



USAID MEDIA PROGRAM REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Issue Date: 13 February 2024
Closing Date and Time: 17:00 (Tbilisi time) 12 March 2024
Deadline for Questions: 17:00 (Tbilisi time) 5 March 2024
Anticipated Award Date: 30 March 2024

MEDIA CONSUMPTION REPRESENTATIVE SURVEY

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND

The International Research & Exchanges Board (IREX), under the scope of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID's) USAID Media Program is seeking proposals from qualified firms to conduct a media consumption representative survey.

The five-year USAID Media Program integrates three core objectives:

1. Preserve and strengthen an enabling environment that fosters press freedom and access to information.
2. Increased business innovation and viability of media outlets.
3. Increase the availability of civically relevant, fact-based, independent sources of information.

Throughout the past year and a half, the program has supported locally-led efforts to preserve and strengthen an enabling environment that fosters press freedom and access to information as well as to increase the availability of civically relevant, fact-based, independent sources of information. It has also laid the groundwork for continuing improvements in the Georgian media environment by supporting systematic, evidence-based advocacy for improved media law and regulation driven by Georgian stakeholders.

II. ASSESSMENT BACKGROUND

Georgian media outlets and content creators lack detailed information on audiences and how Georgians are receiving their news and information on a daily basis. This information is critical for development of the media sector and to ensure media are reaching audiences across demographics and geographic locations. Qualitative studies suggest a shift towards online media consumption in the media landscape, yet available quantitative data to support this assertion is limited. The last nationally representative, quantitative study of Georgian media consumption habits was held in [2020](#), during the pandemic.

Media consumption studies show what type of media people are consuming, and how, and can highlight attitudes and practices around media that are useful for media practitioners to know as well as civil society, activists, government and business sectors.

IREX will competitively identify and contract a qualified media research company to conduct a national quantitative media consumption survey and produce a comprehensive report that includes an analysis of the data which is supported by qualitative research such as focus groups and key informant interviews.

The collection of data is anticipated to commence by April 2024. All comprehensive data, including field summaries, tables, and sections of the report, should be submitted to IREX by September 2024.

It is the responsibility of the subcontractor to ensure sufficient planning and resources are allocated to complete high-quality data collection in a timely manner.

Timeline

Date	Data Collection Activity Timeline Subject to Adjustment upon Signing
February 2024	RFP issued for local data collection firm
February 2024	To provide detailed information regarding the RFP and to facilitate the application process, the USAID Media Program will hold an information session. The online session link will be made available later through IREX Georgia's website and Facebook page.
February 2024	Applicants can ask questions via the following email contact.mp.ge@irex.org, through March 5, 2024 , and questions and answers will be shared on a regular basis on the Facebook page of USAID Media Program.
March 2024	Complete contract with local data collection firm
April 2024	Study preparation and planning
May 10, 2024	Local partner provides final draft of research plan, including work plan, confidentiality provisions, quality control plan, interviewer's manual, pilot-testing protocol and plan, and final versions of all data collection instruments
May 30, 2024	Local partner begins data collection
July 15, 2024	Data collection ends
August 7, 2024	Local partner completes data entry, cleaning, and initial analysis and submits data files to IREX
September 10, 2024	Final data sets, tables, and summary reports due to IREX

III. OBJECTIVE

The overall objective of the media consumption representative survey is to gain a better understanding of how Georgian audiences are getting their news and information, from which platforms and for what purposes, which information sources they trust the most, and what kind of gaps exist in Georgian citizens' information needs.

In order to properly understand where audiences are and their media consumption habits, IREX will undertake a national media consumption survey, tentatively planned to be repeated in Year 4 (2026) of the project. The survey will include both quantitative and qualitative analysis of media consumption habits and will be a landmark study for all Georgian media and international partners to reference, as well as for civil society, government, and other actors who want to connect and communicate with the public through media.

The purpose of the research will be to produce a roadmap for Georgian media that will guide them in determining their strategies for developing content and approaches that connect with audiences; and guide business development to navigate the market. Research results and data will also inform the USAID Media Program's implementation approach and planning. It's worth mentioning that such studies have served as useful tools for shaping the strategies of media institutions such as The New York Times, Guardian, Financial Times, and the BBC, to mention a few.

IV. SCOPE OF WORK

Desk Research

The objective of the desk research for the media consumption representative survey is to thoroughly examine and understand the current state of Georgian media, new global trends in media, and the economic and regulatory landscape of the Georgian media sector. This involves analyzing existing media policies and regulations, business models and innovations in media, including social media, identifying any significant changes or developments, and understanding their implications on media consumption and practices. The survey will integrate findings from this desk research with insights gathered from interviews with key stakeholders, ensuring a comprehensive view of the media environment in Georgia.

