



International Foundation
for Electoral Systems

INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR ELECTORAL SYSTEMS

(IFES)

**Request for Proposal (RFP) for Quantitative and Qualitative Research on Public Opinion about
PRIORITIES, RIGIDITIES, MOTIVATION REGARDING ELECTIONS AND VOTER'S EDUCATION in North
Macedonia**

Solicitation # RFP-20-042

March 25, 2020

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Request for Proposal (RFP) is to invite prospective contractors (“Bidders”) to submit a written response (“Response”) for the procurement of qualitative and quantitative public opinion research in North Macedonia. The solicitation provides Bidders with the relevant operational and performance requirements.

1.2 Coverage & Participation

IFES reserves the right to reject any and all offers, to add, delete or modify any element of the solicitation at any time without prior notification and without any liability or obligation of any kind. This RFP does not obligate IFES to enter into a contract nor does it obligate IFES to pay any costs incurred in the preparation of submission of any Response.

1.3 Zero Tolerance for Fraud

IFES has zero tolerance for fraud. Fraud is any act or omission that intentionally misleads, or attempts to mislead, to obtain a benefit or to avoid an obligation. If you have concerns about potential fraud in any way related to IFES projects, contracts, or activities, please contact IFES’ Compliance Hotline at compliance@ifes.org or at +1 202-350-6791.

2 GENERAL INFORMATION

2.1 The Organization

IFES is an independent, non-governmental organization providing professional support to electoral democracy. IFES supports citizens’ rights to participate in free and fair elections. Our independent expertise strengthens electoral systems and builds local capacity to deliver sustainable solutions.

As the global leader in democracy promotion, we advance good governance and democratic rights by:

- Providing technical assistance to election officials
- Empowering the underrepresented to participate in the political process
- Applying field-based research to improve the electoral cycle

Since 1987, IFES has worked in over 145 countries – from developing democracies, to mature democracies.

2.2 Schedule of Events

The following, tentative schedule will apply to this solicitation. The dates may change in accordance with IFES’ needs or unforeseen circumstances. IFES will communicate changes to the schedule.

- Issuance of RFP March 25, 2020
- Expression of Interest March 31, 2020
- Technical Questions/Inquiries Due April 03, 2020, 5:00 PM Skopje Time
- Q&A Session with Bidders who Expressed Interest April 08, 2020 (time to be confirmed)

- Written answers/Addenda from IFES April 13, 2020
- RFP Closes April 24, 2020 at 5:00 PM Skopje Time

3 PROPOSAL PREPARATION INSTRUCTIONS

3.1 Bidders' Understanding of the Solicitation

Bidders are responsible for understanding the solicitation in its entirety and each of its elements, and should make inquiries to IFES as necessary to ensure such understanding. IFES reserves the right to disqualify any Bidder that it determines, at its sole discretion, does not understand the solicitation or any of its elements. Such disqualification shall be at no fault, cost, or liability whatsoever to IFES.

3.2 Information from IFES

All information provided by IFES in this solicitation is subject to change at any time. IFES makes no certification as to the accuracy of any item, and is not responsible or liable for any use of or reliance on the information or for any claims asserted therefrom.

3.3 Communication

All communications related to the RFP must be in writing. Verbal communication shall not be effective unless formally confirmed in writing by the procurement official listed in 3.3.1. In no case shall verbal communication govern over written communication.

3.3.1 Point of Contact: The sole point of contact for all communication related to this solicitation is listed below.

Name Ian Swank Contracts and Grants Manager iswank@ifes.org	and	Name Sajia Tokhi Contracts and Grants Administrator stokhi@ifes.org
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3.3.2 Formal Communications shall include, but are not limited to the following:

- Questions concerning this solicitation must be submitted in writing to the point of contact identified in 3.3.1.
- Errors and omissions in this solicitation, as well as enhancements. Bidders should notify IFES of any discrepancies, errors, or omissions that may exist within this solicitation. Bidders should recommend to IFES any enhancements to the work described in the solicitation which might be in IFES' best interests.
- Inquiries about technical interpretations must be submitted in writing to the point of contact identified in 3.3.1.

