



**Contracting authority:** European Commission

Support to Civil Society in Georgia 2024

**Annex A.1 – Grant application form - Concept note**

Budget line(s):

Lot 1: BGUE-B2023-14.020211-C1-INTPA>NEAR

BGUE-B2023-14.020211-C1-INTPA>NEAR

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Lot 4: BGUE-B2023-14.020111-C1-NEAR

Reference:

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Deadline for submission<sup>1</sup> of concept notes:

**27/02/2024 at 12:00 (Brussels date and time)**

(in order to convert to local time click [here](#)<sup>2</sup>)

Number & title of lot	<b>Lot 4: to counter disinformation and foreign interference and manipulation (FIMI)</b>
Title of the action:	GUARDIAN - Georgia's Unified Action for Resisting Disinformation, Interference and Adversarial Networks
Name of the lead applicant	Civil Society Foundation (CSF) [Formerly Open Society Georgia Foundation (OSGF)]
Nationality of the lead applicant <sup>3</sup>	Georgia

Dossier No	
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(for official use only)

<sup>1</sup> Online submission via PROSPECT is mandatory for this call for proposals (see section 2.2.2 of the guidelines). In PROSPECT all dates and times are expressed in Brussels time. Applicants should note that the IT support is open from Monday to Friday 08:30 to 18:30 Brussels time (except during European Commission public holidays in Belgium as published in the Official Journal).

<sup>2</sup> An example of a time converter tool available online: <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock/converter.html>

<sup>3</sup> An organisation's statutes must show that it was established under the national law of the country concerned and that the head office is located in an eligible country. Any organisation established in a different country cannot be considered an eligible local organisation. See the footnotes to the guidelines for the call.

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<sup>5</sup> This link will lead you to the "EuropeAid privacy statement" published in the Practical Guide General Annexes (see Annex A13).

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# 1 CONCEPT NOTE

## 1.1. Summary of the action

### 1.1.1. Fill in the table below:

<b>Objectives of the action</b>	<p>Overall objective of the Action is to counter disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) in Georgia through the whole-of-society approach and audience-centric effective strategic communications.</p> <p>Specific objectives are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Expanding shared knowledge of foreign interference and manipulation, by developing a FIMI toolbox, building robust evidence base, and deepening insights into audience vulnerabilities.</li><li>2. Strengthening the whole-of-society response to disinformation through building multi-stakeholder partnerships and empowering CSOs, fact-checkers, media, investigative journalists, academia, researchers, monitors, etc.</li><li>3. Building societal resilience to disinformation and propaganda through strategic communications, rapid response, and long-term audience-centric communication campaigns.</li></ol>
<b>Target group(s)<sup>6</sup></b>	<p>Target groups of this Action per specific objective above are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Practitioners such as researchers, monitors, CSOs, Information Integrity Coalition (IIC) fact-checkers, media, and investigative journalists, as well as policy makers in Georgia, region and at the EU level.</li><li>2. Relevant state authorities at the national and local level, representatives of the Strategic Communications units at various ministries, National Security Council, Information Centre on NATO and EU, Central Election Commission (CEC), Communications Commission (ComCom), CSOs, IIC, fact-checkers, academia, researchers, monitors, investigative journalists, media, grassroots organizations, activists, private sector, creative industry, tech community, individual influencers, and content creators, where possible.</li><li>3. Vulnerable audiences from across the Georgian public, usually defined as segments of society most affected by disinformation, whose positions on key policy and societal issues can be swayed in different direction, thereby a key “battlefield” for disinformation actors (exact demographics and profile of audiences to be determined based on research), including communities across various regions of Georgia.</li></ol>
<b>Final beneficiaries<sup>7</sup></b>	<p>Final beneficiaries of the Action are: the Georgian society as a whole, specifically those most vulnerable to disinformation, civil society sector at national and local level, media, both national and regional, Government of Georgia and its various agencies, Parliament of Georgia and individual legislators, FIMI researchers and practitioners, relevant EU institutions, including EEAS, East StratCom Task Force, EP, diplomatic community and international</p>

<sup>6</sup> **Target groups** are groups/entities who will directly benefit from the action at the action purpose level.

