

Terms of reference

Assignment: CATALYST consultant (local)

Type of contract: Service contract

Duty station: Dushanbe, Tajikistan

Background information

A. Acted globally

[Acted](#) is an independent, private and non-profit international non-governmental organisation (NGO) operating across 69 countries (including 40 countries with direct operations), whose mission is to go the last mile to save lives and support people in meeting their needs in hard-to-reach areas. Acted develops and implements programmes that target the most vulnerable amongst populations that have suffered from conflict, natural disaster, or socio-economic hardship. In 2024, Acted supported 18.5 million people across 43 countries of operation and pursues a triple mandate as a humanitarian, environmental and development.

B. Acted Tajikistan

Present in Central Asia for nearly three decades, and in [Tajikistan](#) since 1996, Acted has been working to address the country's main challenges and foster opportunities for sustainable, inclusive development. Acted relies on a localised, community-led approach to its programming and an in-depth knowledge of the local context to develop and implement relevant long-term actions with a wide range of local and international partners, building together a 3ZERO world – Zero Exclusion, Zero Carbon and Zero Poverty. In 2024, Acted implemented 15 projects in Tajikistan, with a focus on addressing climate change and environmental challenges, and on supporting rural communities as well as other vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as women, youth, and people with disabilities. The organisation operates across all provinces through its main office in Dushanbe and field offices in Khujand, Bokhtar and Murghab. Using a participatory, inclusive, and multi-sectoral approach, Acted Tajikistan responds to emergencies, supports disaster resilience, including through natural resource management (NRM), and strengthens civil society.

Programme background

A. Civil society support

Civil society serves many functions, but crucially it helps contribute to inclusive development, including through the delivery of services, facilitating collective problem-solving, and support the most vulnerable. However, civil society actors in countries where Acted implements its initiatives often operate in complex contexts and have limited capacities. Civil society organisations (CSOs) are therefore not able to effectively support vulnerable populations and advocate for their rights and needs. In response, Acted seeks to reinforce CSOs' institutional capacity and provide them with sustainable resources to ensure their effectiveness in different contexts.

B. Acted's CATALYST tool

To assess and strengthen the organisational and institutional capacity of grassroots/local/national of CSOs and community-based organisations (CBOs), Acted has developed a global instrument known as **CATALYST** (i.e. 'Capacity Assessment, Technical Support and Learning for Sustainable Transformation'). More specifically, the tool can be used to identify capacity building needs, to plan technical support interventions to address these needs based on tailored action plans, and subsequently monitor and evaluate the impact of the support provided, and adjust it as necessary. CATALYST relies on participatory assessment processes to evaluate the capacity needs of CSOs across a number of technical areas, and provides a comprehensive set of tools and guidance focusing on organisational management, financial management, leadership and participation, project cycle management, and external relations.

C. CATALYST in Tajikistan

Acted is currently implementing several projects in Tajikistan focussed on NRM, disaster risk reduction (DRR), economic development, and strengthening civil society capacities. As part of these initiatives, the organisation deploys its CATALYST tool, enabling local CBOs and/or CSOs to identify capacity gaps, develop tailored action plans, and implement targeted technical support interventions. By using CATALYST, Acted aims to help organisations enhance their sustainability, effectiveness, and ability to engage with stakeholders. In 2024, Acted worked with over 40 civil society partners, notably through its 3ZERO House initiative. Established in 2022, the 3ZERO House in Dushanbe serves as a dynamic innovation hub, driving local implementation of Acted's 3ZERO Strategy, including by acting as a platform for CSO capacity building and promotion activities.

Assignment objective

Results from initial CATALYST assessments show that the majority of local CSOs lack fundamental organisational standards and essential written procedures, e.g. Code of Conduct, defined financial management procedures, logistical or human resources policies. Given the widespread nature of these gaps, Acted has decided to develop a **ready-to-use, localised, and standardised 'package solution' of key policies/procedures to be shared with CATALYST beneficiaries**, helping them strengthen their internal governance and meet minimum compliance requirements.