3.3.3 Addenda: IFES will make a good-faith effort to provide a written response to the questions or requests for clarifications in the form of written responses or addenda in accordance with the *Schedule of Events*.

3.3.4 Posting Online: Copy of this solicitation, Amendments and or Q&A will be available online at: www.ifes.org/procurement-notice.

3.4 Submission

It is mandatory for Bidders to send proposals in electronic copy via e-mail to the point of contact identified in 3.3.1 on or prior to the closing date and time shown in the *Schedule of Events*.

3.5 Criteria for Selection

The evaluation of each Response to this solicitation will be based on the criteria outlined below. The purpose of this solicitation is to identify responsible Bidders that have the interest, capability, and financial strength to supply IFES with the product and/or service identified in the Scope of Work.

Evaluation Criteria:

IFES will evaluate responsive offers based on the following criteria:

1. TECHNICAL EXPERIENCE 80%
The technical proposal should consist of:
 - Work plan, methodology, and timeframe (20%)
 - Expertise of the entity submitting the proposal (25%)
 - Academic qualifications and experience of the Team Leader (15%)
 - Academic qualifications and experience of the proposed Team of Experts (25%)

2. PRICE 20%
The financial proposal should include all required costs such as labor cost travel costs, communication costs, costs of preparing the soft and hard copies of required documents and any other relevant costs regarding this assignment. The financial proposal must be reasonable and show efficient use of resources, and additional costs, if any, must be clearly identified. Offers will be compared amongst responsive bidders meeting technical requirements.

Evaluation Criteria Grading for Each Criterion:

Highly Exceeds Expectations	5 Points
Slightly Exceeds Expectations	4 Points
Meets Expectations	3 Points
Meets most but not All Expectations	2 Points
Does Not Meet Expectations	1 Point

3.6 Selection and Notification

IFES will evaluate Responses to identify responsible Bidders and responsive offers. Finalists will be selected to move into the negotiation phase of this process. Written notification will be sent to finalists via email.

4 SCOPE OF WORK/GOODS/SERVICES

1. Background

“Support to Electoral Reforms in North Macedonia” is a project of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), implemented by the International Foundation for Electoral Systems (IFES) and its partner National Youth Council of Macedonia (NYCM).

The project overall objective (goal) is to support democratic and credible election processes that facilitate political participation and social integration by enabling voters to freely select their representatives and hold them accountable.

The project activities are designed to support this objective through the achievement of three outcomes:

- Outcome 1: Strengthened institutions conduct fair and efficient election processes
- Outcome 2: Internally democratized political parties present citizen-oriented policies and election programs
- Outcome 3: Empowered citizens hold political parties and elected officials accountable

Project beneficiaries are election management bodies at all levels; government agencies such as Ministry of Information, Society and Administration, Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, State Statistical Office, Ombudsperson Institution, State Audit Office, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Justice; political parties, civil society organizations, voters and citizens.

Within the framework of the project a comprehensive evidence based research about voter priorities, rigidities and responsiveness to motivational stimuli will be conducted for which IFES engaged the expert support of the Institute of Social Sciences and Humanities – Skopje (ISSHS) to prepare the TOR and to guide the selected research company (subject of this TOR) tasked to conduct quantitative and qualitative research on public opinion about priorities, rigidities, motivation regarding elections and voter’s education.

[About the research](#)

The aim of the research is to carry out evidence-based demographic research on vulnerable social categories of voters addressing their priorities, rigidities and responsiveness to motivational stimuli and accordingly identify voters' education priorities. The findings of the research will contribute to improve effectiveness of voter and civic education campaigns as well as to provide alternative modalities for increased voter engagement adjusted to the specific needs of the demographic groups at stake and to contribute to increased participation of voters in political processes not only on elections day.

Desk research on the topic has shown that there is insufficient and ambiguous data on demographic profiling conducted thus far regarding the voters' attitudes, awareness and interest toward the electoral and political processes, their motivation to vote, abstention from voting and voting education needs. Field research should also provide data on what stimulates and what encourages the demographic groups in question to engage, including civic initiatives, with local and central government institutions in order to advocate rights and policies improving their social inclusion. It has also demonstrated the scarcity of such research and its limited scope (e.g., rural women have been demographically profiled exclusively in relation to the issue of "family voting"). Public motivation for voting usually encouraged through voter information campaigns of State Electoral Commission (SEC), electoral campaigns of political parties and efforts of national and international Civil Society Organizations (CSOs).