<sup>7</sup> **Final beneficiaries** are those who will benefit from the action in the long term at the level of the society or sector at large.

	organizations operating in Georgia.
<b>Expected outputs</b>	<p>Under objective 1: FIMI toolbox developed; repository of FIMI/Disinformation incidents and TTPs; annual FIMI reports; 8 quarterly social media monitoring reports; response framework; at least 12 quantitative and at least 4 qualitative research results.</p> <p>Objective 2: annual international FIMI conference; quarterly stakeholder meetings, regular (at least 16) sectoral meetings, including in regions.</p> <p>Objective 3: 4 rapid response and 2 long-term campaigns.</p> <p>Cross-cutting: 6-8 grants for third parties</p>
<b>Main activities</b>	<p>Objective 1: Developing FIMI toolbox; social media monitoring; traditional monitoring; audience research; emerging trends analysis; developing the response framework.</p> <p>Objective 2: quarterly multi-stakeholder platform meetings; sectoral meetings and capacity building; annual FIMI conference.</p> <p>Objective 3: Strategic Communications Team operation; developing a strategic messaging framework, development of long-term and rapid response campaigns, creative development, production, and execution of the campaigns.</p>

## 1.2. Description of the action: cover all the 7 points in the instructions: (max 2 pages)

Since its independence, Georgia has embarked on the path of the Euro-Atlantic integration, and the EU and NATO membership remains foreign policy goal of its successive governments for decades, a vision shared by [overwhelming majority](#) of Georgian citizens. To deter Georgia's democratic progress and western integration, Kremlin has resorted to strategic use of FIMI, which particularly intensified after Russia's invasion of Georgia in 2008. While Russia has not been successful in deterring public's pro-European sentiment, [research reveals](#) significant vulnerabilities towards disinformation narratives among parts of Georgian society, particularly evident since the start of Russia's full-scale war against Ukraine. USAID's Information Integrity Program's latest [research](#) showed that 31% of Georgia's public agree that the Russia-Ukraine war was provoked by the West, while 29% believe that the West was trying to drag Georgia into the war, narratives heavily spread by propaganda actors. This was exacerbated through similar information manipulation methods by domestic political actors, including those affiliated with the government. Use of discrediting campaigns and disinformation in domestic politics and elections have been [extensively documented](#), while [Meta's investigation](#) found a CIB (Coordinated Inauthentic Behavior) network linked to the Strategic Communications Department of Georgia's Government Administration.

Civil society has emerged as a backbone of the defender community in Georgia pioneering response and counter strategies to FIMI. The Applicants have led and coordinated efforts such as: developing monitoring methodologies; de- and pre-bunking disinformation; advocating in the Parliamentary formats; partnering with Meta and other platforms, establishing the [Information Integrity Coalition](#) (IIC), and partnering on strategic communications campaigns to challenge disinformation within target groups.

The [decision](#) to grant Georgia the EU candidate status on the understanding that relevant steps set out in the EC's [recommendation](#) are taken, puts countering FIMI as the key priority for Georgia's EU integration. The first of the nine steps - "fight disinformation and foreign information manipulation and interference against the EU and its values" provides a renewed opportunity for whole-of-society response. GGSA and ISFED, through IIC, have already developed [recommendations](#) on implementation of this first step.

This Action sets out to counter disinformation and FIMI in Georgia through the whole-of-society approach and audience-centric effective strategic communications. The Action is structured under three main objectives, which respectively cluster activities in terms of 1) **monitoring, research, and learning**; 2) **building multi-stakeholder partnership**; and 3) **strategic communications**. The table below explains the intervention logic according to the three objectives:

