

Terms of Reference (ToRs)

Group of experts for research report on audiovisual media coverage of 2025 electoral campaign in Albania

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| Name of the Project: | “Evidence Based Monitoring of Local Public Spending during Electoral Processes” |
| Reference number: | NDCINEAR/2023/451-721 |
| Job title: | Group of experts for research report on audiovisual media coverage of 2025 electoral campaign in Albania |
| Location: | Tirana |
| Working days: | 40 days |
| Duration: | April - September, 2025 |
| Deadline for application: | 28.03.2025 |

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Contracting authority

Balkan Investigative Reporting Network in Albania (BIRN Albania)

Project background

The overall objective of the project “Evidence Based Monitoring of Local Public Spending during Electoral Processes” is *to contribute to the enhancement of electoral integrity, transparency, and equal competition in Albania's electoral processes.*

In order to address the fundamental challenges and deficiencies within Albania's electoral system, particularly those in relation to the misuse of public funds, the engagement of public administration in politics, the misuse of digital media and prevalence of hate speech in political discourse, as well as the barriers encountered by women and youth to political participation, the activities and outputs of this action will focus in achieving the following outcomes:

- Increased transparency and accountability on use of public funds and public administration in relation to electoral processes.
- Improved governance of electoral process - More engaged civil society, media and youth in election monitoring, including watchdog role on issues related to misuse of public funds, political party finances, media coverage and representation of women candidates and gender mainstreaming in the 2025 electoral campaign.

- Enhanced public trust and confidence in the electoral process - Civil society actors and communities better informed on election processes in order to strengthen multi-stakeholders discussions on election integrity and related reforms

The project is implemented by Qëndresa Qytetare in partnership with BIRN Albania and is financially supported by the European Union.

Background of the assignment

The media plays an important role during election campaigns. It informs voters about the political platforms of candidates and parties participating in the elections, monitoring the campaign and educating voters about their rights and obligations during the electoral process.

Through the media, candidates participating in elections and political parties should have an open platform for debate, as well as space to convey their messages to the voters, so the latter can make an informed choice on the political offers. To fulfil its role during the election period, the media must be pluralistic and independent of political influences, have sufficient resources to cover the campaign, as well as should have access to the activities organized by the political subjects. During a campaign, voters, electoral subjects, journalists and the media enjoy a number of interrelated rights. Voters' right to be informed means that they are served independent and balanced information on political offers, candidates and electoral subjects.

Also, voters have the right to be informed about the electoral process, preparations and infrastructure managed by public entities, as well as about voting, counting and announcement of results. Political parties and candidates also have the right to communicate their electoral platforms in a free and uninfluenced manner. For this reason, during the election campaign, they should be provided with free access to the media through various television formats. Also, they should be given the right of reply to critical reports in the media which question their integrity or political programs. According to the Electoral Code, providers of audiovisual services have an obligation to ensure balanced, pluralistic and impartial coverage during the 30 days of the election campaign, adhering to professional journalistic standards and avoiding the use of hate speech.

During the last two electoral campaigns in Albania, [2021](#) and [2023](#), BIRN has produced data and reports on the audiovisual media coverage of the electoral campaign, by analysing data provided by Audiovisual Media Authority.

In a similar way, for the May 11th, 2025 campaign, BIRN Albania is looking to engage a group of experts to produce a monitoring report on audiovisual media coverage of the campaign, which will include at least the following elements:

- Detailed analysis of the monitoring data provided by AMA for central and local TV stations, including data on the representation of political subjects and actors in news bulletins, live airtime and political talk shows for the 30 days of the campaign;
- Detailed data on the advertisement aired by different political subjects and actors and quantification of the possible costs;
- Gender dis-balance in the coverage of the candidates;

- Legal analysis of the administrative measures suggested by AMA and decided by CEC;
- Recommendations on future actions needed to improve audiovisual media coverage of electoral campaigns in Albania.

The group of experts will be supported through data coders that will be engaged by BIRN Albania and experts of both groups should closely collaborate to ensure the successful completion of this assignment.