The mentioned campaigns are overly generic and do not include targeted approach sensitive to the needs and style of communication specific demographic groups are comfortable with. This ToR sets the criteria for approaching different target groups in voters' education and motivation in line with their demographic specificities. The contracted research company will conduct a quantitative and qualitative research.

- a) Quantitative research will provide **one** national survey that will include:
 - nationally representative voters' sample, and
 - targeted sample(s) that will enable general and specific demographic profiling.
- b) Qualitative research that will provide coverage of the following target groups (that should unpack some of the contradictions or data that needs elucidation):
 - urban population (in general),
 - rural population (in general),
 - women (in general)
 - rural women,

- youth (in general)
- First time voters,
- rural youth,
- the very poor,
- chronically unemployed,
- persons with disabilities,
- remote communities,
- Roma and
- Other ethnic minorities (Serbs, Turks, Vlach and other minorities represented less than 1% in the last census).

The quantitative part of this research will consist comprehensive field research (survey) on national representative sample and targeted sample. It will be aimed to explore civic and voters' education, attitudes and motivation with regard to electoral processes. This research will include additional / smaller targeted sample with specific categories. Quantitative research will encompass more general data as well as the demographically specific data.

Qualitative research as more in-depth method will be used for identifying the specificities of the demographic target groups presented below. Qualitative and quantitative research will be conducted by the selected research company. Considering ISSHS is responsible for developing the questionnaires and guidelines for the company, communication, consultation and coordination between ISSHS and the company is required throughout all stages of contract implementation.

2. Purpose

The research company is expected to provide competent staff and in-house capacities to complete the surveys subject to this ToR and focus groups on civic and voter's motivation and education in Republic of North Macedonia. Under IFES supervision, the selected Research Company will work under the expert leadership of ISSHS which is responsible for drafting the questionnaire and provide necessary guidance. The research company will have responsibility for all data collection in field, data cleaning, data processing, translation of the instruments (Albanian and English, assuming the instruments will be developed in Macedonian language) and the finalization of a statistical matrix with gathered data. The matrix should be validated, cleared and prepared in such way as to extract reliable demographic cross-

tabulations from it. Also, Research Company will conduct, tape, transcribe and produce reports on qualitative research – focus groups, with different target groups.

3. Objective of the research

The objective of the research is to give insights regarding to voters' priorities, voters' rigidity, voters' motivations and voters' education within specific and socially marginalized or disempowered demographic groups. Primary quantitative research will be conducted on a national representative sample comprised of different demographic groups in regards with the latest census. Additional targeted sample will be used. It should contain targeted sampling adjusted to 9 specific target groups (rural women, first time voters (18-20), rural youth, the very poor, chronically unemployed, persons with disabilities, remote communities, Roma and other ethnic minorities such as Turk, Serb, Vlach and others). Based on its in-house field research and the desk-research conducted for the purposes of this ToR, ISSHS has identified areas of relevance marked by insufficiency and absence of clarity of data that needs elucidation. ISSHS will base its questionnaire on the identified caveats in data and relevant questions for understanding the needs of the specific demographic groups. The contracted research company is invited to share its input and along with ISSHS finalize the questionnaire as well as the guidance for the focus groups.

The scope of the overall field research to be conducted according to this ToR is to provide sufficient and relevant data for demographic voters profiling of the following social groups:

- urban population (in general),
- rural population (in general),
- women (in general)
- rural women,
- youth (first time voters but not only them),
- rural youth,
- the very poor,
- chronically unemployed,
- persons with disabilities,
- remote communities
- Roma and
- other ethnic minorities (such as Turk, Serb, Vlach and others).

The main goals of both the quantitative and qualitative research are:

- to identify the public opinions on motivations or demotivation for voting and engaging in political/electoral processes of the above stated demographic groups.
- to identify the social, economic and cultural needs of the specific demographic groups with regard to the electoral and political process and their expectations from it.
- to identify voters' attitude on elections, political parties and methods of overcoming voting/participation in electoral politics.
- to identify and explain voters' opinion regarding existing electoral model and the perception of its representativeness, in particular for the socially excluded or marginalized.
- To identify the needs and successful methods for demographically targeted voters'/ civic education and information.