Objectives	Expected outputs	Outcomes	Impact	Risks and Assumptions
1) Expanding shared knowledge of foreign interference and manipulation, by developing a FIMI toolbox, building robust evidence base, and deepening insights into audience vulnerabilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>FIMI toolbox</li> <li>a joint repository of FIMI and TTPs</li> <li>annual FIMI reports</li> <li>8 quarterly social media monitoring reports</li> <li>response framework</li> <li>12 quantitative and 4 qualitative research results</li> </ul>	a) Standardized, systematized, and shared knowledge around FIMI and disinformation. b) In-depth understanding of the information environment through ongoing monitoring of FIMI/disinformation and research into audience vulnerabilities	Increased collaboration among the professional community and practitioners of disinformation/FIMI research. More coherent and robust understanding of threats and vulnerabilities through the lenses of FIMI toolbox and harmonized with the EU methodology.	Civil society and media can operate freely and without pressure and can carry out crucial monitoring and research activities. There are no regulatory or operational restrictions on EU funding to civil society actors.
2) Strengthening the whole-of-society response to disinformation through building multi-stakeholder partnerships and empowering CSOs, fact-checkers, media, investigative journalists, academia, researchers, monitors, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>annual international FIMI conference</li> <li>quarterly stakeholder meetings</li> <li>regular (at least 16) sectoral meetings, including in regions</li> </ul>	c) Established multi-stakeholder partnerships between state and non-state actors, and various industries from civil society, media, academia, private sector.	Institutional partnerships and the whole-of-society response to FIMI, disinformation and hybrid threats in Georgia. Increased understanding of EU regulatory and policy measures on FIMI. Strengthened cooperation between Georgian and EU stakeholders on FIMI.	Readiness of all actors to engage in good faith to address FIMI/ disinformation and make meaningful progress on the first of the nine steps set out by the EU. Openness to collaboration and partnerships.
3) Building societal resilience to disinformation and propaganda through strategic communications, rapid response, and long-term audience centric communication campaigns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4 rapid response campaigns</li> <li>2 long-term campaigns</li> <li>regular messaging guidance for defender community</li> </ul>	d) Effective audience centric strategic communication that provide guardrails for decreasing impact of FIMI, disinformation and propaganda in Georgia.	Increased societal resilience and reduced vulnerabilities among key audiences.	Public support to Georgia's EU integration remains high. Georgia remains committed to its declared path of EU integration and there are no dramatic shifts in foreign policy.

The Action is designed as a 24-month intervention as the optimal duration considering comprehensive activities, grouped below under respective objectives:

**Objective 1: Monitoring, research, and learning:**

- Development of a **FIMI toolbox** for a systematized mapping of FIMI, including a **joint repository** to accumulate and organize a data according to ABCDE (Actors, Behaviour, Content, Degree, Effect) framework and detailing Tactics, Techniques, and Procedures (TTP) of FIMI/disinformation threat actors – led by GGSA with the support from ISFED and CSF.
- Continuous **social media monitoring** of disinformation and threat actors on Facebook, Instagram, Telegram, TikTok, Twitter to systematically assess information environment, identify emerging narratives, uncover coordinated inauthentic behaviour and mitigate the spread of manipulated content – led by ISFED.
- Continuous **media monitoring** of select TV and online outlets affiliated with pro-Kremlin radical groups as well as screening of the Russian information channels – led by GGSA.
- Regular **surveys, focus groups and experimental research** to understand audience vulnerabilities, gain insight into how FIMI, disinformation and propaganda narratives land with the public, and identify the most affected segments of the population – led by CRRC Georgia.
- Continuous **analysis of emerging trends**, rapid alert system, effective information sharing – led by Strategic Communications Team under CSF, with the support from ISFED and GGSA.
- Continuous learning and developing of **the response framework** detailing a workflow from risk assessment to designing and activating countermeasures and the evaluation of the counter activities effects – all partners.
- Annual **FIMI** and regular **monitoring** reports will provide systematized and regular assessment of the state of FIMI and disinformation efforts in Georgia, providing public with robust analysis, evidence base as well as recommendations. The reports will mainstream crosscutting issues and assess impact of FIMI or disinformation campaigns on democracy and good governance, human rights, gender equality, LGBTQI communities, women, and youth.

**Objective 2: Building multi-stakeholder partnerships:**

- Facilitation of a **multi-stakeholder platform** engaging the CSOs, relevant government authorities, academia, international experts, media, creative industry, and private companies aimed at fostering a comprehensive **whole-of-society approach**. This platform will serve as a mechanism for regular knowledge and experience sharing across the sectors, through quarterly **stakeholder meetings** – led by ISFED with the support of CSF.
- Regular **sectoral meetings** to empower CSOs, fact-checkers, media, investigative journalists, academia, researchers, monitors, creative industry, etc. for sharing analysis of the key threats, vulnerabilities, research insights, best practices, success stories and lessons learned – led by CSF.
- Building awareness on **EU regulatory policy solutions** such as Digital Services Act, AI Act, etc. and **advocacy** for policy harmonization with the EU frameworks – led by GGSA with the support from DE-CONSPIRATOR, and the European Fact-Checking Standards Network (EFCNSN).
- Annual **FIMI conference** bringing together the stakeholders from Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova, Western Balkans, EU institutions and experts to showcase the FIMI toolbox, discuss response strategies, emerging trends, and common challenges – led by ISFED together with CSF and GGSA.

