

**The development of electronic tools for participatory democracy (e-democracy)
Project ID No. G15239**

**TERMS OF REFERENCE
INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT/ BUSINESS ANALYST
TO DRAFT TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS FOR
e-DEMOCRACY PLATFORM**

I. Background

The Project "Development of electronic tools for participatory democracy (e-Democracy)" has been initiated by the e-Governance Agency of Moldova to achieve its objectives which include promoting transparency, accountability, and citizen engagement in the decision-making process , and will be implemented with the financial support of Soros Foundation Moldova. In this case, the project is focused on creating opportunities for interaction between government and the community through e-democracy tools to facilitate bilateral dialogue between public authorities and citizens. Through electronic tools, citizens can publish ideas, participate in public consultations and debates, and implement joint projects in a convenient and accessible form. Authorities consult with citizens through online debates, public consultations, surveys, or by organizing creative solutions contest for the existing problem.

The e-Democracy module in the Republic of Moldova will be designed to enable active citizen participation in the decision-making process through various digital tools. It aims to facilitate citizen engagement in the decision-making process by accelerating the implementation of important social ideas, civic initiatives, and projects. The module includes features such as electronic petitions, surveys, and evaluations of the quality of public services and service providers. The main objective is to promote transparency, accountability, and citizen participation in the democratic process.

1. Increasing the level of interaction between citizens and public authorities

The e-Democracy platform is focused on facilitating participatory democracy in the Republic of Moldova through the development of electronic tools that allow citizens to express their opinions, propose initiatives, and sign petitions securely and easily. Key activities include encouraging civic involvement, promoting e-services (e-Petition, e-Feedback, e-Survey), and increasing public awareness of administrative services.

2. Digital Platform and Services

The e-Democracy platform is a digital initiative in the Republic of Moldova that aims to promote participatory democracy, transparency, and citizen engagement in the decision-making process. The platform includes three key components:

- E-Petition, which allows citizens to submit electronic petitions to public authorities and institutions in Moldova.
- E-Feedback, which enables citizens to evaluate the quality of public services and provide feedback, complaints, and suggestions related to public services.
- E-Survey, which provides a digital survey tool that facilitates the process of consulting, researching, communicating, and engaging citizens in the decision-making process, accelerating the implementation of important social ideas, civic initiatives, and projects.

Existing context:

According to the Social Cohesion Index for the years 2019, 2020, and 2021, low rates of citizen participation in actions that influence the decision-making process are noted, as well as a reluctance on the part of authorities to involve citizens in decision-making processes. The index indicates a low degree of participation in political activities and pressure activities, at 0.04 and 0.01 out of a possible maximum of 1.0. Approximately 7 out of 10 citizens are aware of the functions of the Local Public Administration (LPA) and its responsibilities to make its decisions public, but only 1 out of 10 have participated in public consultation activities. In 2020 and 2021, interest in politics has slightly increased (from 0.47 to 0.55 points), but the participation rate has practically stagnated, recording an insignificant increase from 0.04 to 0.07.

A low rate of citizen participation also results from the annual reports on ensuring transparency in the decision-making process by public administration authorities. Thus, from the report for the year 2020, it appears that out of 2,112 recommendations received regarding projects placed for consultation on the particip.gov.md portal, 379 came directly from citizens, while the rest were proposed by development partners, public authorities, civic associations, political parties, trade unions, employers' organizations, etc. In 2021, an even lower level of citizen activism is noted, as out of 2,167 recommendations received, only 50 out of a total of 2,356 were transmitted by citizens. The problem of low citizen involvement in the consultation process stems from insufficient available information, the lack of monitoring tools for the proposals offered and their outcomes, the availability of outdated electronic consultation solutions, etc.

At the same time, in recent years, with the increasing proportion of the population with internet access in the Republic of Moldova, mass petitioning initiatives (collective petitions) have become increasingly popular, where hundreds or thousands of people mobilize and join a common cause.

Although there is legislation regarding petitioning authorities in the Administrative Code, it does not explicitly address the collective signing and support of major initiatives, nor does it impose legal obligations on public entities to act on the subjects of such initiatives. Petitions from individual citizens and those supported by thousands of citizens have a significant difference in impact, according to current practices. Moreover, there are no dedicated electronic tools available in the Republic of Moldova that allow for the online support and signing of collective petitions or civic initiatives, which limits citizens' accessibility to participate in decision-making processes.

Introducing electronic tools for participatory democracy in the Republic of Moldova would not replace the current petition system, but rather add new channels for submitting petitions. The platform would allow collective petitions/civic initiatives to be securely and easily consulted and signed by citizens with significant online presence, both inside and outside of the country. The electronic solution aims to encourage citizen participation and increase communication between citizens and the government, so that their opinions, initiatives, and proposals for substantive issues can be heard and considered.

II. Objective

The e-Governance Agency of Moldova is hiring a national individual consultant/ Business Analyst to draft technical specifications for the design, development, configuration and deployment of the e-Democracy Platform.

III. Scope of Work

The Consultant will perform the following activities related to this assignment:

1. Review Moldova ICT-related laws, policies, and procedures;
2. Examine the best international practices in the design, development and implementation of similar platforms in other EU countries;
3. Interview the main stakeholders – e-Governance Agency and other relevant entities;
4. Draft Technical Specifications for e-Democracy Platform;
5. Consult the drafted Technical Specifications for e-Democracy Platform with the main stakeholders;
6. Support e-Governance Agency in drafting relevant parts of the tender documents and in the development of the e-Democracy Platform concept;
7. Review and adapt the documents according to e-Governance Agency feedback.

IV. Outputs

1. Functional specifications (List of functional requirements, including flow chart diagrams, business model diagrams, use case diagrams) – in max. 1 month from the beginning of the assignment;
2. Non-functional specifications, based on eGA template - in max. 1,5 month from the beginning of the assignment.
3. Final Functional and Technical Specifications for the IT component(s) as per the requested templates – in max. 3 weeks after the last feedback submitted by eGA.

All outputs must be submitted in editable electronic format, in English.

V. Timing

This is a part-time assignment expected to commence in **March 2023**. The contract will be signed for 3 months. The estimate **level of effort (LoE)** for the drafting of the Functional and Technical Specifications for e-Democracy platform is **30 days**.

VI. Institutional arrangements

The Consultant will work remotely and participate in all meetings relevant to this assignment. If required, the Consultant should work in the premises of eGA.

The Consultant will work in tandem with the appointed representatives of the eGA, will report to and work under the direct supervision of the Project Director.

VII. Resources

eGA will provide any other necessary means and support to the Consultant in order to carry out this assignment.

VIII. Qualification requirements and evaluation criteria

- University degree in areas such as economics, business administration, public administration, computer sciences, engineering or telecommunications or related;
- Minimum 7 years of experience in IT area;
- Familiarity with Republic of Moldova's e-Governance architecture and platforms;
- Excellent understanding of web technologies;
- Excellent understanding the database development and programming;
- Excellent understanding of system design process;
- Familiarity with the regulatory framework in ICT field;
- Proven track record of business analysis and writing technical specifications for platforms and services in the public sector (at least 3 in the last 2 years);
- Knowledge of best international practices for similar platforms used by embassies and consular offices abroad;
- Experience with donor funded programs/projects and standard bidding documents would be an asset;
- Ability to effectively communicate and write in Romanian and English.