Specific goals of the qualitative research are:

- to analyze the specificity of different demographic groups regarding voting.
- to explore in depth voters' priorities, rigidities and responsiveness to motivating stimuli of the specific demographic groups;
- to identify differences in voters' attitudes and reasons for abstention of voting on elections and lack of interest in engaging in political processes.
- to elucidate the data received through the quantitative field research, unraveling the motives behind the responses that contain ambiguities or require a deeper insight into motivations and attitudes.

4. Scale and scope of the survey

The survey should be on national representative sample, divided in 8 statistical regions in Republic of North Macedonia:

- Eastern
- Northeastern
- Pelagonia
- Polog
- Skopje
- Southeastern
- Southwestern

- Vardar

National representative sample size stratified by region has been estimated at approximately 1200 respondents. One per household, using methodology of “next first birthday” when selecting the respondent. National representative sample should accurately reflect the demographic characteristics of the country with representative distribution within demographic groups and regions (accordingly with the latest census).

In addition, a targeted sample will be added on this nationally representative sample. This sample will be used for the following 9 target groups:

- rural women,
- first time voters (18-20),
- rural youth,
- the very poor,
- chronically unemployed,
- persons with disabilities,
- remote communities
- Roma
- other ethnic minorities (such as Turk, Serb, Vlach and others)

For each of mentioned 9 target groups 30 respondents will be selected. Selection of these respondents should also be covering all 8 regions. This sample will be used for more in depth analysis of these specific demographic profiles.

Total number of respondents of the survey for the both samples is 1470.

For the both samples a same questionnaire will be used with general and specific questions that will encompass the specificities of mentioned categories. Design of questionnaire will be developed by ISSHS. Research Company could be consulted on the content and format of the questionnaire. Besides close ended questions, open-ended questions could be used in the questionnaire. Codification of the open-ended questions will be reasonability of Research Company.

5. Scope of the focus groups

Additional qualitative research will be conducted on specific demographic categories. Planned method for this qualitative research are focus groups. Tentative number of focus groups are 12, each with 12

stated target groups: urban population (in general), rural population (in general), women (in general), rural women, youth (first time voters but not only), rural youth, the very poor, chronically unemployed, persons with disabilities, remote communities, Roma and other ethnic minorities (such as Turks, Serbs, Vlach and others). Each focus groups should contain at least 8-10 respondents.

The method of focus groups will be used for an in- depth analysis of the data received from the surveys on these specific demographic categories. Research Company should conduct focus groups in the Republic of North Macedonia choosing the most adequate location where specific target category could be found without omitting the category specifics, this would provide a relevant portrayal of category specifics.

Instruments

For the survey and focus groups, questionnaire and guide for focus groups will be used. Design of the questionnaire will be developed by ISSHS, also the design of the guide using the findings from the previous desk research. Instruments will concentrate on several topics: motivation and voters' education needs of the general population; views of the general population on questions relevant on specific demographic groups' needs and motivation; and specific questions concerning 12 demographic groups and their voters' motivation and education needs (targeted sampling integrated into the questionnaire). Research Company could be consulted on the content and format of the questionnaire and the guide for focus groups. Drawing on its in-house experience with national surveys and qualitative field research, ISSHS will design questionnaire using language that is easily accessible to all demographic groups targeting elucidation of data that is vague, ambiguous or areas that lack any data whatsoever yet indispensable for producing reliable voters' demographic profiling.

6. Deliverables

- Design of the research methodology and tools/proposed approach;
- Nationally representative sample and targeted sample for the quantitative research;
- Conduct interviewer trainings with guidance from the ISSHS if needed;
- Review and translation (Albanian and English, in case the instruments are developed in Macedonian language) of proposed questionnaire to ensure cultural and social suitability;
- Organize and conduct pilot-survey of quantitative research tools in consultation with ISSHS, as final filter for the quality of the questionnaire;
- Carry out all phases of the field research and adhere to scientifically sound survey procedures and

quality standards;

- Manage all aspects of data collection in field, including project management, data cleaning;
- Prepare matrix using statistical program SPSS filled with responses to the questionnaire;
- Produce two reports on quantitative research (from national representative sample and targeted sample) with frequencies, cross-tabulations with two and three variables (on demand) in English language;
- Organize and conduct focus groups with the 12 specific categories of people stated above;
- Produce taped content and transcribe the content of all focus groups;
 - Produce separate reports for focus groups in English language;
 - Be available on consultation regarding the instruments, results and data interpretation.