Deliverables:

1. A data collection plan/instrument that will be used to guide data collection.
2. A detailed analysis of the media landscape in Georgia, including its key players, recent developments, regulatory framework and dominant business models including social media (in English).
3. Draft and final reports on the findings (in English), summarizing the current situation, including visual data representations for each section and analysis of key findings.

Public Opinion Survey

The contractor will conduct ***a media consumption representative survey***. The survey will focus on knowledge and attitudes towards the media, channels of delivery in use, including traditional and new media, media consumption, trust in the media, quality of media content, and civic engagement within media.

The research must examine the media and information consumption landscape, along with its distinct ecosystems in Georgia. This involves a comprehensive examination of Georgian people's regular use

of professional media platforms (TV, web, radio, print) and social media spaces and ecosystems, including Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, and TikTok. The survey will specifically seek to identify the knowledge and attitudes of audiences, but additional qualitative information will also be sourced from media outlets and content creators. It will explore the channels of delivery in use, patterns of media consumption, levels of trust in the media, quality of media content, audience needs, behavior, and engagement within the media sphere.

The survey will look at changes regarding the themes listed above and will allow for disaggregation by type of outcome, sex, rural/urban/capital/ethnicity strata and several other demographic characteristics. The survey should have the following characteristics:

The target population for the survey is the entire adult population of Georgia (18+ years of age), encompassing both urban and rural residents across all municipalities in the country, with the exception of occupied territories, using a representative sampling model.

Sampling units are defined as follows: The Primary Sampling Units (PSU) are electoral precincts. The PSUs should be selected by probability proportional to size within relevant strata. The size of a PSU should be measured according to the number of registered voters inside the PSU. The Secondary Sampling Units (SSUs) should be households within electoral precincts. Households should be selected via the systematic random walk principle. The Final Sampling Units (FSU) will be individuals within households. In each household, one adult respondent should be selected randomly using a Kish grid to be interviewed by an enumerator.

Deliverables:

1. Full dataset of survey responses, cleaned and coded for analysis in Excel and SPSS (in English);
2. Summary of different sets of tables (disaggregated by region, age, gender, education level) and charts/graphs in Excel;
3. Survey documentation (interviewers' manual, data entry and cleaning procedures, sampling and weighting methodology—if relevant, data dictionary) (in English).

Post-Survey Focus Groups

To triangulate the public opinion survey data collected, the data collection firm will be responsible for conducting focus group discussions. Focus group participants will be selected through the opinion survey.

Deliverables:

1. Focus group transcripts.
2. Focus group summary write-ups in English (a summary report, including important quotes).

As with the other deliverables, IREX will perform spot-checks of focus group discussions and of initial write-ups.

Opinion Research of Media Professionals

In addition to the desk review and public opinion survey, the data collection firm will be responsible for getting a clear picture of the state of the Georgian media sector, as reported by the media insiders. The contractor will be responsible for conducting semi-structured interviews with 15 media professionals. IREX will provide the data collection firm with a list of alternate professionals in case some of those interviewed previously are no longer available or have changed professional roles. These professionals include practicing journalists, media business managers, and deans of journalism schools. IREX will provide a list of contacts representing a broad range of media professionals and perspectives. The interview protocol includes questions related to the level of professionalism of media practitioners, the viability of targeted media outlets as businesses, new trends in media, new business models and diversity of channels in media, the quality of university journalism education, and the salience of media associations.

Deliverables:

1. Detailed interview write ups by respondent and question (in English).
2. A coded database of qualitative responses (in English).
3. And a summary of the interviews including useful quotes attributed to stakeholders (in English).

V. PROPOSAL REQUIREMENTS

To accomplish the above tasks, the contractor will be responsible for the following:

1. Developing a detailed work plan and schedule covering enumerator training, instrument pilot testing, data collection, data entry, and data cleaning, as well as associated quality control measures to include supervision, regular check-ins with IREX, and back checks.
2. Reviewing the survey instrument and qualitative interview protocol prior to data collection and discussing any questions or concerns regarding the instruments with IREX prior to enumerator training. IREX will have input into survey and interview questionnaires and will approve all final versions before use.
3. Identifying and training sufficient qualified staff to conduct all aspects of data collection, entry, and cleaning, including:
 - a. Enumerators
 - b. Field Supervisors
 - c. Data Entry/Cleaning Personnel
 - d. Researcher with experience in Analyzing Media Policies/Regulations.
4. Translating instrument changes and preparing and printing all survey materials, including questionnaires and enumerator manuals.
5. Organizing facilities and materials and all other logistics for training for all enumerators and supervisors.

