' investigations) for a qualitative desk review.
- analyze data according to the developed methodology.
- develop the Draft Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap and present them for consultation to IPP and JHRD for review and feedback.
- Following the feedback received from the IPP and SFM on the draft Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap, adjust and review them, if necessary.
- conduct individual interviews, focus groups, and other meetings as necessary for the successful completion of the mission.
- present preliminary findings and conclusions to a limited number of stakeholders in a closed online meeting, collect and insert relevant feedback and proposals for improvement of the draft documents.
- develop the final version of the Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap (the final document will not exceed 80 pages, except attachments: size A4, Calibri 11, line spacing – 1.0 pt, spacing before – 0 pt, after – 8 pt)
- present the findings of the Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap in a public offline event.

The specific objectives of the Legal Needs Assessment are:

- to analyze national relevant legislation and practices of protecting freedom of expression against the dissemination of fakes and propaganda, manipulation, and disinformation in comparison with applicable international legal standards. The analysis will mainly focus on prevention and sanctioning.
- to conduct interviews and focus groups with mass-media representatives, National Audiovisual Council, civil society representatives, judges, prosecutors, law enforcement agents, governmental officials, and other relevant stakeholders.
- to identify potential gaps, shortcomings, and propose solutions for resilience focused on legal policies, legal framework, criminal and non-criminal proceedings aimed to protect Moldova and its people against disinformation, fake news, propaganda, and related hybrid threats.

- to develop a Roadmap that will form the basement for national policies to build resilience against information related hybrid threats and exploitation of freedom of expression.

The document will have the following tentative structure:

- Summary
- Introduction
- Description of methodology
- International framework analysis
- National framework analysis, with shortcomings, gaps and challenges identified
- Conclusion and recommendations
- A Roadmap with detailed action plan to efficiently protect freedom of expression against manipulation and propaganda. The roadmap shall focus on policies/legal framework and means of implementation.

Expected deliverables:

- The experts will jointly submit one document, tentatively entitled “Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap for the Republic of Moldova to effectively protect its people against propaganda, manipulation, disinformation, and related hybrid threats” consisting of two parts: 1. Critical Legal Needs Assessment report on existing national instruments, legislation and practices; 2. A Roadmap to propose necessary measures and/or plan of actions for national stakeholders including but not limited to the Legislators, Government, Judiciary, Prosecution service, National Audio-Visual Council;
- A final detailed activity report to reflect on the work conducted during the proposed timeframe.

Teamwork

The international expert on hybrid threats and information warfare will work in collaboration with the second international expert on freedom of expression and will be assisted by a national expert (both to be selected). The team members will have the same number of working days and joint deliverables.

Arrangements

The international expert on hybrid threats and information warfare will report to the Executive Director of the Institute for Public Policies and the Head of the Justice and Human Rights Department of the Soros Foundation Moldova.

IPP, SFM, and the national expert will facilitate team meetings, focus groups and interviews with relevant national stakeholders. IPP and the JHRD will analyze and provide feedback on every deliverable.

The international expert is expected to travel two times to Moldova: the first time - for field work for a maximum of 5 days and the second time - for the public presentation of the findings and recommendations. IPP will cover travel and accommodation costs.

Timeframe

The expert should start working in January 2023 and end no later than end of March 2023, for maximum of 20 working days.

Job knowledge:

- In-depth knowledge of hybrid threats targeting political, economic, civil, information domain by exploiting freedom of expression and information’s vulnerabilities. Security Standards and/or best practices
- Excellent knowledge of international security standards



- Good knowledge of international human rights protection mechanisms
- Demonstrated capacity to understand and decrypt hybrid actions and actors, their modus operandi with the following tools: propaganda, manipulation, and disinformation
- Knowledge of the country or regional context (Eastern Europe and Eurasia) and current challenges in counteracting/building resilience against information hybrid threats

Required experience:

- University degree/post graduate degree in Security studies, International Law or European Law, or other relevant discipline. Advanced degrees in International Human Rights Law is an asset
- At least 3 years of professional experience at the international level in countering hybrid security threats and freedom of expression vulnerabilities
- Progressive experience in counteracting, decrypting propaganda, manipulation, and disinformation through mass-media, social networks and/or other online platforms
- Previous experience in evaluation of implementation and/or development of policy documents, tuned to protect freedom of expression against information hybrid threats and warfare
- Strong analytical, organizational, and teamwork skills
- Excellent command of English, knowledge of Romanian/Russian is an asset

Performance indicators

The expert's work will be evaluated based on the following performance indicators:

- Delivering outputs and expertise with accuracy and top-level responsibility.
- Compliance with the established timelines.
- Demonstration of excellent cooperation with IPP, JHRD, and other counterparts. Act as a team member rather than as an external expert.
- Demonstration of proactive attitude and interest and keeping constant interaction and communication with stakeholders and partners.
- Deliver "Aha moment" conclusions and recommendations for national policy and decision makers.