7. Duration of entire assignment

The period indicated below may change depending on the overall health situation, IFES needs or unforeseen events.

It is expected that after the procurement process is concluded, a service provider will be selected. Once the contract is signed, a timeframe for implementation will be specified, depending on the overall situation in the country. The selected service provider will have approximately two months to finish the field work and fill SPSS matrix from the quantitative research. In addition, one month must be allocated for further consultation with ISSHS and IFES. The final results from the qualitative research must be delivered approximately two months after received final feedback from ISSHS and IFES.

8. Qualifications and requirements for the Team of Experts - profile, qualification and experience

Research company researchers profile should be with adequate academic and professional background. The research company should propose team of experts engaged in this research project, adequate to provide mentioned deliverables. Core expert team should be comprised of following positions:

Team leader (for the overall project)

- Minimum Master's degree in social sciences and humanities in areas covering social sciences and humanities methodology and research methods (preferable Sociology or Psychology);

- Minimum 8 years of experience in undertaking and managing (research manager or research coordinator in quantitative and qualitative research);
- Experience in drafting minimum 15 analysis/reports (qualitative and quantitative);
- Understanding (experience/education) in statistics and demography and qualitative analysis

Coordinator for quantitative research

- Minimum Master's degree in social sciences and humanities in areas covering social sciences and humanities methodology and research methods (preferable Sociology or Psychology);
- Minimum 8 years of experience in undertaking and managing (research manager or research coordinator in quantitative research and sampling);
- Experience in drafting minimum 10 analysis/reports (quantitative);
- Understanding (experience/education) in statistics and demography

Coordinator for qualitative research

- Minimum Master's degree in social sciences and humanities in areas covering social sciences and humanities methodology and research methods (preferable Sociology or Psychology);
- Minimum 8 years of experience in undertaking and managing (research manager or research coordinator in qualitative research and sampling – focus groups);
- Experience in moderating focus groups with participants of different demographic profiles.
- Experience in drafting minimum 10 analysis/reports (qualitative empirical research);

Core experts' team could be engaged as researchers as well. For the additionally appointed researchers, their detailed CVs should be submitted as well. Research Company should propose number of researchers that will be engaged in quantitative and qualitative part of the research.

Requirements of the additional research team are following:

- Minimum BA degree in social sciences and humanities in areas covering social sciences and humanities (preferable Sociology or Psychology);
- Minimum 5 years of research experience as quantitative or qualitative researcher;
- Experience in developing quantitative research instruments, understanding and conducting quantitative research (for those engaged in quantitative part of the research);
- Experience in organizing, developing research instruments and moderating focus groups (for those engaged in qualitative part of the research);

- Experience in drafting or assisting in drafting minimum 5 analysis/reports (qualitative and/or quantitative);
- Understanding (experience/education) in statistics and demography (for quantitative researchers) and analysis of focus groups (for qualitative researchers).

9. Application Process

Interested local research companies should submit a detailed proposal outlining the research plan. The proposal should be divided into two parts i.e. technical and financial.

The technical submission will contain the following information.

1. Summary of proposed methodology and methodological stages aligned with the requirements of this ToR.
2. Suggested work-plan, methodology and timeframe.
3. Detailed CV's of the Core experts' team and team of researches containing experience on the topic and academic background, including data on requirements described in Qualifications and requirements for the Team of Experts.

Profile of the organization (Organizational ID) with a list of relevant projects containing:

- Organizational Background,
- Main fields of expertise (methodology and research methods and analyses),
- List of minimum 5 selected similar projects of each approach (5 surveys and 5 focus groups).

