

TERMS OF REFERENCE

External Evaluation of the EU-funded Project

“SEE Check Network - fighting disinformation and misinformation through a network of fact-checkers”

This document has been produced with the assistance of the European Union. Its contents are the sole responsibility of the SEE Check Network and can in no way be taken to reflect the views of the European Union.

1. Introduction and Background

SEE Check Network is composed of six fact-checking organizations from five countries in South-Eastern Europe (SEE in further context), focusing on identifying and debunking disinformation and promoting media literacy and media accountability.

The fact-checking web portals that make up the SEE Check Network are the following: Raskrinkavanje.ba, Raskrinkavanje.me, Raskrikavanje.rs, Razkrinkavanje.si, Faktograf.hr and Fakenews.rs.

The network is currently implementing an EU-funded project titled “SEE Check Network – fighting disinformation and misinformation through a network of fact-checkers”.

The project aims to support the resilience of the Southeast Europe (SEE) information space by strengthening fact-checkers’ professional networks and independent media to sustainably act against disinformation and misinformation

The project is implemented across the Western Balkans and focuses on enhancing capacities of civil society organizations (CSOs), independent media, and fact-checking initiatives.

2. Objectives of the Project

Overall Objective (Impact)

To support the resilience of the SEE information space by strengthening fact-checkers’ networks and independent media to combat disinformation.

Specific Objectives (Outcomes)

Outcome 1:

Enhanced capacities of CSOs and independent media to provide analysis, monitoring, and advocacy on disinformation-related policies

Outcome 2:

To strengthen fact-checkers' professional networks and independent media capacities for detecting, exposing and acting against dis- and misinformation through networking and cooperation with other CSOs and media outlets at EU, regional, national and local levels

Outcome 3:

To contribute to an enhanced stakeholders' support and public/civic participation in fight against disinformation through providing credible information and reaching out to the affected populations

3. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to provide an independent assessment of:

- achievement of results against Log Frame indicators
- effectiveness of project activities
- impact on disinformation resilience in the region
- sustainability of results

The evaluation will support accountability to the European Union and inform future programming.

4. Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation will cover:

- all three Outcomes and related Outputs
- the full implementation period
- all partner organizations and regional activities

Special attention will be given to:

- performance of the SEE Check network
 - effectiveness of sub-granting schemes
 - quality and reach of fact-checking outputs
-

5. Evaluation Criteria and Questions

The evaluation will follow OECD DAC criteria:

5.1 Relevance

To what extent do project activities respond to the needs of CSOs, media, and fact-checkers in the Western Balkans?

How aligned is the project with EU priorities on disinformation?

5.2 Effectiveness

To what extent were targets achieved, including:

- three regional and 12 national disinformation reports
- four regional advocacy papers
- 20 sub-grants awarded
- 20 trainings and mentoring sessions
- 42 regional fact-checking stories annually
- 540 fact-checks translated into English

5.3 Efficiency

- Were resources used efficiently in delivering:
 - research outputs
 - training programmes
 - sub-granting schemes
- Was the balance between costs and results appropriate?

5.4 Impact

Has the project contributed to:

- increased number of fact-checking initiatives (target: 20)
- reduced trust in disinformation media (target: <20%) citizens consider media transmitting disinformation as trustworthy
- development of policy frameworks for disinformation

5.5 Sustainability

Are the results likely to continue after project completion?

Is the SEE Check network structurally sustainable (governance, strategy, tools)?

6. Methodology

The evaluator will apply a mixed method approach, including:

Desk Review:

- LogFrame and Description of Action
- project reports and outputs
- research publications and advocacy papers

Data Collection:

- interviews with project partners and stakeholders
- consultations with sub-grantees
- beneficiary feedback (training participants, media actors)

Quantitative Analysis:

- assessment of indicators (outputs, outcomes, impact)
- verification of targets vs achievements

The evaluator must ensure:

- triangulation of data
- gender-sensitive analysis
- ethical standards

Reporting Arrangements

- The evaluator will work under the supervision of the SEE Check Network Project Coordinator and in close cooperation with project partners. The evaluator shall remain fully independent in conducting the evaluation and preparing findings, conclusions and recommendations.
- The evaluation shall be conducted in English and all deliverables shall be submitted in English.

