



TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR
EXTERNAL REVIEW
OF THE PROJECTS
IN NORTH MACEDONIA, MONTENEGRO AND SERBIA
SUPPORTED BY NORWAY AND IMPLEMENTED BY THE GROUP 484
FROM 2015 TO 2021

AUGUST 30, 2021

1 Background

The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade has provided support to the Group 484 since 2012 to foster civil society organisations engagement in the policy monitoring and advocacy efforts in the field of asylum and migration, which then should contribute to the policy improvements toward greater compliance with the relevant EU and international standards. In addition, through a grant awarded to Group 484 in 2015, an institutional support was provided for the CSO coalition 'PrEUgovor' to facilitate development of its monitoring and advocacy efforts that aim to foster national reforms in the rule of law in line with the requirements of EU accession process.

In order to address the challenges of the European migrant crisis, the Embassy awarded Group 484 with a new grant in 2015 to provide support and protection services to the most vulnerable among refugees and migrants at the Western Balkan route (North Macedonia and Serbia). Consequently, Group 484 managed a fund and sub-granted a number of local projects, monitored the work of partners/grantees, and provided training and mentoring with an aim to enhance coordination and networking among agencies and civil society organisations at the national and local level.

After completion of this agreement, Group 484 was awarded another grant in 2019 for the similar project covering Serbia, North Macedonia and Montenegro. However, in March of 2020, after the outbreak of Covid-19 crisis, the call for projects foreseen to be implemented for improving the position of migrants was modified to address immediate needs of all vulnerable groups—including migrants and asylum seekers. Other activities were temporarily put on hold being resumed gradually only in the last quarter of 2020.

The agreements signed in 2015, 2016, and 2019, including the addenda, are the subject of the review to be contracted under this ToR.

The total amount of contracted support for analysis is:

SRB-15/0053: NOK 12,761,195.00; from 15 December 2015 to 31 August 2019

RER-19/0007: NOK 15,000,000.00; from 1 October 2019 to 1 October 2021

The following projects are to be analysed:

SRB-15/0053 Group 484 - Solidarity Network: Building the Common Efforts for Refugees and Migrants Protection

The first contract (signed on 15 December 2015)

Budget: 3,474,000 NOK

Project period: December 15, 2015 – August 31, 2016

Localities covered by the project: relevant locations in Serbia and North Macedonia

The project aim was to provide a range of support and protection services targeting the most vulnerable among refugees and migrants at the Western Balkan route through the sub-granting of up to 10 national and local organisations who have already invested efforts in provision of support and protection services. Final beneficiaries were the refugees and migrants who transited over the Western Balkan route, and their humanitarian, health-related and protection needs were in the focus of a range of various (coordinated and complemented) activities. The children, adolescents, and unaccompanied and separated minors, as well as other vulnerable groups and individuals, were to be particularly targeted. The provision of services was to promote coordination and networking among various service providing agencies and organisations, so to create comprehensive and inclusive protection model (i.e., the model of supportive activities)

especially designed to serve essential needs of the most vulnerable. Beyond that, networking efforts should have contributed to sustainability, good targeting, and quality development of provided support services.

The first non-cost extension was requested on August 26, 2016, to last until November 1, 2017. The reason for this was the closure of Western Balkan route on March 8, 2016, resulting in the larger number of refugees and migrants stayed in Serbia for a longer period and required enhanced support by CSOs.

The application for additional financial support for continuation of the project was submitted on November 14, 2016.

The second contract (signed on 7 December 2016)

Budget: 4.760.055 NOK

Project period: 7 December 2016 to 7 December 2017

Localities covered by the project: Serbia and North Macedonia

The planned effect on society (Impact) of this intervention was enhanced well-being and improved position of refugees, asylum seekers and migrants hosted in Serbia and Macedonia, achieved through development of a broad range of effective protection and integration services, which are provided continually, in a coordinated and vulnerability-sensitive manner, based on appropriate national migration policy which is sensible, human-rights oriented and aligned with the EU and international standards.

The planned effects for the target group (Outcome) were:

- a. Serbian and Macedonian civil society organisations, local self-governments and/or public institutions provided with the financial and mentoring support to enhance protection and integration services for the most vulnerable refugees and migrants at the Western Balkans migratory route;
- b. Enhanced independent monitoring and analysis of national migration policies, greater productivity of new policy initiatives, and improved capacity building and networking opportunities for relevant CSOs and institutional actors.

A non-cost extension was approved on July 27, 2017, to last until June 30, 2018 so that the quality of implementation of several sub-granted projects would be improved. The request also included the budget modification relating to the sub-granting and some additional advocacy activities.

The additional request for financial support for continuation of the project was submitted on December 1, 2017. The Addendum 1 was signed on 8 December 2017.

