**TERMS OF REFERENCES**

*Research on joint ad sale networks of small and local media*

About the project

IREX is implementing the USAID Strengthening Media Systems Project (SMS) in Serbia to improve the regulatory, legislative and economic environment for Serbian media. It aims to support the development of a more enabling legal, regulatory and market environment for media, as well as support the development of financial sustainability, innovation, and partnership in the Serbia sector.

This research will be used to inform SMS program and its partners on the most effective modes of local and small media cooperation in joint ad sale, with emphasize on elements that are implementable in Serbian context.

Background

This research aims to support Strengthening Media Systems (SMS) project and its partners to assist small and local media to increase their advertising revenues by joining forces to access advertising sector and increase revenues advertising.

As SMS internal research showed, majority of small and local media in Serbia relies on project co-funding (large portion of surveyed media have in between 40 and 60 % of incomes from this revenue), while advertising represents the smaller part (in between 5 % and 25 %).

In order to become visible for advertisers and media buying agencies, small and local media should explore possibilities to establish cooperative ad sale networks and present their value to advertisers together. Research seeks to identify similar models in Serbia or on markets like Serbian one and to analyze their characteristic, factors that led to their success or failures. It should answer the following questions:

* What are examples of successful joint ad sales networks of local and small media (with focus on digital) that operate on markets similar to Serbia?
* What are successful stories and what factors (both, external and internal) are cause for success?
* What are failed stories and what factors (both, external and internal) are cause for the failure?
* What models of joint ad sale networks would be suitable for Serbian context, with a focus on digital media?

Research result will also inform SMS team on how to assist small and local media to present their value in a measurable and reliable way for advertisers.

Job description

Small scale research will include the following activities:

* Collecting data on existing models and past efforts to establish joint / cooperative ad sale networks, in Serbia and abroad,
* Analysis collected data to identify the reasons for success / failures, taking into account context in which these initiatives have been implemented,
* Identifying the most functional mechanisms of revenue collection and distribution,
* Consultations with the most important stakeholders in Serbia (media buyers, advertisers),
* Proposing the most suitable models for Serbia and asses each model in line with the findings and contextual factors.

Expected deliverables and timeline

The following deliverables are expected to be produced within the scope of this research:

1. Proposed methodology and cases (25th February 2019)
2. Preliminary findings (10 March 2019)
3. Draft report with case analysis and recommendations (20 March 2019)
4. Final report (31 March 2019)

Application and deadline

Interested service providers – individuals, organizations or companies – are invited to submit the following documents:

* CV that emphasizes relevant experience and detailed description on approach relevant for this assignment;
* Relevant working experience (single page document) - with examples of their previous work relevant for this assignment with three references.

Requested materials must be submitted no later than February 18, 2019 in electronic form to the email sms.tenders@irex.org.

IREX may at its discretion ask for additional information.

Issuing this call does not commit IREX or the USAID Strengthening Media Systems Project to select any proposal/expert.