**Objective 3: Strategic communications**

- Coordination of the work of the **Strategic Communications Team** (consisting of communication experts, representatives of CSOs, creative industry, and researchers), which is responsible for analysing data obtained under objective 1, identifies meta narratives, detects risks and potential impact on the society, suggesting pre-emptive narrative, framing message box, proposing rapid response action plan and campaign strategy – led by CSF.
- Creating a **strategic messaging framework** that address the underlying vulnerabilities and developing a robust fact and evidence-based database of messaging aimed for debunking/pre-bunking/reframing the propaganda narratives, sub-narratives, and messages – led by CSF with the support of other partners.
- Developing **long-term and rapid response communication campaigns** aimed to build resilience towards FIMI, disinformation and propaganda efforts – led by CSF.
- Production and implementation of the campaigns with the support from creative industry – led by CSF.

In addition, CSF (formerly OSGF) will carry out a **grants program**, to expand understanding into specific vulnerabilities (i.e. weaponization of history, Soviet past, and identity), developing innovative approaches in research, pre- or de-bunking, building resilience in specific communities, grassroots actions, working with academia on developing academic research on disinformation and FIMI (both from Russia and China). The grants program may provide funding for third parties such as CSOs (including grassroots organizations in regions), media (national or regional), investigative journalists, academia, researchers, think tanks, etc. The priorities for the grants program will be defined based on gaps in understanding, key vulnerabilities or lack of interventions identified through research component.

### 1.3. Relevance of the action (max 3 pages)

#### 1.3.1. Relevance to the objectives/sectors/themes/specific priorities of the call for proposals

This Action is carried out by some of the leading civil society organizations in Georgia and it aims to address FIMI, Kremlin disinformation and harmful propaganda narratives, which represent significant elements of the hybrid threats to Georgia's democratic development, European integration process and Georgia's alignment on the EU values of democracy and human rights. Thereby, this action is directly in line with the global objective of supporting civil society in its ability to strengthen and promote good governance, democratic values, and human rights in Georgia. More specifically, the Action falls under the Lot 4 – to counter disinformation and foreign interference and manipulation (FIMI). This specific objective of the Lot 4 represents the overall objective for the proposed Action. The applicants aim to implement wide array of activities for countering disinformation and FIMI in Georgia, with robust methodological framework through FIMI toolbox, whole-of-society approach, and strategic communications as the core pillars. The two priorities of this call for proposals are addressed across three main objectives (and relevant workstreams) under this project, as explained below.

**Building societal resilience and strengthening the whole-of-society** approach is achieved throughout all streams of activities: i) creating a more coherent and robust understanding of threats and vulnerabilities with accumulated research, monitoring, and learning analysed through the lenses of FIMI toolbox sets out a common framework and evidence base for better assessing the challenge and impact of FIMI, disinformation, and counter-measures; ii) creating a multi-stakeholder platform and establishing cross-sectoral partnerships expands and strengthens the defender community by engaging diverse state and non-state actors (see 1.3.3); iii) while strategic communication efforts target weaknesses and vulnerabilities within the specific audience segments, and through pre-emptive tactics, rapid response or long-term campaigns, over time, help provide safeguards to the harmful effects of the FIMI/disinformation.

Strategic communication campaigns are an effective audience-centric mechanism for **raising awareness among general public** on national security and hybrid threats, where the applicants place particular emphasis on FIMI and anti-EU disinformation. In addition, high level fora such as annual FIMI conferences, the multi-stakeholder platform, and sectoral/regional meetings provide opportunities of in-depth professional dialogue on the issues of FIMI, cybersecurity, disinformation by engaging state and non-state actors as well as international experts and EU representatives.

The project will incorporate the HRBA and mainstream crosscutting elements, such as gender, rights, and impact on minorities, etc. Particularly, FIMI and monitoring reports will highlight disinformation that target women, LGBTQI groups, ethnic or religious minorities or other disadvantaged groups (i.e. those living in the occupied regions). The design of communication campaigns and choice of audiences will consider these insights. Policy discussions with the state authorities will be guided by the principles of human rights, rule of law, democratic governance, and effective public administration.

