

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

on selection of consultants from 10 countries – Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan – to provide information to EHRA on shrinking space and criminalization of key populations

RFP Number	EHRA-06-11
RFP Title	Focal Points in Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.
RFP Closing Date and time:	23:59 Vilnius time on 3rd July 2025
Proposal Submission Address:	info@harmreductioneurasia.org

Background

The Eurasian Harm Reduction Association (EHRA) is a non-profit, public membership organization uniting activists and harm reduction organizations from Central and Eastern Europe and Central Asia (CEECA), with the mission to actively unite and support communities and civil societies to ensure the rights, freedoms, health and well-being of people who use psychoactive substances in the CEECA region.

In recent years, an array of restrictive “crisis” measures—ranging from foreign-agent registration laws and draconian anti-drug propaganda statutes to LGBTQI+ censorship rules and steep cuts in global health funding—has severely constrained the ability of civil society actors to deliver essential HIV, TB and related health services to key populations. By criminalizing or stigmatizing community-based organizations, these policies shrink operational space, impede outreach and testing, disrupt treatment adherence and undermine partnerships with public health authorities. Some community-based organizations and NGOs have been forced to suspend or abandon their HIV, TB and related health programs — leaving key populations without vital prevention, testing and treatment services — while frontline activists and service providers face harassment, legal sanction or even arrest under these punitive laws, further eroding community trust and capacity to respond to mounting health needs.

In response to these developments a **RESILIENT project** (started in 2025) **aims** to build resilience and strengthen advocacy of community-led groups/organizations in EECA to prevent and mitigate regulatory challenges that threaten the rights of people living with HIV (PLHIV) and key populations (KPs) – people using drugs (PUD), LGBTQI+, sex workers (SW). It focuses on countering restrictive laws (e.g. “foreign agent”, “anti-LGBT propaganda”) that shrink civic space and hinder community-led, including HIV, responses.

Objectives of the project:

- **Monitor** regulatory landscape to anticipate emerging threats in 10 countries **Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan.**
- **Sustain engagement** to protect civic space.
- **Build resilience** of community to navigate restrictive environments.
- **Advocate** against harmful regulations and mitigation of impact (nationally/internationally).
- **Respond** to acute national-level regulatory developments.

The project is implemented by **EHRA** in close partnership with 3 regional community-led networks – **ECOM**, **EWNA**, **SWAN**. Within the first objective – **Monitor** regulatory landscape to anticipate emerging threats in 10 countries – EHRA is looking for **1 consultant per country** (10 in total: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Ukraine, and Uzbekistan) to be Focal Points (FPs) and provide updates and data from the country on regular basis.

Objective, tasks, deliverables

The **objective** of each consultant will be to provide EHRA with up-to-date information related to the civic space in their respective country, namely related to (1) “foreign agent” and other laws restricting key aspects of the civic space¹, (2) propaganda laws (anti-LGBTQI+ propaganda & anti-drug propaganda laws) and (3) criminalization of key populations (KPs): LGBTQI+, people living with HIV (PLHIV), people using drugs (PUD), sex workers (SW).

NOTE: information provided by the FPs will not be public; security situation and measures needed will be discussed with each selected consultant.

Tasks & deliverables

No.	Task	Deliverables
1.	Complete full and follow-up assessments using the instruments provided by project implementors (Full assessment instrument & Follow-up instrument). Assessments aim to gather information on the situation in the country related to (1) “foreign agent” and other laws restricting key aspects of the civic space, (2) propaganda laws (anti-LGBTQI+ propaganda & anti-drug	2 full assessments completed based on <i>Full assessment instrument</i> 6 follow-up assessments completed based

¹ Civic space is the environment that allows people and groups to participate in the political, economic, social, and cultural life of their societies. It's essentially the space where civil society operates, enabling individuals and groups to access information, express their views, and engage in dialogue with the government and other actors. A healthy civic space is crucial for a functioning democracy, allowing citizens to organize, advocate for change, and participate in public life without fear of reprisal. (https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/CivicSpace/UN_Guidance_Note.pdf)

Key aspects of civic space: **Freedom of Association:** The ability to form groups, organizations, and movements; **Freedom of Expression:** The ability to express oneself freely, including through speech, the press, and the internet; **Freedom of Peaceful Assembly:** The ability to gather peacefully and publicly; **Access to Information:** The ability to access information necessary to participate in public life; **Protection from Reprisal:** The ability to participate in civic activities without fear of harassment, intimidation, or other forms of coercion. (https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/Issues/CivicSpace/UN_Guidance_Note.pdf).