For each key topics listed below (see figure 1), the consultant will **develop a policy/procedure document and conduct onboarding/introduction sessions** for the current cohort of CATALYST beneficiaries to present developed procedures/policies.¹ Specifically, the consultant will:

- Develop a practical, user-friendly policy/procedure document covering one of the topics listed below, each comprising of a policy/procedure and a practical recommendations and examples of usage, in Tajik and in English, and written using accessible language
- All policies/procedures have to be adapted to the context of Tajikistan, align with international good practices and core donors' requirements, and strictly comply with national legislation of Tajikistan
- When relevant or upon the request of Acted, separate versions of the same procedure/policy will be developed to meet the needs and capacities of national/regional CSOs and CSOs with more modest programmes and financial operations (e.g. finance and procurement related procedures)
- Conduct comprehensive onboarding/introduction sessions for the representatives of the selected CSOs that will benefit from capacity building using Acted's CATALYST tool.

¹ To note, a single commercial offer should be submitted, detailing the costs of each procedure and policy, where the consultant offers their services (including all related tasks listed below). The consultant can offer their services for one, several or all procedures and policies.

Figure 1. Module topics to be covered

Management procedures	Organisational policies
Financial management procedures	Code of conduct
Procurement procedures	Anti-fraud policies
Human resources policy (including but not limited to recruitment, leave, and basic performance management)	Anti-terrorism and anti-money laundering policy
	Child protection policy
	Conflict of interest prevention policy
	Data protection policy (adapted to the local context)
	Environmental and social protection policy
	Gender policy (promoting gender equality and non-discrimination)
	Policy against sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (SEAH)
	Grievance and complaints mechanism (for beneficiaries, partners, and staff)

Assignment activities

1) Inception phase: structure design

The consultant is first expected to determine the structure of each policy/procedure and data collection methodology,² and the workplan for presentation and approval by Acted's focal point. All procedures/policies developed as part of this assignment will integrate a consultative drafting process, in addition to the data collection on existing best practices, standards and legal frameworks relevant to the policy/procedure in question, to ensure that the deliverables match real life needs of Acted final beneficiaries and are adapted to the context. This should include focus group discussions (FGDs), key informant interviews (KIIs) at different stages of the assignment or other modalities with CSO representatives and other relevant stakeholders. To facilitate this process, Acted will provide a list of potential CSOs to contact, from which the consultant will indicate which organisations/representatives they will engage with. Acted's focal point will review the draft structure before the consultant can start writing the first draft.

Figure 2. Participants in the participatory design process

Persons	Details
Acted CATALYST coordinator	Provide information on CATALYST and its implementation in Tajikistan, expertise and lessons learned on civil society support, and feedback on the proposed procedures/policies
Acted MEAL and FLATS units	
Acted Project Managers/Officers	
CSO/CBO representatives	Provide information on needs and capacities of CSOs/CBOs, common issues faced, and feedback on the policies/procedures. Consultations and feedback on the draft and final versions of the developed procedures and policies
Experts	Provide information on needs and capacities of CSOs/CBOs, common issues faced, expertise and lessons learned on civil society support, and feedback on the proposed procedures/policies

2) Policy/procedure document drafting

Following the approval of the structure of a policy/procedure document, consultation process and workplan, the consultant will begin the drafting process, combining research of existing policies/procedures, applicable standards and legal frameworks with the insights and feedback gathered through the consultations with civil society and experts. To ensure that the draft document accurately reflect the needs and capacities of the targeted local CSOs, the consultant will be required to conduct consultations (at least one FGD per policy/procedure) and/or collect written feedback on the draft from CSO representatives, based upon the mutually agreed list of participants. If the consultant collects written feedback from local organisations by directly sharing the draft policy/document with them, i.e. without Acted acting as a middleman, they will

² The methodology must consider participants' safety throughout the evaluation (including recruitment and training of research staff, data collection/analysis and report writing) as well as research ethics (confidentiality, data protection, age and ability-appropriate assent processes) and quality assurance (tools piloting, enumerators training, data cleaning as relevant).

be required to keep the designated Acted focal point in copy of all exchanges. Following the integration of the feedback gathered during the consultation process, the consultant will submit the draft document for review by Acted's focal point, which will provide feedback/comments, which the consultant will then integrate, after which the final policy/procedure document will be presented for validation by the focal point.

