



**Counterpart International
Arlington, Virginia**

**BALADI CAP Mid-Term Assessment Request for Proposals
(Submission Deadline: January 13, 2017)**

Counterpart International is seeking an experienced Consultant/Firm to contribute to a mid-term assessment for its program in Lebanon. The mid-term assessment will evaluate the project’s overall success to date with respect to laying the groundwork for achieving long-term sustainability and enabling positive institutional change. The potential evaluator will conduct the assessment in Beirut, Lebanon.

A. Program Background

Counterpart’s *Building Alliances for Local Advancement, Development and Investment – Capacity Building* (BALADI CAP) program funded by USAID/Lebanon and implemented by Management Systems International (MSI), runs from September 30, 2013 to September 30, 2018. The project has three main components: (1) Capacity Building Component (CBC); (2) Civic Engagement for Democratic Governance (CEDG); and (3) Civic Engagement Initiative (CEI). The CBC component focuses on building the institutional capacity of 51 civil society organizations (CSOs) mainly within the three pillars of organizational development, financial management, and monitoring and evaluation (M&E). The CEDG component complements CBC through building the capacity of municipalities and municipal unions in the primary areas of organizational development, financial management, IT and disaster management. CEDG also builds the capacities of local CSOs on issues of local government transparency, oversight and participatory planning. The CEI component seeks to broaden the democratic space for citizen participation in public affairs by creating platforms for informed public debate and increased citizen engagement outside of sectarian and confessional lines.

With *USAID Forward/Local Solutions’* emphasis on building the capacity of local civil society organizations (CSOs) to become direct recipients of donor funding and primary players in program implementation, ensuring compliance with USAID rules and regulations, and the delivery of tangible, measurable results by local partners is of extreme importance. Furthermore, BALADI CAP also aligns well with USAID’s Lebanon Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS)¹ Development Objective One, as it works to enhance the institutional capacity of municipalities to better respond to citizens’ needs and provide quality service delivery. The program supports these objectives through implementation of the following tasks:

¹ USAID’s Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS) for Lebanon proposes an overarching goal of “*improved accountability and credibility of public institutions, and broader economic prosperity*” For more information please refer to <https://www.usaid.gov/lebanon/cdcs>.

- **Task 1:** Conducting pre-award surveys and benchmark assessments of local civil society organizations (CSOs); and
- **Task 2:** Providing capacity-building assistance based upon the results of benchmark assessments to improve the financial management, M&E and governance systems of these CSO partners.
- **Task 3:** Civic Engagement for Democratic Governance (CEDG) The CEDG component fosters citizens' participation in local government affairs by building the capacity of a cadre of up to four local CSO service providers to serve as CSO/ISOs by sub-contracting with them to provide the required municipal capacity-building services to implement CEDG component activities, while at the same time strengthening the capacity of municipalities to engage more effectively with citizens in assuring good governance and the delivery of quality local services.
- **Task 4:** Civic Engagement Initiative (CEI) The CEI component seeks to broaden the democratic space for citizen participation in public affairs by creating platforms for informed public debate and increased citizen engagement outside of sectarian and confessional lines. The three most important issues identified for the respective advocacy issue networks, which will each be led by an Intermediary Service Organization (ISO) are: *Governance and Accountability, Human Rights, and Environment Preservation and Solid Waste Management.*

BALADI CAP partners – identified and selected by USAID – primarily include: (a) BALADI Activity's implementing partners and sub-implementers; and (b) local organizations partnering with municipalities that have received grants under the BALADI Activity. BALADI CAP has been mandated by USAID to build the institutional capacity of a total of 51 CSOs over the life-cycle of the Activity.

BALADI CAP provides technical assistance to its CSO partners through standard and specialized training workshops, Communities of Practice regional meetings, hands on coaching, mentoring, and on-the-job training (OJTs) based on prioritized needs identified through an OCA-based organizational capacity benchmark assessment resulting in custom-tailored Action Plans. BALADI CAP interventions are designed to link improving individual and organizational competencies to specific institutional performance gaps.