	<p>propaganda laws) and (3) criminalization of KPs: LGBTQI+, PLHIV, PUD, SW.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Instruments provided by EHRA;</i> - <i>See section Timeframe (below) for submission dates;</i> - <i>Before signing the consultancy agreement the consultant will have an opportunity to review the instruments to better understand the scope of work.</i> 	on <i>Follow-up instrument</i>
2.	<p>Documentation of cases – if full assessment indicates cases describing the impact of the shrinking space on CSOs providing services to PLHIV/KPs (e.g. closing of the CSO, changes within the CSO, arrest of activist), the consultant will be asked to document the cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Documentation instrument provided by EHRA.</i> 	2 cases documented based on <i>Case documentation instrument</i> – at least 1 case per full assessment
3.	<p>Provide information in the joint communication and coordination exchange platform – all focal points will be added to the closed channel, where they will provide relevant links in real time: facebook, news outlets, youtube, etc.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>If the news is in national language, provide a short summary in English or Russian. Online translation tools can be used.</i> - <i>“Rules of engagement” within the channel will be agreed upon.</i> 	-
4.	<p>Participate in trainings on the use of instruments for data collection – when the FPs will be selected online trainings on monitoring of the regulatory landscape and advocacy and use of assessment instruments will be organized, where the FPs will also be trained.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Trainings are envisaged at the end of July and/ or September 2025. The dates will depend on whether and when the team of focal points is complete.</i> 	-
5.	<p>Review of 2 Regional reports - data provided by the FPs will provide basis for the regional report on regulatory challenges related to shrinking space that could negatively affect the rights and health of PLHIV and KPs. FPs will be asked to review the reports and check the accuracy of the information regarding their countries.</p>	Comments to 2 reports provided

Timeframe

The contract with consultants will be signed for August 2025 – 15 May 2027.

Timeframe for providing Full and Follow-up assessments

Assessment	Reporting period	Submission date
Full assessment	1 st January 2024 – 31 August 2025	31 August 2025
Follow-up assessment	September – November 2025	31 November 2025
Follow-up assessment	December 2025 – February 2026	28 February 2026
Follow-up assessment	March – May 2026	31 May 2026
Full assessment	1 September 2025 – 31 August 2026	31 August 2026
Follow-up assessment	September – November 2026	30 November 2026
Follow-up assessment	December 2026 – February 2027	28 February 2027
Follow-up assessment	March – May 2026	31 May 2027

Qualifications for the consultant

Consultants applying to this RFP should:

- Have working contacts/ or be able to establish them with the CSOs working in HIV field and community-lead CSOs (LGBTQI+, PUD, PLHIV & SW);
- Active involvement and/ or understanding of the processes related to the civic space;
- Experience in completing assessments and documentation of cases;
- Have the working level of English and/ or Russian;
- Having a background in law education and/ or practice, understanding of human rights would be an asset (not required).

NOTE: selected consultants to act as Focal Points will have to follow security protocols. Trainings and mentoring on the issue will be provided.

Cost of services

The total contract cost for the work of the consultant is 2200 USD/ per 2 years (1100 USD per 12 months).

Evaluation Criteria

An Evaluation Panel will assess the extent to which proposals submitted in response to this announcement meet the evaluation criteria below.

The minimum technical score is 80. Only candidates with a minimum score of 80 points out of a maximum of 100 are considered eligible for the assignment.

The candidates with the highest technical score that meet the requirement will be invited for negotiation of the agreement.

Criteria	Weighting
Working contacts with the CSOs working in HIV field, including working with LGBTQI+, PUD, PLHIV & SW.	50 points
Active involvement and/ or interest in civic space issues.	25 points
Experience in completing assessment and documentation of cases.	25 points
Total	100 points

Applications will be reviewed and Focal Points selected by a Evaluation Panel consisting of representatives of all 4 regional networks (ECOM, EHRA, EWNA, SWAN).

How to apply

To be eligible as an EHRA consultant, any organization or individual must comply with the [Eurasian Harm Reduction Association Code of Ethics](#).

Applicants must submit the following documents:

1. CV;
2. Letter of Interest (LoI) explaining how the candidate meets the qualifications listed in this RFP.

Please submit your proposal to the info@harmreductioneurasia.org till the **23:59 Vilnius time on 3rd July 2025, with the SUBJECT line “EHRA 06-11 Focal Point Country”** (indicate the country for which you would like to be a Focal Point, for example “EHRA 06-11 Focal Point Armenia”).

ATTENTION. If these documents are not submitted in full, the participant will not be allowed to take part in the tender.

General terms

Interested consultants should pay attention to the following conditions:

- This RFP shall not be interpreted as a contract or obligation of any kind. This invitation to tender does not in any way oblige EHRA to enter into contracts, nor does it oblige EHRA to pay any costs incurred in preparing and submitting applications.
- During the evaluation period, EHRA reserves the right to ask candidates for a call.
- Based on the results of the tender, a contract for the provision of services will be signed with the winners. The contract is not an employment contract. Payment of all taxes and social insurance is the responsibility of the contractor. Further work will be carried out in accordance with the request of EHRA, which will indicate the timing and other specific conditions.