3) Onboarding training

Once the policy/procedure document has been finalised and fully approved by Acted, the Consultant will be tasked with training the selected CSOs on its contents, to ensure they are fully understood by the participants and that they can easily deploy the new frameworks within their own structures, without external support. For this, the Consultant will have to prepare training materials, including a presentation and handouts, and present them for validation by Acted's focal points. Validated contents and supporting materials will subsequently be used for in-person or online trainings with CATALYST beneficiaries. If the training is held online, Acted reserves the right to invite CSOs who are part of its CSO network in Tajikistan. To note, each policy/procedure produced within this assignment will be covered by one training session, meaning that if the Consultant successfully submits a commercial bid for more than one topic, they will be expected to prepare training materials and hold a training session for each. Following the completion of the training, the Consultant is required to submit all the training materials used (including the recording of the session if it was held online) and a training report to Acted.

Deliverables

For the purpose of this assignment, consultants are allowed to apply to develop one or more than one policy/procedure (see figure 1 for the full list of topics), if this is the case, the budget³ and workplan will need to include a breakdown of the working days required per assignment activity and per single policy/procedure document.⁴ The consultant **will be expected** to meet weekly with the CATALYST Coordinator to provide updates on the assignment timeframe and task progress. This can be done either by phone or in person.

The following deliverables should be provided to Acted's CATALYST Coordinator or other assigned responsible Project Manager/Officer, who will then circulate them to the relevant Acted departments and partners for feedback. All deliverables should be in an electronic version, Word/MS Windows compatible format, and in English. Additionally, the final version procedures/policy should be both in English and the Tajik language. For all deliverables, the consultant is expected to justify factual statements using evidence, and to comment on any deviation.

1) Inception phase document content: proposed structure

The tentative structure document shall include the following elements:⁵

- Detailed description of the methodology and consultation/feedback mechanism used
 - Data collection methods and tools, sampling
 - Approach to quality control
 - Data analysis methods
- Proposed structure of each policy/procedure including the list of key legislations and international good practices that will serve as guidelines
- Detailed workplan
- Analysis of anticipated limitations and mitigation measures.

³ [Cost of the development of each policy/procedure](#)

⁴ Please note that at this stage, Acted may choose to commission only selected procedures and policies based on priorities and identified needs.

⁵ The consultant may opt to enhance the structure and add additional sections.

2) Draft and final policy/procedure document

The consultant shall use Acted's template (to be provided at the beginning of the assignment). The template includes the following elements:

Figure 3. Procedure/policy document contents per topic

Section	Description
Executive summary and background Max. 2 pages	Should be tightly drafted, and usable as a free-standing document. It should be a short explanation of the document, when and how it was developed, by whom, its intended use and context. It should describe the approach taken to develop the content as well as the international and local legal sources and frameworks used.
Terminology and abbreviations	List of key terms with accompanying short definitions.
Procedure/policy (main content) Max.10 pages	The procedure/policy in question must be written in clear, easy to understand language, and must be adapted to the context of Tajikistan and adhere to national legislation, international standards and core donor's policies.
Practical recommendations and examples of use Max. 2 pages	It should clearly explain all relevant provisions of the procedure/policy, provide practical and contextualised examples, recommendations on how to implement them, good practices, lessons learned and errors to avoid.
Annexes	This section should provide links and references to the documents and sources used during the development of the policy/procedure.

