

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Procurement Number:	EURASIA2021MO06o
Open Date:	September 27, 2021
Questions Deadline:	October 10, 2021
Closing Deadline:	October 17, 2021
Geographical Area Restrictions:	935
Point of Contact:	Teodora Graur, Senior Program Officer, tgraur@iri.org

Background

The International Republican Institute (IRI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, organization dedicated to advancing freedom and democracy worldwide. Since 1983, IRI has worked to develop democratic institutions and ideals, carrying out a variety of international programs to promote freedom, self-government and the rule of law worldwide. IRI provides technical assistance in the areas of political party strengthening, developing civic institutions and open elections, promoting democratic governance and advancing the rule of law.

IRI's work in Moldova is geared toward developing the capacity of political parties—with specific focus on internal structures and processes, financial compliance and outreach to voters. IRI's programming seeks to strengthen the ability political leaders to organize themselves and effectively communicate and represent the Moldovan citizens. A key competent of this work is the regular public opinion research that IRI conducts in order to gauge public sentiment and in turn to inform political parties and local stakeholders on issues relevant to constituents.

IRI is seeking quotations from qualified research firms for data collection for a series of focus groups on political and social issues in Moldova.

Period of Performance

Date of signature – March 31, 2022

Statement of Work

Qualitative Research In Moldova

Focus Groups on Political and Social Issues in Moldova

Objectives Of The Research

IRI is seeking to gather insights into various political and social issues in Moldovan society as a follow-up to IRI's nationwide quantitative public opinion research. These themes may include:

- Youth political participation
- Perceptions of the justice sector, corruption, and rule of law in Moldova
- Awareness of and perceptions of government reforms
- Citizen engagement in politics at the local and national level
- Additional or different issues as needed

IRI will provide more detailed informational needs with key research questions to be answered for each series of focus group discussions.

Methodology

The questions above are best addressed by a focus group study. Depending on the incidence of the COVID-19 virus in Moldova, IRI and the vendor will work together to determine whether in-person or remote focus groups will be best.

In Person Discussion Groups: Two series of four discussion groups (eight discussion groups in total), each lasting approximately 90-120 minutes and attended by 8-10 participants, should take place in communities determined in consultation with IRI (with at least one focus group taking place within Chisinau).

Remote Discussion Groups: Two series of six discussion groups (12 discussion groups in total), each lasting approximately 90-120 minutes and attended by 6-8 participants, should take place online with participants from communities determined in consultation with IRI. The online platform used for discussions should be proposed by the Offeror and should be accessible and familiar to participants.

Discussions in each series will likely be conducted in Romanian and in Russian (in separate discussions), depending on IRI's research needs.

All participants should be:

- At least 18 years of age and a generally equal gender balance
- Must be recruited from different neighborhoods or towns within the research location communities
- Participants in the same focus group session may not know one another.
- No participants may have participated in a focus group or in-depth interview study in the past 12 months.

General Responsibilities Of The Offeror

Offeror will be responsible for managing all logistical aspects of the project above and should engage local support staff as necessary to complete the following for each of the two series of focus group discussions:

- **Screener.** For each series, IRI will provide a draft screening questionnaire based on the specifications above at least two weeks before the proposed focus group sessions. The Offeror will review offer edits within three working days of receipt. Following IRI approval, the Offeror will translate the screener into Romanian and Russian. IRI reserves the right to review the translation prior to recruitment launch.
- **Recruiting participants.** For each series, offeror will recruit all participants according to the screening criteria listed above. At least one week prior to the start of the first focus group session, the Offeror will provide a brief description of the composition of the groups in terms of age, gender, occupation, etc. For in-person groups, Offeror should recruit 8-10 participants for each group as well as 2-3 alternates in case any of the original participants are unable to participate. For remote groups, Offeror should recruit 6-8 participants for each group as well as 2-3 alternates in case any of the original participants are unable to participate. All participants will be required to give written informed consent to participate in this study. IRI will provide draft informed consent language which may be adjusted by the bidder in order to conform to any specific legal requirements in the research country.
- **Discussion guide.** For each series, IRI will provide the draft discussion. Offeror will be welcome to offer suggestions for improvement and is expected to format and translate the discussion guide into Romanian and Russian. IRI reserves the right to review the translation(s). For the first series, at least one week prior to the first planned session, the discussion guide will be piloted with a group of 6-10 pilot participants who fit the recruitment criteria. This pilot will be moderated by the same moderator who will moderate the actual groups. The pilot session(s) will be video (preferred) or audio recorded and the recording will be provided to IRI. The Offeror will prepare a 1-2 page pilot report, based on a template provided by IRI. Once IRI has reviewed the pilot report, some modification of the discussion guide may be required.
- **Focus Group Moderator.** Offeror will provide a trained and experienced moderator for groups in each city. The moderators should familiarize him/herself with the topic of discussion prior to the groups. The moderator will participate in a training of up to 4 hours total with IRI staff, at IRI's discretion.
- **Observation.** The Offeror will provide for all groups a facility from which Romanian or Russian-speaking IRI staff may unobtrusively observe. In the case of online groups, the observation will be remote.
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- **Recording of Focus Group Discussions.** Audio and/or video record all aspects of research necessary for full and accurate data collection, transcript generation and inclusion of illustrative samples in the final analytical report. Offeror will film focus groups and film should be high quality with clear sound. If participants do not consent to videotaping, audio recordings are acceptable.

- **Written Summary of Focus Group Discussions.** For each series, offeror will provide a 2-3 page written summary of the focus group discussions in idiomatic English within one week after the final focus group session. A template will be provided by IRI.
- **Transcripts.** The Offeror will provide IRI with full verbatim transcripts in English of each group that will identify each participant speaker by number or first name to link each comment to the participant's gender, exact age, education level, city and occupation.
- **Written Analytical Report.** For each series, offeror will analyze all discussions, and write and edit final analytic report (see Deliverables) for review, editing and acceptance by IRI within three weeks of the final focus group session. IRI will provide a report template. The report is expected to synthesize findings across all participants and all discussion sessions, while noting to any major differences of opinions between participants and sessions. The report must present actual analysis (i.e. not mere description) and illustrative quotes from participants.

Deliverables

- For each series:
- Finalized discussion guide (incl translation where applicable)
- Proposed Participant Profile
- Written summary as specified above.
- Full transcripts of all discussions as described above.
- Video/Audio recordings of the discussions with clear audio.
- Recording should be delivered to IRI electronically (for example via a file transfer service) or delivered to the local IRI office.
- Analytic report of 30-50 slides in MS PowerPoint in idiomatic English, which includes a one or two page/slide executive summary, addressing the research needs outlined above. This number can be adjusted downwards in consultation with IRI, but bidders should expect to provide reports with up to 50 slides.

Timing

The focus group discussions will likely be held in November 2021 (series 1) and February 2022 (series 2); the exact timing needs to be determined in close consultation with IRI.

Proposal Content

Proposals should address the following points:

- List qualitative projects you conducted with similar specifications in this market, including whether they were conducted online or in-person
- Name and explain the role of subcontractors (if any)
- State if you are to comply with all requirements listed on this SOW without alterations. If any proposed alterations, explain.