7. Deliverables

- Following submission of the Draft Evaluation Report, the evaluator shall be available to address comments received from the contracting authority and project partners before submission of the Final Evaluation Report.
- All deliverables shall be subject to review and written approval by the Contracting Authority before acceptance.
- The evaluator will cooperate with project partners for access to information while maintaining full independence in analysis and conclusions.

7.1 Inception Report

- methodology and evaluation matrix
- data collection plan
- detailed evaluation methodology
- evaluation matrix
- work plan and timeline
- data collection tools
- stakeholder consultation plan
- risk assessment and mitigation measures
- detailed work plan with implementation timeline

7.2 Draft Evaluation Report

- preliminary findings
- initial conclusions and recommendations

7.3 Final Evaluation Report

Must include:

- assessment per OECD DAC criteria
- analysis of all Log Frame indicators
- lessons learned
- actionable recommendations

The Final Evaluation Report should contain at minimum:

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Methodology
- Project Background
- Findings by OECD DAC criteria
- Assessment of LogFrame indicators
- Conclusions
- Lessons learned
- Recommendations
- Annexes (list of interviews, documents reviewed, evaluation matrix)

7.4 Presentation

- Presentation of key findings and recommendations to the Steering Committee and project partners, either online or in person.

8. Timeline

Indicative duration: 30 working days

- Inception report: within 10 days
- Draft report: within 20 days
- Final report: within 30 days

9. Key Areas of Assessment (Linked to Activities)

The evaluation must assess performance of key activities:

Outcome 1 Activities:

- comprehensive research on disinformation
- regional and national reports
- advocacy and policy papers

Outcome 2 Activities:

- SEE Check annual meetings
- development of communication strategy
- database and data standards
- sub-granting scheme (20 grants)
- trainings and mentoring

Outcome 3 Activities:

- POINT conferences
- regional newsroom
- production of fact-checking content
- translation and dissemination

10. Required Qualifications

Education:

- University degree in Social Sciences, Media Studies, Public Policy, or a related field.

Experience:

- Minimum 3 years of experience in evaluation
- Proven experience in EU-funded projects (mandatory)
- Experience in:
 - media/disinformation/civil society
 - regional (Western Balkans) context

Skills:

- strong analytical and methodological skills
- experience with LogFrame and OECD DAC
- excellent English writing skills

11. Application Procedure

CA “Why not” on behalf of the SEE Check Network carries out the procurement procedure.

Applicants must submit:

- CV
- Technical proposal
- Financial offer (EUR)
- At least two references
- Sample evaluation report

Application deadline: 30 July 2026

Submission email: info@zastone.ba (Subject: Project Evaluator Application: IPA/2022/440-985 – See Check)

Questions contact: info@zastone.ba (Subject: Inquiry: Project Evaluator - IPA/2022/440-985 – See Check)

12. Selection Criteria

- Technical proposal – 40%
- Experience and qualifications – 40%
- Financial offer – 20%

Applications will be evaluated by an Evaluation Committee established by the Contracting Authority.

13. Budget

Maximum budget:

€ 4.000,00 EUR (Gross)

14. Ethical Considerations

The evaluator must ensure:

- Independence and impartiality
 - Confidentiality - the evaluator shall treat all project documentation, interview responses and personal information as confidential and comply with applicable data protection legislation.
 - Compliance with EU evaluation standards
 - The evaluator shall declare any actual or potential conflict of interest before contract signature.
 - All reports, datasets and materials prepared under this assignment shall become the property of the Contracting Authority.
-