Terms of Reference (TOR) for Research Consultancy

**Project Title:** Exemplifying the detrimental impact of EU and US anti-terrorism aid regulations on human rights activists and civil society.

**Background:** The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is a Quaker organization that promotes lasting peace with justice, as a practical expression of faith in action. Drawing on continuing spiritual insights and working with people of many backgrounds, we nurture the seeds of change and respect for human life that transform social relations and systems. AFSC is building a global program focusing on civic space and intends to undertake research to inform the development of this initiative.

The overall purpose of this research is to demonstrate how EU and US state aid regulations designed to prevent funds going to terrorists and / or being laundered, are being used in some countries to quash human rights organisations, opposition parties and civil society. AFSC has witnessed the impact of these regulations and would like to develop a strategy to bring about a change to these regulations, to enable civil society to flourish.

**Objectives of the research:** The researcher will:

1. Clearly articulate the current EU and US state regulations in a simple and accessible way. Include reference to other influential regulations at a global level that are restricting civil society and human rights activists on the ground.

2. Undertake 3 case studies to demonstrate the impact of these regulations. Ideas for the case studies will be discussed and agreed with AFSC at the beginning of the research period. The case studies will be undertaken through desk research, and some online interviews as necessary. The research will not involve travel to the regions. AFSC will give support in identifying useful contacts as far as possible, but it will be beneficial if the researcher already has contacts to engage with on these questions and issues.

3. Suggest what realistically, not ideally, would be fit for purpose in place of the current regulations. This could include a suggestion of changes to wording, or implementation or monitoring. We are looking for some change that we can advocate for.

4. Suggest ideas for how AFSC can bring about change to these regulations – would it be actions we can carry out alone, or are there networks or movements we can join already campaigning for these changes? Is there an opportunity for AFSC to lead on this work? What is our comparative advantage? What would a realistic goal be for this work, but 2030?

**Methodology:** Given the complexity of the research objectives and the need to engage with a wide range of stakeholders, a mixed-methods approach would be expected for this research consultancy, such as a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods to provide a comprehensive understanding of the issues presented.

**Scope:** The scope of work for this research consultancy encompasses a comprehensive range of activities and deliverables to fulfill the objectives.

**Deliverables:**

A 25-page maximum report, excluding appendices, with 1.5-page executive summary. The report should include:

1. Executive summary 1.5 pages
2. Introduction / context 1.5 pages
3. Section setting out, in simple terms, the current EU, US and other relevant bodies anti-terrorism and anti-money laundering restrictions that relate to aid, including a timeline of when these regulations were introduced – 2.5 pages
4. Case studies from 3 countries to demonstrate how these regulations are being utilised to shut down civil society and human rights organizations. 4 pages per case study = 12 pages
5. Section with clear specific suggestions of how the EU, US and so on can redesign the regulations and monitoring to ensure that civil society and human rights organisations are supported, instead of threatened – 2 pages
6. Section with advocacy recommendations on how to influence the EU and US state to change the regulations – 2 pages
7. Conclusion / recommendations for further advocacy, or programming, or research – 2 pages

Timeline: The report is expected to be submitted by 30 September 2023. There may be some back and forth with comments or questions, and a final report will be submitted by 15th October 2023.

Reporting and Communication: The consultant will maintain regular communication with the focal contact person from AFSC throughout the research process. Progress updates and draft reports will be submitted for review and feedback as required.

Consultant profile:

1. Research expertise
   1.1. Advanced degree in a relevant field such as Political Science, International Relations, International Development, Human Rights, Social Science, or a related discipline
   1.2. Proven track record in conducting rigorous research, including experience with mixed methods approaches, data collection, analysis, and interpretation
2. Subject matter knowledge
   2.1. In-depth understanding of EU and US aid regulations and their impact on human rights activists and civil society
3. Methodological proficiency
   3.1. Strong skills in both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies.
4. Analytical skills
   4.1. Ability to critically analyze complex data, identify trends, draw meaningful conclusions, and derive actionable recommendations.
5. Communication skills
   5.1. Excellent written communication skills to present findings, insights, and recommendations effectively
   5.2. Experience in creating clear and concise reports
6. Ethical awareness
   6.1. Strong understanding of ethical considerations in research, particularly when dealing with sensitive data and engaging with diverse stakeholder groups.
7. Cultural sensitivity
   7.1. Cultural awareness and sensitivity, especially when working with stakeholders from different regions and backgrounds.
8. Project and time management skills

Budget: 4,500 USD total for the consultancy, with the expectation that the time committed will be at least ten days.

Confidentiality: All information and data gathered during the research consultancy will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used solely for the intended purposes.

Rights and Ownership: Upon completion, all research findings and materials will be the property of American Friends Service Committee and the consultant shall not use or disclose the findings without prior written consent.

Submission of Proposals: Interested consultants should submit their research project proposals, including a cover letter, CV, sample of previous work to TOR@afsc.org by Monday 21st August 2023.
at 9am BST. Interviews are planned to be held on 23rd and 25th August. For any questions or clarifications please contact the email provided.