The Action will respond to achieving all the indicative results described in the call for proposals, namely:

- Development of a FIMI toolbox – through objective 1.
- Conducting tailored strategic communication campaigns on national and grassroots levels to raise awareness of the target groups – through objective 3.
- Facilitation of multi-stakeholder partnerships between the CSOs, authorities, private sector, creative industry, and media – through objective 2.
- Capacity building of CSOs, fact-checkers, watchdog groups, activists, investigative media, academia, researchers, influencers, and independent content creators – through objectives 1, 2, 3.
- Monitoring of information space, traditional media, and social media platforms to identify emerging narratives, uncover coordinated inauthentic behaviour, and curb the spread of manipulated content, fake news, and conspiracy theories – through objective 1.
- Provision of support to third parties to explore innovative approaches aimed at pre-bunking and debunking disinformation narratives and amplifying fact-checked narratives through media to reach wider audience – through the Grants program.
- Conducting studies to identify vulnerabilities exploited by malign actors attempting to sow societal divisions and development of actionable countermeasures – through objective 1 and Grants Program.

#### 1.3.2. Relevance to the particular needs and constraints of the target country/countries, region(s) and/or relevant sectors (including synergy with other EU initiatives and avoidance of duplication)



FIMI and disinformation represent significant instruments in Kremlin arsenal of hybrid warfare and influence operations in Georgia. The [2022 report](#) of the State Security Service of Georgia states that the main goal of the disinformation campaigns was to change the country's foreign policy orientation and its Euro-Atlantic aspirations. Since the start of the Russia's war on Ukraine, there has been a sharp rise, in [anti-Western rhetoric](#) and conspiracy theories, i.e. alleging that Georgia would be granted a EU candidate status only if Georgia opened up a second front and engaged in a war against Russia. This has impacted [public attitudes](#) – in the USAID Information Integrity Program's audience research, year on year comparison shows that public perception of the West as a partner, in terms of common values and traditions, decreased while the share of those uncertain increased. Attempted [introduction](#) of the Russian-style "Foreign Agent" law in 2023, has [raised concerns](#) on Georgia's commitment to European integration and human rights. Georgian people's strong pro-European stance and CSO's coordinated strategic communications response [prevented](#) adoption of the "Russian law". Georgian people's "[unshaken commitment to the European values](#)" has secured Georgia the EU candidate status. The EC recognizing countering FIMI/disinformation as a key step for Georgia's further path towards EU accession provides a clear guidance as well as an opportunity to galvanize key stakeholders around this objective.

Georgia has a strong defender community in the form of its civil society when it comes to FIMI, including disinformation. Georgian CSOs have been at the forefront of studying, documenting, and analysing FIMI threats and initiating responses. More recently, CSOs have also started shifting more towards strategic communications and audience-centric campaigns. However, CSO actors still lack synergies, common methodologies, frameworks, and shared approaches. While some efforts have been successful to establish cross-sectoral partnerships, creating a whole-of-society approach remains a challenge, largely due to the difficulties to meaningfully engage with authorities. When it comes to building societal resilience, true audience-centric strategic communication efforts have only recently started taking shape, and still, they lack sufficient resources, coordination and encounter various sensitivities. Therefore, this Action, with its three workstreams, is very relevant and timely for Georgia's current context and its outlook given the EU integration process. Recently adopted Government [Communication Strategy](#), along with the [action plan](#) on implementation on the 9 steps are a handful of documents that outline the government plans at the national level to address the disinformation. The multi-stakeholder platform, and regular sectoral meetings proposed in this Action provide mechanisms for meaningful engagement and cooperation, in case of demonstrated political will from all sides.

As part of this Action, the Applicants seek to coordinate, build on, amplify, and expand on other similar initiatives with shared objectives. One such key initiative is the USAID Information Integrity Program that is set to conclude in 2025. As members of the IIC, GGSA and ISFED are uniquely positioned to ensure complementarity and continuity. The multi-stakeholder platform will also invite the USAID Information Integrity Program to ensure sharing of research data, learnings, and insights accumulated since its launch in 2020. Where there might be similar activities (i.e. communication campaigns), we will seek to avoid overlaps, align strategies, ensure synergies, where possible. Similarly, CSF (formerly OSGF) is part of a KAS-led consortium implementing an EU project United for Georgia's European Way, which will allow complementary approaches, insights, and visibility, particularly when it comes to the grants program. This action will also create a synergy with Horizon Europe project DE-CONSPIRATOR, which GGSA is a part of.