LOT 3: National Legal Expert on freedom of expression to assist two international experts to develop a Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap towards effective protection of freedom of expression against manipulation, disinformation, fake news, and propaganda

The Institute for Public Policy hereby invites individual national legal experts on freedom of expression to submit a Proposal to this Request of Proposals (RFP) to assist two international experts to conduct a Legal Needs Assessment and develop a Roadmap to improve effective protection of freedom of expression against manipulation and propaganda.

The selected national expert will have the following tasks:

- Assist two international experts to develop the initial concept and methodology (methods and work techniques). The methodology will include at least desk reviews, interviews, and focus groups with relevant stakeholders, recommended by IPP and JHRD. The national expert will also suggest names of best candidates for in-depth interviews and meetings with international experts (e.g. public officials, private persons, journalists, lawyers, law enforcement agents, judges, prosecutors, SC leaders, and human rights defenders)
- Collect and provide international experts with available relevant national documents (laws, by-laws, case law, academic research papers, collection of journalists' investigations) for a qualitative desk review.
- Assist international experts to analyze data according to the developed methodology.
- Contribute to the development of the Draft Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap and present them for consultation to IPP and JHRD for review and feedback.
- Following the feedback received from the IPP and SFM on the draft Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap, assist international experts to adjust and review them, if necessary.
- Assist international consultants and the IPP to organize and conduct individual interviews, focus groups and other meetings as necessary for the successful completion of international experts' mission.
- Assist international experts to make a preliminary presentation to a limited number of stakeholders in a closed online meeting, collect and insert relevant feedback and proposals for improvement of the draft documents.
- Contribute to the development of the final versions of the Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap (the final document will not exceed 80 pages, except attachments: size A4, Calibri 11, line spacing – 1.0 pt, spacing before – 0 pt, after – 8 pt)
- Deliver a presentation of findings of the Legal Needs Assessment and the Roadmap in a public offline event

The specific objectives of the Legal Needs Assessment are:

- To analyze national relevant legislation and practices of protecting freedom of expression against the dissemination of fakes and propaganda in comparison with applicable international legal standards. The analysis will mainly focus on prevention and sanctioning.
- To conduct interviews and focus groups with mass-media representatives, National Audiovisual Council, civil society representatives, judges, prosecutors, and other relevant stakeholders.
- To identify potential gaps, shortcomings, and solutions to improve legal framework, criminal and non-criminal proceedings aimed to protect against fake news and propaganda.



- To develop a Roadmap that will form the basement for national policies to efficiently protect against fakes and propaganda.

The document will have the following tentative structure:

- Summary
- Introduction
- Description of methodology
- International framework analysis
- National framework analysis, with shortcomings, gaps and challenges identified
- Conclusion and recommendations
- A Roadmap with a detailed action plan to efficiently protect freedom of expression against manipulation and propaganda. The Roadmap shall focus on legal framework and means of implementation.

Expected deliverables:

- The experts will jointly submit one document, tentatively entitled “Legal Needs Assessment and a Roadmap for the Republic of Moldova to effectively protect its people against propaganda, manipulation and fakes” consisting of two parts: 1. Critical Legal Needs Assessment report on existing national instruments, legislation and practices; 2. A Roadmap to propose necessary measures and/or plan of actions for national stakeholders including but not limited to the Legislators, Government, Judiciary, Prosecution service, National Audio-Visual Council;
- A final detailed activity report to reflect on the work conducted during the proposed timeframe.

Teamwork

The national expert will work in collaboration and will assist two international experts, one specialized in informational security and another one in freedom of expression (both to be selected). The team members will have the same number of working days and joint deliverables.

Timeframe

The expert should start working in January 2023 and end no later than end of March 2023, for maximum of 20 working days.

Arrangements

The national expert will report to the Executive Director of the Institute for Public Policies and the Head of the Justice and Human Rights Department of the Soros Foundation Moldova. IPP will assist the national expert by facilitating team meetings, focus groups and interviews, as well as identifying and selecting stakeholders. IPP and JHRD will analyze and provide feedback on every deliverable.

Job knowledge

- In-depth knowledge of the system of Moldovan and international legislation on the protection of the right to freedom of expression, sanctioning and preventing the dissemination of fakes and propaganda, as well as on information hybrid threats.
- Excellent knowledge of the national human rights protection mechanisms as adjusted to international human rights standards.
- Understanding of propaganda, manipulation, and disinformation machinery and mechanisms currently used and applied in Moldova via mass-media and social networks.

Required experience



- University degree in Law, or other relevant discipline. Advanced degrees in International Human Rights Law are a strong asset.
- At least 5 years of professional experience in Moldova.
- Previous work experience in the human rights field is a strong asset.
- Previous experience in evaluation of implementation and/or development of the policy documents, especially in safeguarding human rights and freedom of expression.
- Strong analytical, organizational, and teamwork skills.
- Excellent command of Romanian and English, knowledge of Russian is a strong asset.