Specific work

Results to be achieved by the group of experts under this call are detailed below:

- Development of the methodology: Develop the methodology to gather and analyse the quantitative data published by AMA and CEC based on their current media monitoring methodology. Develop a set of qualitative indicators that should be analysed during the 30 days of the electoral campaign. Train the coders engaged by BIRN Albania on how to track the necessary data on daily basis. Estimated workload for this task is 10 working days.
- Data analysis: Analyse the quantitative data gathered by the coders and produce at least two sets of data – one for the first half of the campaign and the second one for the overall duration of the campaign. Closely collaborate with BIRN journalists and editors to produce in-depth analyses based on the two sets of data. Analyse the estimated costs of political advertisement aired, as well as all the related recommendations of AMA and decisions of CEC in such regards. Estimated workload for this task is 15 working days.
- Based on the final data analysed, the group of experts should draft the research report, shared it with the project team and finalize the report. The research report should include at least the following sections: Context and literature review; the methodology; main quantitative and qualitative findings; conclusions and recommendations, as well as necessary annexes with complimentary data. Estimated workload for this task is 15 working days.

REQUIREMENTS FOR THE ASSIGNMENT

General qualifications

The experts must meet the following criteria:

- University degree in media, journalism, political science, communication, or other relevant fields.
- Strong knowledge of the political and media landscape in Albania.
- At least **5 years of professional experience** in media research, journalism, or election monitoring.
- Excellent written and verbal communication skills in **English and Albanian**.

- Strong analytical skills and ability to synthesize data into comprehensive reports.

Specific Qualifications

- Proven experience in media content monitoring and analysis.
- Familiarity with election-related media coverage and regulatory frameworks.
- Experience in qualitative and quantitative research methods.
- Ability to work independently and meet deadlines under time-sensitive conditions.

The experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

Reporting requirements

The experts should submit the following reports / documents in the Albanian language:

- **One report on the methodology and related tools developed and agreed.** This report shall be submitted no later than April 10, 2025.
- **One report with the dataset of the first two weeks of the campaign.** This report shall be submitted no later than April 29, 2025.
- **One report with the dataset of the 30 days of the campaign.** This report shall be submitted no later than May 20, 2025.
- **One final research report on audiovisual media coverage of 2025 electoral campaign in Albania, with all the relevant annexes.** This report shall be submitted no later than September 10, 2025.

Submission and approval of reports

The report referred to above must be submitted office.albania@birn.eu.com. The project manager is responsible for approving the reports.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Proposal:

The group of experts is expected to submit a proposal, including:

- *Letter of Interest*, summarizing previous relevant experiences with this call;
- *Technical proposal*, including a summary of steps / approaches to be implemented for the successful fulfillment of the assignment and division of work between experts (max. 2 pages);
- *Financial offer* for working days in Euro. The service provider should submit a Financial Offer as described in Annex A.
- *CV* of the expert/s;
- *The contacts of two possible references.*

If successful, the applicants will be asked to complete the following forms that can be found in the file ‘Documents to be completed after the selection phase’:

- *Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria and selection criteria;*
- *Statement of Exclusivity and Availability;*
- *Financial Identification Form;*
- *Legal Entity File.*

Fee-based

This is a fee-based contract based in the number of days for each task.

The payment will be done following the submission of the main deliverables.

- One report on the methodology developed and agreed – 10 working days;
- Two datasets of quantitative and qualitative data submitted – 15 working days;
- One research report on audiovisual media coverage of 2025 electoral campaign in Albania – 15 working days.

Application Process

The deadline for submission of applications is **March 28, 2025**.

All applications should be sent by email to the following address:

office.albania@birn.eu.com, indicating the title of the TORs in the Subject.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

If the submission deadline has been met and all the required documents are sent, the expert/s will be evaluated on their quality, technical proposal and financial offer. They will be evaluated using the evaluation criteria in the table below.

| Evaluation Criteria | Score |
|--|--------------|
| Qualifications | |
| Formal and continues education of the candidate and work experience | 10 |
| Strong knowledge of the political and media landscape in Albania | 10 |
| Proven experience in media monitoring researches | 10 |
| Familiarity with election-related media coverage and regulatory frameworks | 10 |
| Proven experience in writing research reports based on qualitative and quantitative data | 10 |
| Implementation | |
| Technical proposal | 30 |
| Financial offer | 20 |
| Total Value | 100 |