B. Scope of Work

The mid-term assessment design should accommodate and address the following elements:

1. This will be an in-depth analysis, beyond merely looking at the extent to which the project's objectives and goals have been achieved, but taking a higher level assessment-focused approach and gauging the extent to which the project activities undertaken to date have been effective and are likely to contribute to long-term sustainability and bring about positive institutional change for the beneficiaries, i.e. local civil society organizations and the municipalities/municipal unions with whom BALADI CAP works.
2. Assess the extent to which USAID's expectations are likely to be met or not and why; especially when compared against the *Local solutions and USAID Forward* approach, as well as *Development Objective One* under USAID's CDGS for Lebanon. In particular, the evaluator should assess and identify the short, medium, and long term impact of this civil society capacity building program on civil society's ability to effectively participate in and contribute to democratic governance in Lebanon as a result of BALADI CAP interventions. Moreover, explore and identify what potential corrective measures, if any, might be undertaken in the remaining time period to meet USAID's

overall expectations, and the concrete results Counterpart foresees the project to leave behind as expressed in the project results framework. It is expected that Counterpart, USAID, the government of Lebanon, MSI, as well as the community be engaged as much as possible in this process to ensure that perceptions of all major stakeholders are taken into account.

3. Capture lessons learned and provide suggestions on the effectiveness of BALADI CAP's various programming approaches and measure their impact, sustainability, and advantages and disadvantages.
4. Assess the impact that the operating environment/local context in Lebanon may have had on the project's success/shortcomings, if any. As this program was initiated under the Civil Society Leader with Associate (LWA) mechanism, consider how this internal assessment can provide valuable information that will contribute to the mechanism's overall learning framework, which can then be replicated or shared in other contexts.

Evaluation Questions

The evaluation specialist is required to provide answers to the following aspects of the project:

1. Is the project's legacy as expected by Counterpart and USAID likely to be met and to what extent?
2. How can BALADI CAP further improve its programming practices (i.e. activities, tools and overall approach) in Lebanon or in a similar context?
3. To what extent has the Activity's capacity-building interventions been successful in:
 - Building the financial management, M&E, and governance capacity of CSO partners that joined BALADI CAP under Cohort I (12 CSO partners).
 - Ensuring a transfer from individual to institutional capacity-building; and creating a sustainable model for institutional change.
 - Facilitating or laying the groundwork for the establishment of a legacy institution that can continue the capacity building activities for local CSOs beyond the life of BALADI-CAP, and act as legacy institutions. The key here will be to assess the extent to which activities to date have been successful in contributing to the capacity of an organization sufficiently for it to be a legacy institution candidate.
4. What potential impact the project has had so far: Assessment of the medium and potential long-term effects, both positive or negative. Attribution of effects to project interventions is not required, but attempts should be made to prove any likely contribution.
5. What is likely to be sustained: Assessment of likelihood that the benefits of the project will endure over time after the completion of the project. Sustainability should also assess the extent to which the project has planned for an exit strategy, developed local ownership for the project, and developed sustainable partnerships.

The evaluator should also take into consideration the extent to which program implementation has been *relevant, effective and efficient* as defined below:

Relevance: the extent to which the project interventions met the needs of the project beneficiaries and is aligned with the country's and US Government's development goals, objectives, and strategies. Relevance

should also address the extent to which the project was designed taking into account the economic, cultural, and political context and existing relevant program activities.

Effectiveness: the extent to which the project is likely to achieve its objectives. Effectiveness should also assess the extent to which the interventions are contributing to the expected results or objectives.

Efficiency: the extent to which the project resources (inputs) have led to the achieved results. An assessment of efficiency should also consider whether the same results could have been achieved with fewer resources or whether alternative approaches could have been adopted to achieve the same results.

The above will necessitate an evaluation design that employs qualitative methods for evaluating performance. Counterpart expects that the evaluator will collect data from the following major stakeholders:

- CSOs in the various cohorts who have been trained or are receiving training to date
- Newly identified ISOs or ISO candidate organizations
- The service providers who have been contracted to carry out benchmark assessments and development of action plans for the municipalities and municipal unions
- MSI field staff
- USAID Mission in Lebanon – AOR
- Relevant national or local government primarily Municipalities and municipal unions

Approach and Methodology

Due to the fluid context in Lebanon, Counterpart is looking for innovative suggestions regarding the methodology design of this evaluation. Generally, this evaluation should utilize qualitative methods and tools appropriate to the evaluation’s research questions, with particular attention paid to engaging all stakeholders. It is highly recommended to have qualitative data available to support the final evaluation report. Additionally, even if/when secondary data are available for the evaluator to build on, attempts should be made to obtain primary data with reliable methods to ensure data integrity.