Additional Grant: 4,400,000 NOK

Project period extended: until December 31, 2018.

Group 484 then asked for the new extension of the project period through the request submitted on 20 July 2018. The MFA decided to comply, and the Addendum 2 was concluded on August 1, 2018. The Support Period was extended to 1 April 2019.

Another request for non-cost extension was submitted on 25 March 2019 asking approval of the Support Period to be further extended until August 31, 2019, as to enable completion of the small reconstruction works supporting renovation and refurbishment of two facilities of the Ministry of Interior of the Republic of Serbia. The request was approved but the Embassy awarded to Group 484 also the additional grant in the amount of 127,140.00 NOK.

RER-19/0007 Group 484 - Support to Migrants and Local Communities in Montenegro, North Macedonia and Serbia

Budget: 9,991,862 NOK

Project period: October 2019 – October 2021

Localities covered by the project: a number of towns and municipalities in Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia

The planned effect on society (Impact) was to bring the position of migrants in Serbia, Montenegro and North Macedonia in full compliance with international human rights standards.

The planned effect for the target group (Outcome) was to enable migrants in Serbia, Montenegro and North Macedonia to have the full access to guaranteed rights in line with international and national standards related to treatment of foreigners and persons seeking international protection with the special focus on access to economic and social rights.

On 6 April 2020 Group 484 submitted a request to MFA which included a thorough revision of the results framework and the budget revision as well. MFA decided to comply, and the Addendum 1 was concluded on 9 April 2020. It enabled the additional grant and the results framework which will capacitate Group 484 to effectively address a range of new challenges emerging from the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic.

Additional Grant: 5,008,138 NOK

A new Impact and a new Outcome were added to the project's results framework.

Hence, the second planned effect on society (Impact 2) was explicated as follows: vulnerable local citizens and migrants in Serbia, Montenegro, and North Macedonia, as well as relevant national and local institutions and organisations, enabled to cope with and respond to challenges of the COVID-19 epidemics.

The additional planned effect for target groups (Outcome 2) was defined as the improved ability of vulnerable groups, including local citizens and migrants, to meet the basic needs during the COVID-19 epidemics.

The Support Period remained unchanged.

2 Purpose, Scope and Objectives of the External Review

2.1 Purpose of the External Review

This external review is initiated by Norway to assess and verify results achieved under the above-stated projects, as well as to assess Group 484's project management and organisational capacities for possible further cooperation.

The external review results will be used by Norway and the Group 484 to better understand the progress made, outcomes and challenges, but also further steps and the character of potential adjustments needed for the future project implementation.

The conclusions and recommendations will serve to maximise the impact of Norwegian support, ensuring even greater sustainability of the results in the future.

The conclusions and recommendations of the review shall be delivered to the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Belgrade, who shall have unlimited rights to make the review available to the public.

2.2 Scope of the External Review

The external review shall cover the period from the date when the contracts were signed and up until 1 October 2021.

Type of service: Output-based consultancy

Type of work: Desk research, organisational assessment of Group 484, and field visits/interviews

Location: Belgrade and selected sites which shall correspond to the localities of the sub-granted projects (and which would be specified in the Inception report)

Duration: Up to 85 working days

Tasks:

1. Inception phase – documents review, kick off meetings; writing inception report and drafting evaluation tools (questionnaire, interview questions etc.); revision of evaluation questions and criteria, if needed
2. Research and analytical phase – fieldwork and interviews with Group 484, subgrantees, and other stakeholders; data analysis and desk review of various documents and reports–
3. Final report writing phase – writing the evaluation report (including presentation of the findings)

The external review shall include partner organisations and sub-grantees, relevant national and local authorities (ministries, local self-governments, agencies), other implementing organisations active in the targeted sectors, relevant donors, and other stakeholders.

2.3 Objectives of the External Review

The objectives of this review are as follows:

- 1) To independently assess results and impact achieved against the objectives and goals specified in the project proposals and contracts signed with Group 484 (Description of Actions);
- 2) To independently assess the management capacities and performance of the implementing partner Group 484 during implementation of the above-stated projects;
- 3) To independently assess the organisational capacities and performance of the Group 484 for the purpose of accessing the Norway's future support;

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- 4) To highlight any lessons learned and make recommendations for improving current project management and future programming.

2.4 Key evaluation questions

Key criteria for this external review include relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability.

Key questions are as follows:

Relevance

- 1) What is the relevance of the projects' objectives in terms of the Norwegian priorities and the beneficiary countries national strategies?
- 2) To what extent do those objectives correspond to the priorities and specific needs of beneficiary countries in targeted areas? What sources of information and resources have been used in design of the projects?

