Request for Proposals

**Issue Date:** November 1, 2022  
**Proposal Due Date:** December 1, 2022  
**Anticipated Award Date:** January 15, 2023  
**Budget Ceiling:** $18,000 USD, including VAT

IREX Fonds (International Research & Exchanges Board) is seeking quotes from qualified respondents to serve as IREX’s lead consultant or firm for an impact evaluation on trainings and learning under the Media Literacy in the Baltics Program, supported by the U.S. Department of State. IREX seeks a lead consultant or firm who can lead the impact evaluation in all three Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania). Local applicants with language capabilities in Estonian, Latvian, Lithuanian, and Russian will be given preference to serve as lead. IREX reserves the right to select additional consultants or firms to compliment the work of the lead firm under this bid.

The anticipated award(s) will be a firm fixed price contract. IREX reserves the right to withdraw this request for proposal at any time up to award of the contract.

**Background on the program:**

IREX’s proven [Learn to Discern](#) (L2D) training model equips people to identify manipulation, distinguish disinformation from facts, and responsibly share content. Learn to Discern does not teach people what media to consume – instead, it teaches people how to effectively engage with information. In the Baltics, IREX works with **nine universities** to develop and implement specialized coursework for journalism students incorporating L2D methodology: "Journalism in the Era of Disinformation" (JEDI). In addition, IREX works with **four teacher training institutes** to integrate media literacy, critical information engagement, and digital literacy into their curricula. In summer 2022, IREX launched the Baltics adaptation of the "**Very Verified**" online media literacy course and is using a blended learning approach to train participants across generations and communities in partnership with **six youth-led organizations**.

**Required activities and deliverables:**

- Participate in design meeting to review evaluation design template and program change process
- Participate in regular consultations with IREX program team throughout evaluation period, including brief weekly check-ins
- Develop methodologies toward answering learning questions and finalize in consultation with IREX
- Develop, oversee, and execute plan for qualitative data collection, including:
  - Conducting separate focus groups with university and Very Verified training participants per country (minimum six groups, at least two per country)
  - Conducting key informant interviews with university faculty (minimum 13 interviews, at least one per university, with program lead plus at least one additional faculty member per institution) and youth-led partner organizations (minimum 6 interviews, at least one per organization)
• Work with IREX to present quantitative data (to be provided by IREX) alongside results of qualitative assessments¹
• Review additional project data including partner reports and mid-program evaluation conducted in 2020
• Develop draft report and accompanying PPT presentation (in English) including an executive summary with key findings, evaluation methodology, results, key recommendations for stakeholders, including: university faculty and leaders (distinguish recommendations for journalism/communications and teacher training institute programming), government/ministry partners, and civil society/media partners, as applicable, and references/citations
• Develop final report and presentation incorporating comments from IREX
• Other related tasks as assigned.

Learning Questions to Guide Evaluation:

1. What has been the impact on students of the university courses and Very Verified training participants through the Media Literacy in the Baltics program?
2. How do students (including communications/journalism students, future teachers, and students from other majors) report on the impact of media literacy courses and/or Very Verified trainings in their daily lives?
3. To what degree do students apply their skills and knowledge in media literacy to spreading awareness and practical resources for use by the general public in combatting disinformation? What are their motivations and challenges?
4. What system changes occur in participating universities and their communities in awareness, dialogue, and commitment to promote media and information literacy?
   a. Subquestion for teacher training institutes: How has Media Literacy in the Baltics expanded professional education on misinformation and integrated key media and information literacy skills into general education curricula at teacher training institutes? What are instructors’ motivations and challenges?
   b. Subquestion for all institutes: How has Media Literacy in the Baltics supported educators to offer high quality, project-based, creative, and tech-integrated instruction, and measure its impact? Has this practice spread to other coursework or curricula?

The results of the evaluation will be shared via roundtable discussions with stakeholders including government officials, media, education, and civil society partners interested in media literacy policy and practice.

Anticipated Timeline and Deliverables:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Due date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Work plan and approach</td>
<td>One week after signing contract</td>
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¹ Media Literacy in the Baltics conducts pre- and post-survey evaluations to measure the impact of program interventions. IREX will be responsible for cleaning the data and calculating evaluation metrics, while the selected vendor will be expected to analyze and present these quantitative results alongside the qualitative assessment. Quantitative data collection will not be required under this contract.
Finalize approach & develop data collection tools and protocols in consultation with IREX/DC | Two weeks after signing contract
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Finalize data collection tools and protocols | Three weeks after signing contract
Data collection period | Begins four weeks after signing contract
Draft report | Nine weeks after signing contract
Final report | Twelve weeks after signing contract

**Proposal Requirements**

Organizations interested in providing this service must submit a proposal, including a breakdown of costs, which demonstrates the organizations’ capacity to complete the work. Proposals should include the following details:

- A budget in sufficient detail to determine the price elements
- CVs of staff that will be assigned to the project, emphasizing relevant experience and detailed description of roles and responsibilities for this assignment
- A detailed description of the method used to perform the tasks outlined
- Details about the vendor’s capability to fulfill the scope of project
- The type of customer support and technical assistance available for this project
- A list of similar projects with at least three references

All application documents must be in English.

**Proposal Submission**

If you are interested in applying, please e-mail a proposal to Kaspars Ruklis at kruklis@irex.org and write in the subject “impact evaluation proposal.” Late submissions will only be considered if in the best interests of the program. All proposals submitted must be valid for a period of not less than sixty (60) calendar days from the closing date indicated above. Submission of this application indicates approval for IREX to contact references.

**Proposal Evaluation:**

The criteria are listed in descending order starting with the most important factors to be evaluated.

- Sufficiency of methodology outlined given context of evaluation (25%)
- Overall Price Competitiveness (25%)
- Flexibility & Customer Service (15%)
- Creativity in approach (10%)
- Qualifications of key personnel (10%)
- Organizational capacity (10%)
- Past references (5%)

Evaluation and ranking of proposals will be done by IREX. IREX may at its discretion ask for additional information or perform site visits. Issuing this RFP does not commit IREX to select any proposal.

**Renewal**
IREX reserves the right, based on availability of funding and vendor performance, to enter into subsequent contractual agreements with the winning vendor for a period of up to five years without issuing a new RFP.