3) Onboarding training

Within two weeks of the approval of the final policy/procedure document by Acted, the consultant will have to plan and deliver an onboarding training for participating CSOs. The consultant will be tasked with developing a detailed agenda, visual supports/presentation, and handouts to support this training, which will be held online or in person. Once the draft agenda and contents have been reviewed by Acted and approved following any necessary adjustments, Acted's focal point(s) and Logistics Department will support with the organisation of the training itself and liaise with the consultant. As such, Acted will cover the physical training costs (venue, refreshments, beneficiary accommodation, transport, etc.). The consultant will be required to submit a post-training report to Acted (template to be provided by Acted at signature), including attendance records and accompanied by the recording of the training (if held online).

4) Feedback on deliverables

Please note that all deliverables are subject to Acted's approval before they are considered as final and corresponding milestones payment can be released. Upon submission of the draft structure of each policy/procedure and policy/procedure document by the consultant, Acted will formulate comments as well as indicate any factual errors, within five (5) working days of reception, on the basis of the quality control checklists provided to the consultant, which outline expectations for each of component (executive summary and background, terminology and abbreviations, procedure/policy, practical recommendations and examples of use, and annexes), which should be taken into account by the consultant. The consultant shall take note of all comments and decide whether or not to revise the outputs and, where appropriate, succinctly explain why comments cannot be taken into account. The consultant will then submit a revised version to Acted, within five (5) days of receipt of Acted comments. The revised version should clearly highlight the changes made. Concerning the onboarding training, the corresponding milestone payment will be released once the training has been delivered and Acted has received the training report and, if relevant, the recording.

Milestones and payments

The consultant is required to report against each milestone (three in total) detailed below.

Figure 4. Milestones and payments

Milestones	Tasks/activities	Deliverables	Timeline	Instalment
Preparation of a detailed structure, including consultation methodology and key sources, and its approval by Acted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop a draft structure for each selected policy/procedure •Acted to provide feedback and consultant to integrate it •Submission of the revised structure to Acted and Acted to validate final structure 	Approved proposed structure	Two (2) calendar weeks after the contract is signed	10% of total amount
Development of a policy/procedure document. Feedback on the draft by Acted	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Develop a draft policy/procedure document •Acted to provide feedback and consultant to integrate it •Submission of final version to Acted and Acted to validate final document 	Draft policy/procedure document Approved final policy/procedure document (in English and Tajik)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Four (4) calendar weeks after the structure is validated •One (1) calendar week after the draft document was shared back by Acted 	70% of total amount
Onboarding training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Preparation of the training agenda and contents, including visual support materials and hand outs •Review of the planned agenda and contents by Acted focal point •Coordinate with Acted focal point(s) and Logistics department for the organisation of the training session •Onboarding training of CSOs via in person or online event •End of training report and submission of the recording (if online session) 	Onboarding training	Within two (2) calendar weeks of Acted validation of the final policy/procedure document	20% of the total amount

Eligibility

1) Criteria

Eligible applicants for this assignment include **individuals with the status of legal resident in Tajikistan or firms legally registered in Tajikistan**. Individual consultants/staff from the consulting firm should have the following background:

- Post-graduate qualifications in audit, finance, law, or areas relevant to one or more of the modules
- Experience in procedure/policy design and redaction within in development projects and/or the civil society sector is required
- Strong knowledge and/or demonstrated experience in procedure/policy design and redaction in the context of Tajikistan is required
- Excellent knowledge of the Republic of Tajikistan, the civil society sector, the work and operation of local CSOs, relevant national legislation and core donor's requirements is necessary
- Strong knowledge of the Core Humanitarian Standards
- Experience in working with international projects will be an advantage
- Strong analytical skills and abilities to clearly synthesise and present findings
- Excellent written and oral Tajik and English; good written and oral Russian
- Capacity to work autonomously, proactively, and deliver high-quality work within deadlines, and good communication skills are essential
- Proficiency in computer skills (Windows, MS Office, and Internet, E-mail communication platforms) is required.

