

SCOPE OF WORK

Final Evaluation of the “Supporting Independent Media in the Baltics Action” (SIMBA) Project

PROJECT BACKGROUND

In 2018 Internews began the DRL-funded project **Supporting Independent Media in the Baltics Action** (SIMBA). The project is implemented in cooperation with The Baltic Centre for Media Excellence (BCME), a highly regarded independent Latvian non-profit organization that builds resilient media systems across the Baltics. The project implementation period was originally set to run from July 3, 2018, through June 30, 2020, but after receiving two cost extensions the end date was moved to August 31, 2022.

The **project goal** is to foster resilience in media and society by making credible, professional media more competitive, and expanding domestic audiences for fact-based, reliable information. The project targeted young and adult local audiences, including Russian-language media audiences in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, bridging divides between communities, by achieving the following objectives:

Objective 1: Improve independent media’s and public broadcasters’ sustainability and quality of content.

Objective 2: Strengthen citizens’ ability to identify and analyze independent, reliable, high-quality news and information.

SIMBA EVALUATION PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this evaluation is to assess the performance, results, impact, and sustainability of the project. Key evaluation questions:

1. *What output and outcome results, if any, were achieved by the project?*
2. *How was the project effective, if at all, in meeting its intended objectives?*
3. *In what ways are the results of the project activities sustainable?*

These three key evaluation questions are broken down further in the evaluation matrix which will be provided separately. While many data sources are applicable throughout the evaluation questions, project M&E data quarterly reports will be critical for evaluating whether the Project achieved intended output and outcome results, and the sustainability.

The evaluation will focus on the overall SIMBA project performance in Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. The consultant will be responsible for producing several deliverables using a methodology and following a timeline that is mutually agreed upon with the project staff. The evaluation should include recommendations for potential future programming to support increased access to objective information and enhanced media literacy in the targeted countries.

The evaluation process should consist of three main phases: (1) developing the methodology, (2) data collection, and (3) analysis and report writing. While the evaluation should take into consideration all SIMBA beneficiaries and partners, the evaluator may want to single out case studies for a more in-depth assessment. The evaluator will exercise discretion in the handling of sensitive and proprietary information.

Required Tasks and Deliverables

- Conduct an extensive document review, including the original solicitations and proposals, all quarterly narrative reports and M&E data, documentation of grant opportunities, grantees’ narrative reports, Secret Reader’s reports, project-commissioned audience research reports (focus group discussions and audience satisfaction index survey reports, etc.), a media partner’s impact evaluation report, Outcome Harvesting verifications, and other records and data collection tools.
- Finalize research methodology and other details in conjunction with project staff, including the creation of a list of questions for each target group of stakeholders.
- Hold online meetings/interviews/focus group discussions with project management staff, the implementing partner, consultants and trainers, participating media partners, and other stakeholders throughout the project’s target countries to evaluate project outcomes.
- Complete the evaluation report (15-20 pages) in English with findings and recommendations.
- A debrief with Internews staff on the evaluation findings.

Estimated timeframe: Approximately 26-34 working days according to the estimated timetable below. The final evaluation report must be submitted by EOB July 29, 2022.

REQUIRED TASKS	ESTIMATED LOE	DEADLINE
Conduct desk research of existing project materials	4-5 days	
Finalize research methodology, evaluation framework, list of interviewees, and interview questions.	3-4 days	
Field phase: Conduct interviews/focus group discussions with key informants	7-10 days	
Analysis of information collected and completion of first draft	7-9 days	
Debrief with Internews staff on evaluation findings	1 day	
Draft final report	3 days	
Finalize evaluation report based on Internews’ comments	1-2 days	July 29, 2022

Qualifications/Experience

- Master’s degree in social sciences, media, international development, evaluation, OR equivalent professional experience
- Demonstrated experience conducting mid-term and final external project evaluations, including monitoring and evaluation experience, application of interviewing techniques, qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis, research and statistical analysis.
- Knowledge of media and political environment in the Baltics; in-depth understanding of issues facing media outlets around digital convergence and financial sustainability.
- Excellent inter-cultural communication skills/cultural sensitivity.
- Required fluency in English, Russian; fluency in at least one Baltic language strongly preferred.