6. Pretesting the survey questionnaire, qualitative interview protocol, and focus group discussion protocol with at least 30 (thirty) survey respondents, 4 interviewees, and 1 focus group in Tbilisi to inform training plans.

7. Planning, managing, supervising, and implementing data collection to include the desk review, survey data collection, qualitative interviews, and focus group discussions.

8. Data Protection:

- a. **Confidentiality:** All data collected, processed, or stored as part of this project will be treated as confidential. Access to sensitive information will be restricted to authorized personnel only, and strict confidentiality agreements will be enforced.
- b. **Security Measures:** Robust security measures will be implemented to prevent unauthorized access to data. This includes encryption of data transmission, secure storage protocols, access controls, and regular security audits.
- c. **Data Retention and Disposal:** Data will be retained only for as long as necessary to fulfill the purposes for which it was collected. At the conclusion of the project, data will be securely disposed of in accordance with established protocols.
- d. **Data Sharing:** Any sharing of data with third parties will be done in compliance with data protection regulations and only with the necessary safeguards in place to protect confidentiality and privacy.

9. Following standard confidentiality protocols:

- a. Having all enumerators read a confidentiality statement to respondents and having all respondents sign a consent statement;
- b. Ensuring all identifying information is included on a cover sheet of the survey;
- c. Removing identifying information following survey completion; and,
- d. Entering identifying and non-identifying information into a dataset separately.

10. Planning, managing, supervising and implementing the following quality assurance protocols:

- a. Daily supervisor reviews of all surveys and interviews for completion and abnormal responses;
- b. Survey/interview back-checks for 10 percent of respondents by supervisors;
- c. Double data entry by separate data entry operators, with manual reconciliation of discrepancies;
- d. Data entry supervisor review of all submitted surveys/interviews for completeness;
- e. Transcription and data entry of all qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions into NVivo;
- f. Data cleaning with internal consistency and range checks to identify potential errors and then analysis of outliers, leading to manual review of paper surveys; and
- g. Correction of outstanding transcription errors.

11. Either submit written weekly progress reports to IREX or participate in weekly conference calls during field data collection and data entry.

12. Submit cleaned quantitative and qualitative datasets and corresponding code books of variable names and value labels by July 30, 2024.

13. Submit summary tables and field reports describing challenges arising during data collection.

Proposals must include a budget in sufficient detail to determine the price elements, resumes of key staff that will be assigned the project, a detailed description of the method used to perform the tasks outlined, and a list of three similar projects, with contact information for the clients.

VI. RESEARCH OUTLINE SUMMARY

Research Methodology	<p>Administer a household survey in all regions of Georgia with a statistically significant sample of citizens included in the household survey to measure knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of citizens throughout regions of Georgia.</p> <p>Conduct interviews with media professionals, journalists, academics, media business representatives etc. to get qualitative information on the stated subject areas.</p> <p>Carry out desk research on the status of the legal, business regulatory, and policy framework for the media in Georgia, which should be supported with interview evidence from media professionals.</p>
Survey Locations	All regions in Georgia, excluding the occupied territories.
Target Respondents	The general public in target regions and Georgian media experts and professionals.
Sampling	<p>For the public opinion survey, the contractor will determine the sample size based on a 95% confidence interval and a margin of error of 5%. citizens will be selected at random from all regions of Georgia. In general, this study will utilize a before-and-after design, a comparison of all treatment region citizens to all control region citizens to better help evaluators understand attribution within this study.</p>
Questionnaires	<p>All data collection instruments have already been designed to minimize bias and promote ease of (1) understanding by respondents, (2) interviewer use, and (3) data processing.</p> <p>The contractor will develop the questionnaires in agreement with IREX and translate it into Georgian. IREX will review these questionnaires and provide slight modifications where necessary. The contractor is responsible for translating all instrument modifications and formatting and printing all paper questionnaires as well as supplemental materials, as relevant.</p>
Data Processing	<p>Double entry of data is required. The data entry error rate must not exceed 3% (subject to independent verification by IREX.)</p> <p>Full data cleaning, including logic checks on the validity of responses and manual reconciliation of data entry errors, is required.</p>
Database Format	Data should be compiled in SPSS with a complete codebook of variable names and value labels. There should be one record for each respondent identified by a unique ID, with a separate dataset mapping unique IDs to

respondent identities. All records must allow for identification of the interviewer, supervisor, and the time/length/location of the interview. The dataset, mapping unique IDs to respondent identities, must be destroyed upon completion of the contract. The contractor must provide certification to IREX that this dataset has been irrecoverably destroyed.