Performance indicators

The expert's work will be evaluated based on the following performance indicators:

- The expertise delivered with accuracy and top-level responsibility.
- Compliance with the established timelines.
- Demonstration of excellent cooperation with IPP, JHRD, and other counterparts. Act as a team member rather than as an external expert.
- Demonstration of proactive attitude and interest and keeping constant interaction and communication with stakeholders and partners.
- Deliver "Aha moment" conclusions and recommendations for national policy and decision makers.



FORM A. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

A1. APPLICANT'S STATEMENT

Applicant:	[To be completed by the applicant] Please specify your status: individual expert or legal entity.	Date:	Select the date
RFP reference:	2022.IPP.02		
	PLEASE SPECIFY LOT NR YOU APPLY FOR		
Information about the applicant's representative	Name and position: [To be completed by the applicant] E-mail: [To be completed by the applicant]		

I hereby propose to provide the services in accordance with your RFP No.2022.IPP.02 and my proposal. I submit the proposal, which includes the Technical Offer and the Financial Offer, sent in separate files and separate emails.

I declare that all information in this proposal is true and accept that any misinterpretation or misrepresentation contained in this proposal may result in my disqualification.

The Services will be provided in accordance with the Application Documents and Terms of Reference.

The undersigned certifies that he/she is duly authorized to sign this proposal and undertakes to execute it if the Institute accepts this proposal.

I understand and acknowledge that you are under no obligation to accept any proposal that you receive.

Name: _____

Date and signature: _____

A2. TECHNICAL OFFER FORMAT

Applicant:	[To be completed by the applicant]	Date:	Select the date
RFP reference:	2022.IPP.02 PLEASE SPECIFY LOT NR YOU APPLY FOR. PLEASE, LIST THE DOCUMENTS INCLUDED IN THE TECHNICAL OFFER ONE BY ONE.		

The technical offer is to be prepared according to this form. Where the applicant is required to use a specific approach under the Terms of Reference, he/she must describe how it intends to comply with the requirements.

The technical offer shall include, but shall not be limited to the following:

- The cover letter (max. 2000 words), which should reflect all qualifications required (see Terms of Reference);
- Proof of studies;
- CV with the specification of the field of expertise;
- List of research studies/ reports/ projects in the field of freedom of expression, counteracting disinformation and informational hybrid threats;
- List of publications with the link, if available;
- Detailed tentative activity plan with the chronological description of actions, in accordance with the Terms of Reference requests.

The legal entity applicant will additionally submit the CV of the organization and make proof of experience in conducting comparable missions.

Note: The Applicant may provide comments and suggestions for improvement regarding the Terms of Reference or additional services to be provided beyond the requirements of the Terms of Reference, if any.

Date and signature



FORM B. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

B1. DETAILS REGARDING THE PREPARATION OF THE FINANCIAL OFFER

The Applicant must prepare the Financial Offer following the format below and submit it in a separate email from the Technical Offer as indicated in the Instructions for Applicants. Any financial information provided in the technical proposal may disqualify the applicant.

Make sure the financial proposal is password protected. The password will not be disclosed unless requested in writing by the Soros Foundation Moldova.

COSTS

The Financial Offer should align with the requirements of the Terms of Reference and the applicant's Technical Offer and will include all expenses related to the performance of the tasks indicated in the Terms of Reference.

All the amounts stated in the Financial Offer are considered Gross Amounts, meaning Fee Before Tax.

These amounts are subject to:

- 12% Income Tax and 9% Medical Insurance for residents.
- 12% Income Tax for non-residents.

ERRORS IN FINANCIAL OFFERS

For Financial Offers that have been opened, the Soros Foundation Moldova checks and corrects arithmetical errors as follows:

1. if there is a discrepancy between the unit price and the line item total obtained by multiplying the unit price by the quantity, the unit price prevails and the line item total is corrected
2. if there is an error in a total corresponding to the addition or subtraction of subtotals, the subtotals prevail and the total is corrected.

If the applicant does not accept the correction of errors made by the Foundation, the proposal will be rejected.



B2. FINANCIAL OFFER FORMAT

Applicant:	[To be completed by the applicant]	Date:	Select the date
RFP reference:	2022.IPP.02 PLEASE SECIFY THE LOT NR YOU APPLY FOR		

I hereby propose to provide the services in accordance with your RFP No.2022.IPP.02 and my proposal. I present the proposal, which includes the Technical Offer and the Financial Offer, sent in separate files and separate emails.

I declare that all information in this proposal is true and accept that any misinterpretation or misrepresentation contained in this proposal may result in my disqualification.

The services will be provided in accordance with the Application documents and with the Terms of Reference.

Proposal currency: USD

Table: Financial Offer

	Services	Fee rate	Nr. of days	Total amount
		A	B	C=AxB
1				
2				
3				
4				
Total				

Note: Additional lines can be added if necessary

The undersigned certifies that he/she is duly authorized to sign this proposal and undertakes to execute it if the Institute accepts this proposal.

I understand and acknowledge that you are under no obligation to accept any proposal that you receive.

Name: _____

Date and signature: _____