- Describe recruitment plan
- Describe fieldwork quality assurance measures (if any)
- Describe analysis plan
- Provide proposed moderator(s)/ CV/Resume
- Describe platform selected for remote discussions
- Describe plan for translation of transcripts
- Describe anticipated challenges if any

Technical Proposals

All proposals submitted to IRI must include:

1. Information addressing Bidder’s experience in providing each of the services identified in the above Statement of Work and Bidder’s proposed specific approach for providing those services to IRI under this contract, including sufficient information to determine a clear definition of services as it relates to other providers that may be involved.
2. The name, address, and telephone and facsimile numbers of the Bidder (and electronic address if available). If the Bidder is a firm, name(s) should be provided for individuals authorized to conduct business on behalf of the firm.
3. Bidders may provide a list of up to three references for work performed of a similar nature during the last three years, along with contact details. IRI may contact the references to evaluate past performance.
4. If the Bidder is a U.S. organization/resident, or a foreign organization/resident which has income effectively connected with the conduct of activities in the U.S. or has an office or a place of business or a fiscal paying agent in the U.S., the information submitted must contain Bidder’s Taxpayer Identification Number.
5. Proposals will not exceed 10 pages (pages (excluding sample reports) and bidder should include in the application information related to past performance, including presentations, reports, etc. IRI will accept bids presented in an email.
6. Sample reports to demonstrate past work should preferably be in a slide deck format, but written reports are acceptable. Reports may be cleaned of identifying information to maintain client confidentiality if necessary.

Price Proposals

Bidders must propose a firm-fixed Unit Price for each of the deliverables identified below and in the format of the table below. The Bidder’s pricing must be valid for at least 60 (sixty) calendar days after the due date for proposal submission. The proposed Unit Price should be fixed and inclusive of all costs to perform, including inspection services, transportation, taxes, import duties (if any), and other levies. To the extent that a Bidder proposed to include any pricing not reflected in the table below, such pricing must be fully described in the proposal. Proposals must be submitted in USD, payments under any resulting contract will be made in this currency.

Unit/Deliverable (In Person)	Unit Price	Number of Units	Total
Finalized discussion guide (including translation where applicable)		2	
Proposed Participant Profile		2	
Pilot report for 1 st series		1	
Full transcripts		2	
Video/Audio Recordings		8	

Analytical Report		2	
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Unit/Deliverable (Remote)	Unit Price	Number of Units	Total
Finalized discussion guide (including translation where applicable)		2	
Proposed Participant Profile		2	
Pilot report for 1 st series		1	
Full transcripts		2	
Video/Audio Recordings		12	
Analytical Report		2	

All costs to be incurred by the Bidder in completing this work, including any relevant taxes and fees (VAT 0%), should be included in the price.

Prices should be quoted in US Dollars (USD). Payments will be made in USD by way of wire transfer.

Prices must be guaranteed through the expiration of this agreement.

All pricing tables should be submitted as Microsoft Excel files.

Evaluation and Award Process

1. IRI may contact any Bidder for clarification or additional information, but Bidders are advised that IRI intends to evaluate the offers based on the written proposals, without discussions, and reserves the right to make decisions based solely on the information provided with the initial proposals. IRI may but is not obligated to conduct additional negotiations with the most highly rated Bidders prior to award of a contract, and may at its sole discretion elect to issue contracts to one or more Bidders.
2. Mathematical errors will be corrected in the following manner: If a discrepancy exists between the total price proposed and the total price resulting from multiplying the unit price by the corresponding amounts, then the unit price will prevail and the total price will be corrected. If there is a discrepancy between the numbers written out in words and the amounts in numbers, then the amount expressed in words will prevail. If the Bidder does not accept the correction, the offer will be rejected.
3. IRI may determine that a proposal is unacceptable if the prices proposed are materially unbalanced between line items or sub-line items. Unbalanced pricing exists when, despite an acceptable total evaluated price, the price of one or more contract line items is significantly overstated or understated as indicated by the application of cost or price analysis techniques. A proposal may be rejected if IRI determines that the lack of balance poses an unacceptable risk.
4. IRI will conduct a source selection based as follows:

IRI intends to make an award to the responsible Bidder based on the following evaluation factors:

- a) **Technical evaluation, (including technical capabilities, proposed technical approach, and personnel qualifications)** – 30 percent
 - Capabilities of moderator(s) as evidenced by CV and proposal details-15 percent
 - English, Romanian, and Russian language skills of firm and moderator-15 percent
- b) **Past performance and experience in performing similar projects** – 40 percent
 - Relevant experience in politically-focused or relevant focus group research in Moldova and/or the Eurasia region as demonstrated by CV and/or list of past projects-25 15 percent
 - Quality of sample focus group report(s)-15 15 percent
- c) **Price** – 30 percent

IRI intends to evaluate Bidders' proposals in accordance with these factors and make an award to the responsible Bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the program.