Minimum general experience: 10 years
Minimum specific experience: 5 years
Country experience: required

2) Submission process

Individuals/firms interested in developing deliverables targeting one or more of the focus areas outlined above are welcome to express their interest by submitting a commercial offer by email. Depending on their prior experience, skills, and capacity, **consultants can choose to submit bids covering the development of one or more policy/procedure documents**. All applications must be submitted before **July 21, 2025 at 17:00 (local time in Dushanbe)** by email to tajikistan.tender@acted.org with the subject line "Commercial Bid-CATALYST Consultant (Local)".

Acted will not be responsible for any cost or expenses incurred by the applicants in connection with the preparation and submission of their bids to Acted.

3) Required documents

The applicants (individuals and organisations) are requested to include the following information in the application:

- CV(s) of the personnel deployed (CV of focal point/coordinator and key staff that will work on each policy/procedure);
- Registration documents for personnel candidate if relevant (TIN, SIN, scanned passport copy, bank details certified by the bank's stamp);
- Registration documents for organisations if relevant (TIN, SIN, scanned passport copy of the organisation's directors, bank details certified by the bank's stamp, certificate (Shahodatnoma, and Iqtibos or Patent);
- Technical proposal including:
- Sample of previous work (relevant experience) and/or capacity statement (max. 4-6 pages) proving information on the ability to deliver the assignment. This can include information on experience, information on familiarity with the civil society sector, relevant national legislation, and international standards.
- The commercial offer from the supplier or company is provided inclusive of all taxes. The offer should include the cost breakdown for each separate policy/procedure⁶.

Acted reserves the right to award the contract only to one or several selected policy/procedure documents.

4) Additional remarks

Please note that the consultant will have to comply with all government rules and will be responsible for government taxes, a translator (if required), medical/health/repatriation insurance, as well as transportation, access, accommodation and food-related expenses. Furthermore, consultants are expected to abide to humanitarian principles and to ensure the confidentiality of the data collected. It is also demanded that consultants follow Acted's [Code of Conduct and organisational policies](#) at all times.

As the client, Acted will be the exclusive and irrevocable owner of any data collected or output produced within the framework of the assignment, which shall not be shared externally without Acted's prior written approval. By the end of the assignment, the consultant shall submit all Acted/assignment related documentation back to Acted's management. Acted will act in an appropriate and timely manner in the event of non-compliance or breach of contractual obligation by the consultant.

⁶ Please note that Acted may request a more detailed budget breakdown at later stages of the selection process

Questions may be send by e-mail no later than seven (7) days before the deadline for the submission of the commercial bid to tajikistan.tender@acted.org with the subject line “Request for Information-Commercial Bid-CATALYST Consultant (Local)”. Acted has no obligation to provide clarifications to questions received after this date. Replies will be given no later than five (5) days before the deadline for submission of the commercial bid. To ensure the equal treatment of bidders, **Acted cannot give a prior opinion on the eligibility and selection of bidders.**

Any offer submitted after the deadline will be automatically rejected. Any missing document will lead to the direct disqualification of the applicant. Offers that do not meet the applicant eligibility criteria and/or do not include a consultation/feedback framework will be disqualified. Clarifications will only be requested by Acted to bidders when information provided is not sufficient to conduct an objective assessment of the submitted offer. Furthermore, Acted reserves the right to prioritise some topics over others based on the financial offers and needs of its projects. Applicants will be informed in writing about the results of the evaluation of their bids within fourteen (14) working days of the application deadline.

If you witness or suspect any unlawful, improper or unethical act or business practices (such as soliciting, accepting or attempting to provide or accept any kickback) during the bidding process, please make your report on the [Transparency Line](#) platform, managed by the Investigations unit of the Transparency & Compliance department at Acted’s head office. If you are unable to access the platform, please send an email to transparency@acted.org.