**Terms of reference   
and technical Specifications**

# Assignment summary

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| **Assignment title** | Mixed-Methods Research on the State of Social Work Profession in Georgia |
| **Beneficiary** | Expertise France |
| **Project** | Strengthening Human Capital Development in Georgia |
| **Type of Contract** | Service contract (open to research organisations and team of researchers) |
| **Duration** | 4 months (March - June 2026) |
| **Country** | Georgia (nationwide, with travel to regions) |
| **Language** | Georgian (research instruments and report); English (executive summary) |

# Context and justification of the need

The ToR is prepared within the framework of the EU and AFD funded project "Strengthening Human Capital Development in Georgia," implemented by Expertise France. The project aims to support Georgia in strengthening primary health care and coordination between primary and hospital care, with a focus on mental health; improving social and employment services delivery to vulnerable groups, with a particular focus on people with disabilities; and increasing the efficiency, transparency, and accountability of public administration through the development of digital systems in the fields of social protection and employment, including cyber security. The project applies a gender-sensitive approach across all components.

Within this broader framework, Expertise France is implementing the component "Strengthening Social Work Profession in Georgia," which aims to enhance the quality, recognition, and sustainability of professional social work practice in Georgia. The social work component operates under an action plan structured around the interconnected objectives: establishing needs- and rights-based frameworks for professional social work practice; promoting sustainable professional development; enhancing professional supervision; and advancing professional recognition and title protection.

The social work profession in Georgia faces numerous challenges that affect the quality of services delivered to vulnerable populations. These include the involvement of personnel without specialised social work qualifications, which raises concerns about professional standards and service quality; gaps in professional supervision that may limit practitioners' opportunities for reflective and accountable practice; limited continuing education mechanisms that constrain professional growth; and the lack of title protection and professional classification frameworks, which leaves the profession's boundaries and recognition uncertain. The profession's role and positioning within the social protection system would benefit from an efficient examination.

Research is fundamental to the social work profession. It provides the empirical foundation for effective practice, policy, and professional development. Without evidence of the realities faced by practitioners, service users, and the systems within which social workers operate, efforts to strengthen the profession risk being fragmented or misaligned with actual needs. This research constitutes the first major activity under the project and serves as a critical foundation for all subsequent interventions. It aims to generate a comprehensive, evidence-based understanding of the current state of social work practice in Georgia, which will directly inform the project's strategic direction, including curriculum development, training programme design, policy recommendations, and public awareness activities.

# Research purpose and objectives

# Purpose

The purpose of this research is to conduct a comprehensive mixed-methods study that will produce an in-depth, evidence-based assessment of the current state of social work practice in Georgia, identify key challenges and urgent needs, and develop actionable recommendations for strengthening the profession.

# Objectives

* Assess the needs of social work practitioners for advancing interventions with diverse client groups across different sectors and regions of Georgia
* Examine the impact of non-qualified personnel entering the social work field on service quality, professional identity, and client outcomes
* Identify urgent issues requiring immediate attention in the profession
* Develop evidence-based recommendations for strengthening social work practice quality and ensuring sustainable professional development

# Scope of work and tasks

The Research Organization/Team of Researchers shall carry out the following tasks under the guidance and oversight of Expertise France.

# Research preparation

* Develop a detailed research proposal, including a refined methodology, work plan, and timeline, to be approved by Expertise France
* Develop the theoretical framework for the study
* Design the sampling framework, ensuring representation across different sectors, regions, and types of social work practice, including the service users
* Develop all research instruments, including structured questionnaires, focus group discussion guides, and in-depth interview protocols
* Address all ethical considerations, including informed consent procedures, confidentiality protocols, and data protection measures
* Submit all instruments and protocols for review and approval by the EF prior to data collection

# Data collection

The Research Organization/Team of Researchers shall conduct the following data collection activities:

* Quantitative component - administer structured questionnaires to social workers across different sectors and regions of Georgia
* Qualitative component - focus groups with social workers across different sectors and regions (in-person and online)
* Qualitative component – In-depth interviews with academia representatives and policymakers
* Qualitative component - social work service user focus groups
* Recruit research participants, ensuring diversity in line with the approved sampling framework
* Obtain signed informed consent from all participants
* Ensure proper documentation of all data collection activities, including audio recording and note-taking for qualitative sessions

# Data analysis and reporting

* Transcribe, process, and validate all quantitative and qualitative data
* Perform thematic analysis of qualitative data
* Integrate quantitative and qualitative findings into a coherent analytical framework
* Prepare a comprehensive research report with evidence-based findings and feasible recommendations
* Prepare an executive summary for stakeholders

# Presentation of findings

* Present research findings to the EF, social work professional community and other stakeholders
* Document feedback and recommendations from the presentation session
* Prepare a final version of the research report incorporating the feedback received

# Deliverables and timeline

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| **#** | **Deliverable** | **Description** | **Timeline** |
| 1 | **Research Proposal** | Detailed research proposal with refined methodology, work plan, timeline, theoretical framework, and sampling strategy | Within 2 weeks of contract signing |
| 2 | **Research Instruments** | Structured questionnaires, focus group discussion guides, in-depth interview protocols, and consent forms | March 2026 |
| 3 | **Interim Progress Report** | Brief report on data collection progress, challenges encountered, and any proposed adjustments to methodology | April 2026 |
| 4 | **Raw Data Package** | Completed questionnaires, focus group transcripts, interview transcripts, signed consent forms | April 2026 |
| 5 | **Draft Research Report** | Comprehensive draft report integrating quantitative and qualitative findings with recommendations | May 2026 |
| 6 | **Presentation of Findings** | Presentation to the SW Working Group and stakeholders; facilitated discussion; documented feedback | June 2026 |
| 7 | **Final Research Report** | Final comprehensive report incorporating stakeholder feedback, with executive summary in English | June 2026 |

# Team composition and qualifications

This assignment is open to both research organizations and individual researchers/team of researchers.