Effectiveness

- 1) To what extent have the projects' outputs been achieved?
- 2) What progress has been made toward achieving expected broader results (outcomes and impact)?
- 3) What were the factors (positive/negative) that influenced projects achievements?
- 4) Did the projects face any particular constraints during their implementation? How Group 484 performed in mitigating those constraints?
- 5) Were the criteria for selecting final beneficiaries adequate? Did the provided support reach the selected beneficiaries? Was the level of the beneficiary's involvement appropriate? How these projects impacted the final beneficiaries?

Efficiency

- 1) Were the projects activities implemented in a timely manner?
- 2) To what extent were the projects cost-effective? What measures have been taken to ensure efficient use of resources? To what extent the project management team has used resources efficiently in terms of expertise and time? Was it possible to implement activities and achieve outputs with less resources without reducing their quantity and quality?
- 3) Was the project management structure in place? To what extent did that structure enable efficient and effective implementation of activities and realization of project's outputs and expected results? Were there any changes in the project management structure during the projects implementation, and if yes, why?
- 4) What were and how efficient were the procedures in HR recruitment (external and in-house staff)?
- 5) What procedures were in place to ensure efficient implementation of activities and achievement of results? Were these procedures adequate? Was there any change in procedures during the projects implementation and if yes, why?
- 6) Were the reporting and monitoring requirements in line with the Description of the Action? Were there any changes introduced as a result of monitoring? If yes, which ones and why?
- 7) What mechanisms were in place to ensure coordination between Group 484 and other stakeholders? Was the level of coordination adequate for the purpose of achieving expected results?
- 8) Was the Group 484 management model flexible enough to respond to necessary needs for changes in line with fluid dynamics of migration?
- 9) How was the visibility of the project and donors ensured? What procedures and measures were taken to ensure visibility of the project and donors? Was the level of visibility satisfactory?

Sustainability

- 1) Have the projects progressed towards achieving their sustainability plans as designed in the Description of the Action? To what extent?
- 2) Has Group 484 worked with final beneficiaries and/or grantees to ensure sustainability of the project? If yes, how? If not, why?
- 3) Will the changes caused by the project continue beyond the life of the project?
- 4) Were there any risks for the sustainability of supported grants? If yes, what are they? Were they recognized by the project management and what measures were taken to mitigate/overcome these risks? Were there any risks not identified by the project team?
- 5) Were there any political, legal, or financial obstacles to the sustainability of the projects outputs?
- 6) What was the level of ownership of the final beneficiaries in the projects? What measures have been taken to ensure local ownership?

3 Timeline¹

Activity	Timeframe
Call for Consultancy Service	[15 days]
Selection of a consultant(s)	[5 days]
Initial review and draft Inception Report	
Review and feedback on the draft Inception Report	
Submitting Final Inception Report	
Desk research and field work	
Analysis and preparation of the first draft report	
Review and feedback on the first draft report	
Incorporating the comments and submitting final report	

The final evaluation report should not exceed 30 pages (deadline February 2022) It should include key observations against each of the evaluation criteria, but it should not necessarily address each of the specific questions as per the evaluation criteria.

4 Required Expertise and Skills

Key competences:

- Excellent analytical, communication and writing skills
- Demonstrated experience in conducting complex evaluation reviews
- Demonstrated experience in conducting organisational assessments and providing advice to civil society organisations regarding organisational development
- Fluency in English with excellent writing, presentation and communication skills
- Demonstrated professional competence and mastery of subject matters
- Computer literacy

Qualifications:

- Minimum University degree in the field of social or humanistic sciences
- Minimum of five years' experience in conducting assessments and evaluations of donor assistance and/or project management of international projects
- Good knowledge of migration and development issues and of past and ongoing interventions in the relevant sectors in all targeted countries
- Excellent knowledge of civil society in the targeted countries and understanding of the models of involvement of civil society in advocacy and policy processes
- Knowledge of the existing social, economic and political situation in targeted countries is required
- At least one similar assignment conducted in the context of Norwegian Aid, will be considered as an advantage

¹ All empty fields to be fullfilled by the candidate. The days committed to Call for Consultancy Service and Selection of Candidates are not included in duration of this work.

How to Apply:

- Please send your CV, financial offer (fee per day) and timeline **no later than September 14th 2021**.
- All documents should be sent on: office@grupa484.org.rs with the subject: Application Process-Consultant for External Review of the projects in North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia
- If two or more consultants want to apply with the joint offer, applicants should send CVs for all consultants, joint financial offer for all tasks, with the clear division of responsibilities between the candidates and timetable for all activities
- For further clarifications related to the application process, please use the e-mail: office@grupa484.org.rs until September 6st, 2021. Phone calls are not allowed.