- 5. If a cost realism analysis is performed, cost realism may be considered in evaluating performance or price.

Submission Instructions

Bids must be submitted via email to Teodora Graur, at tgraur@iri.org with the subject line "EURASIA2021MO06o Focus Group Facilitation II" by the deadline listed above.

RFP Terms and Conditions

1. Prospective Bidders are requested to review clauses incorporated by reference in the section "Notice Listing Contract Clauses Incorporated by Reference".
2. IRI may reject any or all proposals if such is within IRI's interest.
3. Proof of costs incurred, such as but not limited to receipts, pictures and financial documents, may be requested during and for up to three years after the end of the contract period.
4. The Bidder's initial proposal should contain the Bidder's best offer.
5. Payment will be made upon receipt of invoices and deliverables/services.
6. Discussions with Bidders following the receipt of a proposal do not constitute a rejection or counteroffer by IRI.
7. IRI will hold all submissions as confidential and submissions shall not be disclosed to third parties. IRI reserves the right to share proposals internally, across divisions, for the purposes of evaluating the proposals.
8. For any currency conversion, the exchange rate to US Dollars listed on oanda.com on the closing date of this solicitation shall be used.
9. Every contract will contain provisions governing termination for cause and termination for convenience.
10. By submitting a proposal, offeror agrees to comply with all terms, conditions, and provisions included in the solicitation and agreement to the services identified above, and will specifically identify any disagreement with or exceptions to the terms, conditions, and provisions.
11. Offerors confirm that the prices in the proposal/proposal/application/quote have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other Bidder or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition.

12. By applying to this RFP, applicant is certifying that if it is awarded a contract, none of funds payable under the resulting contract will be used to (1) procure or obtain, extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain; (2) enter into a contract (or extend or renew a contract) to procure; or (3) obtain the equipment, services, or systems that uses covered telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system in compliance with the National Defense Authorization Act. Covered telecommunications equipment and services mean any of the following:
- i. Telecommunications equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).
 - ii. For the purpose of public safety, security of government facilities, physical security surveillance of critical infrastructure, and other national security purposes, video surveillance and telecommunications equipment produced by Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, or Dahua Technology Company (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).
 - iii. Telecommunications or video surveillance services provided by such entities or using such equipment.
 - iv. Telecommunications or video surveillance equipment or services produced or provided by an entity that the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Director of the National Intelligence or the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, reasonably believes to be an entity owned or controlled by, or otherwise connected to, the government of a covered foreign country. ([2 CFR 200.216](#)).
13. Bidders agree to disclose as part of the proposal submission:
- Any close, familial, or financial relationships with IRI staff and agents. For example, the Bidder must disclose if a Bidder's mother conducts volunteer trainings for IRI.
 - Any family or financial relationship with other Bidders submitting proposals. For example, if the Bidder's father owns a company that is submitting another proposal, the Bidder must state this.
 - Any other action that might be interpreted as potential conflict of interest.

Notice Listing Contract Clauses Incorporated by Reference

IRI is required to make the contractor subject to certain flowdown clauses of the prime award. This awarded contract will incorporate one or more clauses by reference, with the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. Where "flow-down" to the contractor is applicable, references to "USAID/Department of State" shall be interpreted to mean "IRI", "Recipient" to mean "Contractor", and "Subrecipient" to mean "lower-tier subcontractor." Included by reference are the applicable provisions contained in Appendix II to 2 CFR Part 200 and USAID Standard Provisions for Non-US Non-governmental Organizations/US Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions.