Regardless of the type of applicant, the following minimum team composition and qualifications are required:

## Lead researcher

* Advanced degree (Master’s or PhD) in sociology, social work, social sciences, public policy, or a closely related field
* Minimum 5 years of experience in conducting social research, preferably in the social work or social protection sector
* Demonstrated experience in designing and leading mixed-methods research studies
* Strong knowledge of the social work profession and the social protection system in Georgia
* Excellent analytical and report-writing skills in Georgian; working knowledge of English
* Experience working with international development organisations is an asset

## Research facilitators/interviewers

* University degree in sociology, social work, social sciences, or a related field
* Experience in conducting qualitative research (focus groups and/or interviews)
* Knowledge of social work practice and the Georgian social protection context
* Willingness and availability to travel to regions across Georgia

## For research organisations

Research organisations applying for this assignment must:

* Be a legally registered entity with a demonstrated track record in conducting social research, ideally in the fields of social work, social policy, or social protection
* Have a minimum of five years of institutional experience in designing and implementing social research projects, with particular emphasis on studies related to social services, human services workforce, or social protection systems
* Demonstrate institutional capacity to manage and deliver mixed-methods research projects of comparable scope and complexity, including experience with both quantitative and qualitative data collection across multiple regions
* Have documented experience in conducting research involving diverse stakeholder groups, such as practitioners, policymakers, academia representatives, and service users
* Demonstrate prior experience in producing policy-relevant research outputs, including comprehensive analytical reports with actionable recommendations for institutional or systemic reform
* Propose a named research team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities, accompanied by CVs demonstrating the qualifications outlined in Sections 6.1 and 6.2.
* Demonstrate the organisational and logistical capacity to coordinate fieldwork across different regions of Georgia, including the ability to manage travel, participant recruitment, and data collection logistic
* Provide references for at least two research assignments completed within the last five years. For each reference, include the name of the organisation, a brief description of the assignment, and contact details for verification (no written recommendation letters are required).
* Experience working with international development organisations or donor-funded projects is a distinct advantage

# Management and reporting arrangements

The Research organization/Team of researchers will work under the direct guidance and supervision of the Senior Local Social Work Expert of Expertise France. Key management arrangements include:

* Regular coordination meetings (at a minimum bi-weekly) with the Senior SW Expert throughout the assignment
* All research instruments, sampling framework, and methodology must be approved by the Expertise France before data collection begins
* All deliverables shall be submitted to the Senior Local SW Expert for review and approval
* The Expertise France reserves the right to request revisions to deliverables to ensure quality and alignment with project objectives

# Budget and payment

# Budget includes all costs, including professional fees, travel expenses for regional data collection, materials, communication, and any other costs associated with the assignment. Please note that this project is VAT exempt. All financial offers must be provided net of VAT (VAT excluded).

Applicants are required to submit a detailed financial proposal with their application, broken down by the following categories:

* Professional fees (person-days by team member)
* Travel and accommodation for regional data collection
* Materials and supplies (printing, recording equipment, etc.)
* Communication and other operational costs

Payment will be made in instalments linked to the approval of deliverables, according to a schedule to be specified in the contract.

# Duration and timeline

The assignment is expected to span 4 months, from March to June 2026, with the presentation of findings and submission of the final report in June 2026. The indicative timeline is as follows.

# Application requirements

Interested research organisations and individual researchers/research teams are invited to submit the following:

* 1. **Technical Proposal**
* Understanding of the assignment and proposed approach
* Proposed methodology, including sampling strategy, data collection methods, and analytical approach
* Proposed team composition with roles and responsibilities
* Work plan with timeline
* Description of relevant experience (institutional and/or individual)
  1. **Financial Proposal**
* For research organization: Detailed budget breakdown as outlined in Section 8 (excluding VAT).
* For team of researchers: Daily rates for each proposed team member
  1. **Supporting Documents**
* CVs of all proposed team members
* For organisations: proof of legal registration and institutional profile
* References (contact details) and/or examples of previous research assignments

# Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

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| **Criterion** | **Weight** |
| Proposed methodology and approach | 30% |
| Qualifications and experience of the team | 30% |
| Relevant institutional/individual track record | 15% |
| Quality and feasibility of the work plan | 10% |
| Financial proposal (value for money) | 15% |

Technical proposals will be evaluated first. Only proposals that meet the minimum technical requirements will be considered for funding.

# Intellectual property and confidentiality

All data, instruments, analyses, and reports produced under this assignment are the intellectual property of Expertise France. The Researcher/Research Team shall not publish, share, or use any data or findings without the prior written consent of Expertise France.

The Researcher/Research Team shall ensure strict confidentiality of all participant data and comply with applicable data protection regulations. All raw data shall be transferred to Expertise France upon completion of the assignment.

# Contact information

For inquiries related to the ToR, please contact:

**Name of Contact Person:**

**Mariami Paposhvili, Deputy Project Manager**

**E-mail:** [**mariami.paposhvili@expertisefrance.fr**](mailto:mariami.paposhvili@expertisefrance.fr)

Proposals should be submitted to the above e-mail address by **20 February, 2026 (12:00 am Tbilisi time).** Please indicate *“Mixed-Methods Research on Social Work”* in the subject line.