

# ToR RESEARCH CONSULTANT | THEMATIC REVIEW: ABUSE OF INCUMBENCY IN ELECTIONS

## GENERAL INFORMATION

**Title of Consultancy:** Thematic review: Abuse of incumbency in elections  
**Application Closing Date:** 6 May 2024  
**Location of Consultancy:** Remote/home-based

## BACKGROUND

Transparency International (TI) is the global civil society organisation leading the fight against corruption. Through more than 100 chapters worldwide and an international secretariat in Berlin, Germany, TI raises awareness of the damaging effects of corruption and works with partners in government, business, and civil society to develop and implement effective measures to tackle it.

The Transparency International Secretariat (TI-S) in Berlin is conducting consultations to update its 2009 [Standards for Political Funding and Favors](#). Participants in consultations to date have raised concerns about practices of abuse of state resources and incumbency in the context of elections, for which the above mentioned standards do not present policy options to prevent, curb and remedy. To inform consultations and fill in that gap, TI-S seeking a consultant to support research on tactics, impacts of and measures against incumbency abuse in electoral processes worldwide.

The consultancy seeks to elaborate a Thematic Review on the 1) types, 2) impacts, and 3) measures to prevent and counter incumbency abuse, drawing from extant research, international best practice and standards on electoral integrity and protection of public resources. The review will contribute to strengthening global efforts to combat the abuse of incumbency in elections, promoting political integrity during electoral processes worldwide.

## ASSIGNMENT

The consultant shall produce a thematic review comprising the following elements:

### 1.1 Scope:

- a) Typology. The consultant will propose and describe a typology of prevalent tactics of abuse of incumbency in elections globally, including at least:
  - i. Personnel (public officials)'s participation in campaign activities while on duty;
  - ii. Use of resources owned by public agencies in partisan campaign activities (staff, vehicles, buildings, phones, computers, etc);
  - iii. Use of state funds to sponsor government communications to the public (advertising, mass mailing, etc);
  - iv. Use of government-held information (including personal data);
  - v. Use of state-owned media (print, digital, broadcast, other) in biased reporting (in support or against political parties or candidates);
  - vi. Use of security forces;
  - vii. Use of discretionary funds;
  - viii. Manipulation of fiscal, monetary, and other policies before and during campaign periods as inducement for voters (e.g. temporary employment schemes, extraordinary tax exemptions, tax amnesties, temporary subsidies on utilities, cash handouts, salary and/or pension increases, etc).

The typology should include definitions, corruption risks entailed by each type, and describe examples from across the world<sup>1</sup>.

- b) Impacts. The consultant will provide a review of the literature assessing the short-term and long-term impacts of abuse of incumbency on:
  - i. the level playing field amongst candidates, opportunities for political participation, and election outcomes;

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<sup>1</sup> Particular country examples may include 2023 elections in Argentina, Guatemala, and Madagascar, among others to be discussed with TI-S.

- ii. social and economic outcomes (budget deficits, public investment, inflation, tax revenues as well as poverty, inclusion, and others as applicable)
- iii. women and men, either as voters or candidates.
- c) Measures. The consultant must provide a review of salient legal standards and practice to prevent (e.g. neutrality directives, codes of conduct, leaves of absence, resignations, caretaker arrangements, fiscal rules and constraints, budget transparency, loan/debt conditionalities), monitor (e.g. reporting mechanisms for public officials and citizens), investigate (e.g. mandates, powers), remedy (e.g. reimbursements) and sanction (e.g. fines, criminal liability) abuse of state incumbency, as well as the technical and legal challenges associated with them. In addition, the consultant must propose actionable recommendations to be considered into Transparency International standards.

## 1.2 Modalities for data collection, review and analysis

The consultant shall propose the parameters for the review taking into account:

- a) Sources to be included in the review are constitutional and legal frameworks, international recommendations and standards, comparative research articles, credible media reporting, domestic and international electoral observation reports from both authoritarian and democratic contexts, low and middle-income countries -preferably over last four years.
- b) Interviews with up to three international stakeholders (electoral observers, experts) to identify key areas for assessment, gather insights and lessons learned.
- c) Data collection tools (e.g. interview questionnaires, datasets)
- d) Collect, validate, and analyse quantitative to substantiate the review, and identify trends and patterns in simple visualisations.
- e) Actionable recommendations

## EXPECTED DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The duration of the consultancy is four weeks starting end of May 2024. During that time, the consultant will incrementally provide the following four deliverables:

- a. An annotated outline (max. two pages), accompanied with a workplan note (max 1 page) explaining the steps and tools to carry out the review
- b. A First Draft report following the agreed outline, with a clear presentation of the analysis, findings, country examples and provisional recommendations
- c. Final Report addressing all feedback received, including a 500-word executive summary, key findings illustrated with examples from selected countries, including recommendations

The consultant is expected to provide regular updates upon request from TI-S.

All deliverables are to be submitted in **English**, in electronic form, in accordance with the deadlines stipulated above. The Consultant is responsible for editing and quality control of language. The TI Secretariat retains the sole rights with respect to all distribution, dissemination, and publication of the deliverables. The final report is not to exceed 15 pages and should highlight the main findings and recommendations derived from the empirical and desk-based research. The report will be published and shared at conferences, and with the target audiences, principally among anti-corruption practitioners.

## SELECTION CRITERIA

The Consultant should have the following qualifications:

- Minimum of 7 years research experience in issues related to elections, political finance and/or anti-corruption;
- Familiarity with a variety of research methodologies and proven experience in applying them for policy and evaluation purposes in a variety of contexts;
- Experience of working with clients in civil society, particularly advocacy-oriented NGOs;

## REMUNERATION AND COSTS

In line with Helpdesk framework agreements this work will be remunerated at the daily rate of **EUR 450/day**.

We expect no more than 8 days of work.

### **For candidates based in the EU, EEA, UK, and Switzerland**

Transparency International e.V. (Secretariat), (TI-S) is registered as a Business Entity in Germany with VAT identification number DE273612486. EU reverse charge applies. Service providers should issue invoices with zero VAT. Candidates who are based in Germany and do not charge German VAT must confirm their small entrepreneur status.

## HOW TO APPLY

The application should include the following documents:

1. **Motivation letter** and note regarding availability in stated assignment period
2. **Curriculum Vitae** or Consultancy profile as well as a sample of relevant previous work (confidentiality guaranteed)

Please indicate '**Research Consultant: Abuse of state incumbency in elections**' in the subject line of your email application. Applications should be sent in English by email to [cme-tender@transparency.org](mailto:cme-tender@transparency.org) by close of business of **6 May 2024**.

Please note that only shortlisted applicants will be contacted.

The Transparency International Secretariat is committed to creating an inclusive work environment where diversity is valued and where there is equality of opportunity. We actively seek a diverse applicant pool and therefore welcome applications from qualified candidates of all regions, countries, cultures, and backgrounds.

Selection of candidates is made on a competitive basis, and we do not discriminate based on national origin, race, colour or ethnic background, religious belief, sex, gender identity and expression or sexual orientation, marital or family status, age, or ability. We kindly ask applicants to refrain from including in their application information relating to the above as well as from attaching photos.

### **Data protection**

*When you respond to this tender and submit your application, you provide consent that Transparency International e. V. keeps your application materials for the period of ten years according to German legal requirements. Afterwards Transparency International will delete your application and any personal data included in it. If you have any questions, please reach out to [dataprotection@transparency.org](mailto:dataprotection@transparency.org) <https://knowledgehub.transparency.org/helpdesk/best-practice-on-preventing-the-abuse-of-public-resources>*