

**Maintaining and building confidence between the conflict-affected societies  
of Abkhazia and Georgia**

**Terms of Reference**

**Introduction**

1. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is looking for an implementer or consortia to improve the relationship between Georgia and the breakaway territory of Abkhazia through promoting reconciliation dialogue processes and delivering effective confidence-building measures that engender and boost confidence and relations between and within the two populations. The UK (both government and NGOs) is respected in both Abkhazia and Georgia and we seek to use our positive image to improve reconciliation attempts.

**Objective**

2. The main objective of the project is to improve understanding and relations between officials and societies within and between Abkhazia and Georgia on the issue of Georgian-Abkhaz reconciliation.  
3. The UK is keen that officials in both Sukhumi and Tbilisi increase their efforts towards the peaceful resolution of this unresolved conflict. A supplier is needed to meet this objective by improving trust, information sharing and physical interaction within and between these conflict-affected societies.

**Background**

4. Since the conflict in the early 1990s between Abkhaz and Georgian forces the interaction between officials and communities on both sides of the conflict-divide has diminished. Following the 2008 Georgia-Russia war the divide increased considerably with growing restrictions, placed by both sides, on who could visit the breakaway territory. The recent Abkhaz-Russian treaty has intensified Russian control over local security issues in Abkhazia and further reduced the space in which the international community can operate.

5. Despite the restricted environment there remains some room for manoeuvre within Abkhazia amongst de facto officials and civil society. Within Georgia there has been a noticeable change in official rhetoric towards Abkhazia as the government seeks to deliver its “engagement without recognition” policy. Policy changes towards Abkhazia are developing slowly and are likely to harden in the run up to Parliamentary election in October 2016. After the elections the UK will continue to encourage the Georgian government to engage with a wide range of Abkhaz society.

6. UK interest in improving the relationship between Abkhazia and Georgia is linked to our desire to increase the space for constructive dialogue between conflict-affected and divided societies. We believe that through dialogue, confidence and trust can be established, tension reduced, and opportunities seized to move forward a reconciliation agenda.

**Outputs and Deliverables**

7. The supplier will need to develop a respected, track 1.5, dialogue mechanism between Abkhaz and Georgian societies that feeds into discourse within each community and opens up debate on how to resolve common issues. Key regular milestones and quantitative / qualitative indicators will be important to help evaluate progress and demonstrate impact.

8. This dialogue mechanism should produce a flexible, but focused, arena in which any issue can be discussed and tangible Confidence Building Mechanisms can be developed and delivered. There

should be a particular focus on outputs and deliverables that can deliver real change within societies and/or at high political levels. The dialogue mechanism will need to be highly sensitised to the wider geopolitical environment and the existing high-level political negotiations at Geneva.

### **Recipient**

9. The direct beneficiaries of this project will be key decision-makers and influence shapers within and between Abkhaz and Georgian societies. This will include those directly involved in the track 1.5 and any follow-on CBM activities. Indirect beneficiaries will be wider society, who at some stage will also need to be engaged to ensure the general population of both territories are also supportive of the arguments and approach towards reconciliation.

10. The international community, especially those involved in key negotiating formats, will have great interest in any successful dialogue format. Careful handling will be required to maintain a clear identity for the dialogue to ensure it is not seen as competing with, but potentially contributing to, existing high-level reconciliation processes.

### **Scope**

11. The FCO are asking the supplier to suggest an intervention or interventions that will make a positive impact on the reconciliation process between Abkhazia and Georgia over a period up to March 2020. British Embassy Tbilisi will work in close co-operation with the supplier to ensure that the project is well aligned with current policy aims for the UK, Georgia and other key international actors. The project will support UK engagement with the breakaway territory of Abkhazia and support ours and others' efforts to advance a new conflict resolution narrative in both Georgia and Abkhazia.

### **Dependencies**

12. The supplier is asked to assume that they will deliver an entirely independent intervention should they win the competition. Items such as office space, translation costs, security, legal fees, insurance, transport and accommodation costs should be priced into the contract. The supplier is responsible for due diligence of potential partners and for assessing, reporting on and mitigating all risks as a project level.

### **Specific requirements:**

13. Due to the sensitive nature of this unresolved conflict and the closed nature of Abkhaz society, it is important that project partners already have an established track record in working in this region. New entrants are unlikely to gain effective traction in the short to medium timeframe of this tender. In addition to native English language skills, staff directly engaged in frontline delivery will also need to have Russian language skills. Georgian language skills are also very welcome.

Careful consideration should also be given as to how this work should be publicised to ensure maximum visibility for UK support, whilst at the same time respecting the sensitivities of the geopolitical context.

### **Reporting and M&E**

14. The supplier will meet at least monthly with the FCO to discuss ongoing progress against their project plan (including communications plan), risks and impact. Significant deliverables are expected within each six-month period.

15. The supplier will be asked to formally submit financial reporting and monitoring and evaluation reports on the project on a quarterly basis as well as an annual summary at the end of each UK

financial year. Evaluation of the project by an external evaluator should be undertaken at a minimum of every two years. The scope and timing of the external evaluation should be agreed between the supplier and FCO. The cost for this evaluation will be borne by the supplier as part of their bid.

16. FCO reserves the right to carry out its own evaluation visits at a time agreed with the supplier and after giving reasonable notice.

#### **Financial Management and Payments**

17. The supplier will be reimbursed as per the CSSF Framework contract on a call-down basis following the submission of monthly line by line fee and expense reports.

#### **Performance Management**

18. Performance will be assessed on a monthly and quarterly basis with key assessments made every six months. Any divergence from project plans will need to be explained and plans subsequently updated in consultation with FCO. Significant delays in delivery of activities and/or reporting could lead to delays in payments, rescope of work and budgets.

#### **Timeframe /Break Points**

19. The project is expected to start in August/September 2016 and can run up to March 2020. However, the FCO reserves the right to terminate any multi-year agreement at the end of each UK financial year if the supplier's performance is not deemed satisfactory or the fund available to the Caucasus CSSF programme are no longer sufficient to continue financing the project.

#### **Budget**

20. The FCO is budgeting approximately £400,000 per annum for each of the financial years from April 2016 to March 2020.

#### **Duty of Care**

21. The FCO has no specific knowledge of any direct threat to the implementers of this project. The implementer will hold the duty of care responsibility for its staff and the security of the project. It is to ensure that all reasonable security measures (physical information and communication) are taken to reduce the threat to as low as is reasonably possible, and to expose any risks that are identified. The project, as with the rest of the Caucasus CSSF programme is overt, no attempt should be made to disguise activity.