The methods and tools used in this evaluation may include a combination of the following:

Document review: The evaluator will find it useful to consult a broad range of background documents related to capacity building, civic engagement, drive through model, USAID Forward apart from project documents provided by Counterpart and MSI. Besides project documents, Counterpart will support the evaluator’s efforts in obtaining secondary data. The package of briefing materials could include:

1. Program Award Agreement executed between Counterpart and USAID
2. Program Award Agreement executed between Counterpart and MSI
3. MSI’s BALADI CAP “Mid-Term Performance Evaluation”
4. BALADI CAP’s Performance Monitoring, Work, and Implementation plan
5. Relevant Quarterly Reports
6. Any other relevant project documents

Key Informant Interviews (KIIs): KIIs are suggested to be conducted with key stakeholders, including MSI’s staff and associated consultants, Field-based USAID staff, relevant local government staff, relevant local partners staff, Counterpart relevant staff, CSO and ISO staff, and the community.

Focus Group Discussion: It is anticipated that the evaluator will conduct multiple rounds of focus group discussions with MSI Counterpart staff and CSO and ISO beneficiaries’ staff

Survey: The evaluator may carry out a survey of beneficiaries to test and verify the integrity of M&E data collected by MSI field staff and reported to USAID. The evaluator will detail in the Methodology Plan whether an in-depth survey, more relevant for qualitative information, or a broad quantitative survey will be conducted, with supporting reasons.

C. Deliverables

The evaluator is expected to provide Counterpart the following deliverables:

1) Mid-term Assessment Workplan: The evaluator will prepare/formulate the final evaluation questions, finalize the assignment timeline, clarify potential team members' roles and responsibilities, and develop data collection methods, tools, and guidelines over the course of the two weeks following signature of the contract. The evaluator should submit the final, detailed *Mid-term Assessment Workplan* **no later than two weeks after contract start date**. Counterpart will support the evaluator's efforts in obtaining information about the logistical and administrative procedures for the assignment.

2) Methodology Plan: A strategy document that details the methodology that will be used, geographic and participant sampling structure, and evaluative procedures. The document will include a data analysis plan that details what procedures will be used to analyze data. Each data collection, analysis, and/or presentation tool, including the specific instruments, needs to be approved by Counterpart prior to the start of the evaluator's field work.

3) Draft Evaluation Report: Prior to the mid-term assessment debriefing, the evaluator will submit a rough draft of the evaluation report to Counterpart Headquarters, who will then provide preliminary comments. Based on the draft report and comments, potential meetings among evaluator and Counterpart will be scheduled to discuss the results. The report will outline the methodology used, overall analysis, and the conclusions of the mid-term assessment, and specific programmatic recommendations for ongoing or future programming.

4) Debriefing: The evaluator will present the major findings of the final evaluation to Counterpart's HQ program staff and other stakeholders. The debrief should also include recommendations, challenges encountered throughout the process and explain how they were overcome or not, as well as lessons learned. The debriefing will also include pending data validation issues, if any, in order to ensure that all data has been collected and no further data collection is necessary. The debriefing will take place at a time and place agreed upon by both parties or via Skype, if needed.

5) Final Report: The final report, not to exceed 40 pages (not including annexes), should be concise and to the point, utilizing charts, graphs and diagrams where appropriate. In producing the final evaluation report, the evaluator will link findings to the data analyzed (all findings must be evidence-based). Those links must be clearly articulated in the report. Additionally, the conclusions will clearly relate to the findings. It may require back and forth consultation, payment will not be rendered until the report is approved.

D. Timeline

Counterpart anticipates the preparatory work and review of relevant reports and documents to be completed by **February 22, 2017**.

The evaluator should expect to conduct the field work during **February 27 to March 31, 2017** period.

The mid-term assessment is expected to be completed and the final report submitted on **April 30, 2017**.

The first draft of the final report is due to Counterpart by **April 14, 2017**. Once the draft is submitted, Counterpart has five business days to review the report, raise concerns, provide comments, and send it back to the evaluator no later than close of business on **April 21, 2017**. The evaluator will then address CPI's comments and concerns and submit the final report no later than **April 30, 2017**. If CPI is still not satisfied with the final report, then both CPI and the evaluator will negotiate a no cost extension of no more than five (5) days to ensure both parties are satisfied with the final result.

Throughout the mid-term assessment, there must be open communication between the evaluator and CPI through phone calls, emails, text messages, Skype calls, or face-to-face meetings for effective coordination between both parties and to ensure that potential issues are resolved in a timely manner. Any anticipated changes to the plan during the course of the evaluation must be submitted in writing and be approved by Counterpart.