IRI Obligations

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of IRI, nor does it commit IRI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal or quotation.

Required Certifications

The following certificates need to be signed by all Bidders. These certifications are an integral part of the quotation/proposal. Please print them off and send back to us with your proposal after signature on each certificate. They are:

- Certification regarding debarment, suspension, ineligibility and voluntary exclusion lower tier covered transactions
- Authorized Individuals
- Certification Regarding Lobbying

CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION LOWER TIER COVERED TRANSACTIONS

This certification implements Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension and the requirements set forth in 2.C.F.R. 180, Subpart C.”

Copies of the regulations may be obtained by contacting the person to which this proposal is submitted.

1. By signing and submitting this proposal/application/quote, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out below.
2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
3. The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to which this proposal/application/quote is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
4. The terms "covered transaction," "debarred," "suspended," "ineligible," "lower tier covered transaction," "participant," "person," "primary covered transaction," "principal," "proposal," and "voluntarily excluded," as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of the rules implementing Executive Order 12549.
5. The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this proposal/application/quote that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the IRI.
6. The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal/application/quote that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier Covered Transactions," without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals.

8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 above, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
1. The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for disbarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.
2. Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

Entity Name: _____

Address: _____

Authorized Individuals

The offeror/bidder/applicant represents that the following persons are authorized to negotiate on its behalf with IRI and to bind the recipient in connection with this procurement:

Name	Title	Telephone	Email

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

Entity Name: _____

CERTIFICATION REGARDING LOBBYING

The undersigned certifies, to the best of his or her knowledge and belief, that:

1. No Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid, by or on behalf of the undersigned, to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with the awarding of any Federal contract, the making of any Federal Cooperative Agreement, the making of any Federal loan, the entering into of any cooperative agreement, and the extension, continuation, renewal, amendment or modification of any Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement.
2. If any funds other than Federal appropriated funds have been paid or will be paid to any person for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of Congress, or an employee of a Member of Congress in connection with this Federal contract, grant, loan, or cooperative agreement, the undersigned must complete and submit Standard Form-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities," in accordance with its instructions.
3. The undersigned must require that the language of this certification be included in the award documents for all subawards at all tiers (including subcontracts, subgrants, and contracts under grants, loans, and cooperative agreements) and that all subrecipients must certify and disclose accordingly.

This certification is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was made or entered into. Submission of this certification is a prerequisite for making or entering into this transaction imposed by section 1352, title 31, United States Code. Any person who fails to file the required certification will be subject to a civil penalty of not less than \$10,000 and not more than \$100,000 for each such failure.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

Entity Name: _____

Address: _____

EXPERT RATE INFORMATION

Name <i>(Last, First, Middle)</i>	Proposed Rate:	Daily	Hourly
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Rates should be given for the last three (3) years. If employment history/salary information is applicable, list salaries separate for each year. If expert services is applicable, indicate the type of rate daily/hourly.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY - SALARY

POSITION TITLE	EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS POINT OF CONTACT & TELEPHONE #	Employment Period <i>(M/D/Y)</i>		Annual Salary ¹ U.S. Dollars
		From	To	

SPECIFIC EXPERT SERVICES

SERVICES PERFORMED/TITLE	CLIENTS NAME AND ADDRESS POINT OF CONTACT & TELEPHONE #	Service Period <i>(M/D/Y)</i>		Units at Rate	Daily/Hourly Rate ² In U.S. Dollars
		From	To		

CERTIFICATION: To the best of my knowledge, the above facts as stated are true and correct.

Signature	Date
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¹ Basic periodic payment for services rendered. Exclude bonuses, profit-sharing arrangements, commissions, consultant fees extra or overtime work payments, overseas differential or quarters, cost of living or dependent education allowances.

² A form of management fee whereby the client pays a set fee for providing professional services. Exclude cost reimbursements, bonuses, overtime work payments, overseas differential or quarters, cost of living, and any other allowances.