The financial proposal will describe the estimated cost for the quantitative and qualitative research project. Financial offer should consist costs for survey of nationally representative sample of 1200 + 270 respondents of targeted sample. For the qualitative research, financial offer should be given separately for both 12 focus-groups and for 16 focus groups.

5 FUNCTIONAL REQUIREMENTS

5.1 Timeline

Bidders must submit a timeline in the Response showing the time required to produce and consolidate the products and/or deliver services.

5.2 North Macedonia License, Clearance and Approvals

The Bidders will include in the timeline any time needed to obtain any licenses, clearances, and/or approvals required under local legal requirements to produce or deliver the products and/or services described in the Scope of Work.

6 QUALIFICATIONS & REFERENCES

Bidders must provide the following information for their Response to be considered:

1. A brief outline of the company and services offered, including:
 - Full legal name and address of the company
 - Corporate and tax registration documents
 - Year business was started or established
 - Full name of the legal representative (president or managing director) of the company
 - Name of any individuals or entities that own 50% or more of the company
 - U.S. companies must indicate if they are a registered Small Business (Woman owned, veteran-owned, Minority-owned, Disabled, Service Disabled Veteran-owned)
 - No subcontracting is allowed under this solicitation.
2. Evidence of successful completion of a project of a similar size and complexity.
3. References: Contact information for no less than three references from projects similar in size, application, and scope and a brief description of their implementation (including location and year). IFES reserves the right to request and check additional references.
4. Bidders must be legally registered under the laws of the country in which they are organized and possess all licenses, permits and government approvals necessary for performance of the work. Scope of Work.
5. A certification signed by an officer or authorized representative that the Bidder has sufficient financial, technical and managerial resources and facilities to complete the Scope of Work.

7 PRICING

Bidders must complete the following cost breakdown for the implementation of their solution for IFES' project as described in this solicitation. Bidders must agree to keep these prices valid for a minimum of 90 calendar days.

Pricing must be in Macedonian Denar (MKD) and without VAT. Unit prices are required and in the case of discrepancies between unit prices and the total price, the unit price will be taken as reference basis in the evaluation. Technical specifications must be shown for each item.

No.	Item Description	Technical Specifications	QTY	Unit	Unit Price	Total Price
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					MKD	MKD	
Group 1							
1.							
2.							
	Subtotal Group 1						
Group 2							
3.							
4.							
	Subtotal Group 2						
Group 3							
5.							
6.							
	Subtotal Group 3						
Total					MKD		
Taxes (IFES is VAT exempt)					MKD		
Grand Total					MKD		

8 ADDITIONAL TERMS & CONDITIONS

8.1 Non-Disclosure Agreement

IFES reserves the right to require the Bidder to enter into a non-disclosure agreement.

8.2 No Collusion

Collusion is strictly prohibited. Collusion is defined as an agreement or compact, written or oral, between two or more parties with the goal of limiting fair and open competition by deceiving, misleading, or defrauding a third party.

8.3 Companies Owned or Controlled by Government

The Bidder must disclose in writing with its Response if a government, its agents, or agencies, have an ownership or managerial interest in the company. Failure to disclose a government ownership or managerial interest in the company will result in the Bidder's offer being removed from consideration.

8.4 Subcontracting

No subcontracting is allowed under this solicitation.

8.5 Costs

The solicitation does not obligate IFES to pay for any costs, of any kind whatsoever, which may be incurred by a Bidder or third parties, in connection with the Response.

8.6 Intellectual Property

Bidders may not use any intellectual property of IFES including, but not limited to, all logos, trademarks, or trade names of IFES, at any time without the prior written approval of IFES.

8.7 Bidders' Responses

All accepted Responses and supporting documentation shall become the property of IFES, subject to claims of confidentiality in respect of the Response and supporting documentation.

8.8 Partial Awarding

IFES reserves the right to accept all or part of the Response when awarding a contract.

8.9 No Liability

IFES reserve the right to accept or reject any Response or to stop the procurement process at any time, without assigning any reason or liability. IFES shall not be liable to any Bidder, person, or entity for any losses, expenses, costs, claims, or damages of any kind.

8.10 Entire Solicitation

This solicitation, any addenda to it, and any attached schedules, constitute the entire solicitation.

[End of Solicitation]