The following table outlines requirements for the final report:

Final Report Requirements	
Report Length	Maximum of 40 pages, excluding the Table of Content and Annexes
Executive Summary	Include a 3 to 5-page Executive Summary that provides a brief overview of the evaluation purpose, project background, evaluation questions, methods, findings, and conclusions.
Questions	Address all evaluation questions in the SOW
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain evaluation methodology in detail.• Disclose evaluation limitations, especially those associated with the evaluation methodology (e.g. selection bias, recall bias, etc.). NOTE: A summary of methodology can be included in the body of the report, with the full description provided as an annex.
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Present findings as analyzed facts, evidence and data supported by strong qualitative evidence.• Include findings that assess outcomes and impacts on males and females.
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support recommendations with specific findings.• Provide recommendations that are action-oriented, practical, and specific.

Annexes	<p>Include the following as annexes, at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statement of Work. • Full description of evaluation methods. • All evaluation tools (questionnaires, checklists, discussion guides, surveys, etc.). • A list of sources of information (key informants, documents reviewed, other data sources). <p>Only if applicable, include as an annex Statement(s) of Differences regarding any significant unresolved differences of opinion on the part of funders, implementers, and/or members of the evaluator.</p>
Quality Control	Assess reports for quality by including an in-house peer technical review with comments provided to the evaluator.
Transparency	An English report should be submitted in electronic version to Counterpart for approval.

E. Administrative Provisions

The evaluator will coordinate with Counterpart HQ’s Program Manager Perin Arkun, MENA Regional Director, Monica Goletiani and Monitoring and Evaluation Officer Mowdou Naky in regards to the overall scope, direction, and completion of this assignment.

Counterpart HQ program staff will provide all relevant reports, data and related information necessary to prepare the evaluator for the assignment. And as required, Counterpart HQ staff will coordinate with BALADI CAP project staff to facilitate potential meetings with CSO partners and all relevant stakeholders during the field visit in Lebanon.

Payment will be based on the following milestones:

Milestone	Payment
Contract Signature	15 % of the total
Methodology Plan Submission	20 % of the total
Draft Report Submission and Debrief completion	30 % of the total
Final report submitted and approved; all data handed over to CPI	35 % of the total

F. Proposal Requirements

The applicant shall submit a full technical proposal to Counterpart via an electronic submission with the following documents:

1. **Qualifications:** Resume/CV of the lead consultant that demonstrates at least 5-7 years of solid experience working on or leading USG-funded program/project mid-term and/or final evaluations or

similar work, preferably in the region. Prior experience working in Lebanon a plus. *Native Arabic speaker, or near-native level command of Arabic is required.* If the proposal is submitted by a consortium of partners, qualifications of each proposed partner should be presented. Consultant must also demonstrate familiarity and experience with designing and managing qualitative research designs.

2. **References:** The applicant is required to submit three references with email and telephone contact information related to past experiences of evaluation research.
3. **Proposed methodology and structure of the evaluation, which will include:**
 - Proposed sampling methodology
 - Proposed evaluation design with a detailed description of tools to be used
 - Team composition and structure
 - Quality control method and tools
4. **Work plan** which will include: Detailed timeline of activities – in days, required for each stage of the mid-term assessment.
5. **Budget:** An itemized budget in US dollars.

G. Proposal Evaluation

Proposals for this Mid-term assessment will be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Score
Consultant prior experience in similar work	25 points
Proposed overall methodology	25 points
Proposed sampling method	15 points
Quality of data-collection and data-entry procedures	10 points
Timeframe for delivery of Evaluation deliverables	5 points
Methods of quality control	10 points
Budget	10 points
Total Score:	100 points

When drafting the proposal, the Consultant/Firm should be careful to include all information requested above. Failure to submit a complete application will result in the rejection of the proposal.

All questions pertaining to this RFP must be submitted by **12:00 noon EST on January 2, 2017**. Questions may be submitted, in written form, to: **Ms. Khadija Boussen at kboussen@counterpart.org**. Questions will be answered within two (2) business days via email. Questions and answers will be shared with all bidders.

H. Instructions for Submitting the Proposal

Please submit the proposal via email as a Word and/or Excel document to: **Ms. Khadija Boussem** at kboussem@counterpart.org **no later than January 13, 2017 at 11:59 p.m. EST.** Please include in the subject “BALADI-CAP Mid-term assessment.”

The proposal submission deadline is January 13, 2017 at 11:59 p.m. EST. Proposals received after this date will not be considered. The selected Consultant/Firm is expected to start work on the mid-term assessment on or around February 13, 2017.