VII. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Any questions concerning this RFP should be submitted in writing no fewer than 5 days prior to the closing date shown above to contact.mp.ge@irex.org and questions and answers will be shared on a regular basis on the Facebook page of USAID Media Program.

To provide detailed information regarding the RFP and to facilitate the application process, the USAID Media Program will hold a public information session. The online session link will be made available through IREX Georgia's website and Facebook page.

Applicants should retain for their records one copy of all enclosures which accompany their application.

The application must be received by USAID Media Program/IREX no later than the closing date listed on the front page of this RFP. Pre-award costs are not allowable and will not be reimbursed. Applications should be submitted in electronic format to the following email address contact.mp.ge@irex.org with “RFP: IREX USAID Media Program: Media Consumption Representative Survey” in the subject line.

VIII. SCORING CRITERIA AND QUALIFICATIONS FOR BIDDERS

Qualified applicants must:

1. Have proven knowledge and experience in conducting baseline and endline surveys through the use of internationally accepted qualitative and quantitative methods, including experience with conducting focus group discussions and desk reviews;
2. Have consultants/employees with strong academic and research backgrounds and excellent analytical skills;
3. Have proven knowledge of the media industry;
4. Have a team experienced in data collection, data entry, editing, and analysis; and
5. Be a registered entity in Georgia.

Previous experience working with USAID evaluations or assessments is also preferred.

Bids will be evaluated on the following:

1. Strength of technical proposal (50 percent) - applicants should show how they will approach the design and execution of the study, demonstrating a comprehensive and detailed research methodology and design tailored to the research objectives and expected outcomes. Additionally, proposals should detail technical expertise, effective research management and adherence to timelines, feasibility, quality assurance and compliance, as well innovation and creative approaches.
2. Quality of staff planning (25 percent)—applicants must provide resumes for the following key staff positions:

- a. Study Manager – Have at least a Master’s Degree (PhD preferred) and a minimum of 10 years of experience overseeing similar studies, preferably for international donor organizations
- b. Survey Manager – Have at least a Bachelor’s Degree (Master’s preferred) and a minimum of 7 years of experience overseeing large population surveys
- c. Interview and Focus Group Discussion Manager – Have at least a Bachelor’s Degree (Master’s preferred) and a minimum of 5 years of experience in qualitative data collection and analysis.
- d. Data Entry/Analysis Manager – Have at least a Master’s Degree and a minimum of 7 years of experience overseeing data entry, cleaning, and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data.

Any changes to the above staff members following contract award will require prior approval by IREX.

3. Feasibility and cost effectiveness of financial proposal (25 percent) – Competitive proposals should fall within the - \$25,000-40,000 range.

IREX reserves the right, based on the availability of funding and contractor’s performance, to enter into subsequent contractual agreements with the winning vendor(s) for a period of up to four years without issuing a new RFP.

Additional Information

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award or commitment on the part of IREX, nor does it commit the USAID Media Program to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application, which are the responsibility of the applicant. IREX reserves the right to fund, in part or in full, any or none of the applications submitted.

Environmental Considerations: Activities supported by the USAID Media Program will not support or engage in construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or renovation work. The USAID Media Program will also not engage in actions that normally have a significant impact on the environment as defined by 22 CFR 216 (2) (d):

- i. Programs of river basin development;
- ii. Irrigation and water management;
- iii. Agricultural land leveling;
- iv. Drainage projects;
- v. Large scale agricultural mechanization;
- vi. Resettlement projects;
- vii. New land development;
- viii. Penetration road building and road improvement;
- ix. Power plants;
- x. Industrial plants; and
- xi. Potable water and sewerage projects

In addition, the USAID Media Program will not support activities that:

- Support project preparation, project feasibility studies, engineering design for activities listed in §216.2(d)(1);
- Affect endangered species;
- Provide support to extractive industries (e.g. mining and quarrying);
- Promote timber harvesting;
- Lead to construction, reconstruction, rehabilitation, or renovation work;
- Support agro-processing or industrial enterprises;
- Provide support for regulatory permitting;
- Lead to privatization of industrial facilities or infrastructure with heavily polluted property;
- Assist the procurement (including payment in kind, donations) or use (including handling, transport, fuel for transport, storage, mixing, loading, application, clean-up of spray equipment, and disposal) of pesticides or activities involving procurement, transport, use, storage, or disposal of toxic materials--pesticides cover all insecticides, fungicides, rodenticides, etc. covered under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act; and/or
- Procure or use genetically modified organisms.

Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.216 procurement of certain telecommunications and video surveillance services or equipment is prohibited.