### **1.3.3. Describe and define the target groups and final beneficiaries, their needs and constraints, and state how the action will address these needs**

Target groups of the action are classified in three layers according to the three objectives and activities.

At the core are the inner layer of the target groups for objective 1 – these are the practitioners of FIMI and disinformation research in Georgia, as well as experts and policy makers in Georgia and the EU. These include researchers, monitors, and fact-checkers, primarily organized as CSOs. The Information Integrity Coalition (IIC) represents the majority of these civil society professionals in Georgia. Both ISFED and GGSA are elected within the Steering Committee of the Coalition. ISFED serves as the current chair, while GGSA will take on this rotational role later in 2025. Therefore, the Applicants have close relationship and a direct mandate to engage the professional civil society community in monitoring, research, and learning, as well as in capacity building component of the Action. While there are many actors within the counter-disinformation space in Georgia, often their capacities are constrained, or they lack robust methodologies and conceptual approaches to their work. Developing the FIMI toolbox will provide a necessary framework that can be adopted by them. Beyond the CSOs, media and investigative journalists, international community, and policy experts, as well as policy makers within Georgia and the EU will benefit from a more systemic, standardized, and in-depth understanding of FIMI environment in Georgia with the outputs of the proposed action.

The next layer of the target groups within the objective 2 consists of actors from across diverse sectors from government to businesses and individuals. In terms of the government, it would be representatives of the Administration of Government, various ministries, relevant strategic communication units, Information Centre on NATO and EU, CEC, ComCom, National Security Council. From the legislative branch, this includes Parliamentary Committees on Security and Defence, European Integration, and Foreign Relations. Given Georgia's unique challenges in terms of FIMI and disinformation, in desirable circumstances, the government authorities would seek cooperation with broader civil society actors to achieve whole-of-society response and increased resilience. In case of Georgia, however, there are constraints in this regard, due to the track record of the ruling party-affiliated individuals engaging in anti-Western rhetoric over the recent years, coupled with coordinated inauthentic activities being linked to the Government's strategic communications unit. Attitudes towards CSOs from certain ruling party and government representatives and difficulties in terms of meaningful engagement of civil society might create challenges for a desired collaboration, however CSOs still maintain working relationships with some agencies, including the Information Centre on EU and NATO, CEC, and ComCom. Applicants operate under the assumption that there will be willingness from all sides for a meaningful engagement in good faith with the incentive to contribute to implementing the nine steps defined by the EU as important prerequisites for Georgia's progress on EU accession. This layer of target audiences also includes those already identified above as part of the practitioners, however in addition, academia, researchers, grassroots organizations, activists, private sector, creative industry, tech community, individual influencers, and content creators, will be engaged as part of the whole-of-society approach. Some of these target groups may be constrained by lack of awareness and knowledge of the FIMI challenges or lack of understanding how they could contribute. This is exactly the reason behind their selection as their engagement and capacity building would increase broader societal resilience and create opportunities of new cross-sectoral partnerships resulting in whole-of-society response.

Finally, the outer layer of the target groups includes broader Georgian public, specifically vulnerable audiences, usually defined as segments of society most affected by disinformation, whose positions on key policy and societal issues can be swayed in different direction, among them grassroots and marginalized communities across various regions of Georgia. Winning the hearts and minds of this target group is a main objective of FIMI actors, therefore, it is important that we use audience-centric approaches and design effective strategic communications campaigns.

In terms of final beneficiaries, this Action will benefit, first and foremost, the Georgian society through increased resilience, whole-of-society partnership, enhanced understanding of the threats and guardrails to disinformation. Besides, the action's final beneficiaries are the practitioners, FIMI and disinformation experts, researchers, as well as the broader civil society, national and regional media, academia, etc. who will benefit from more robust methodological framework and evidence base, as well as increased capacities, and potential partnerships. Government of Georgia and its various agencies, Parliament of Georgia and individual legislators will benefit from tapping into the resources of a motivated defender community that provides great opportunities for synergies, whole-of-society engagement, and knowledge sharing. Finally, EU institutions, including EEAS, East StratCom Task Force, EP, diplomatic community, and international organizations operating in Georgia will also benefit from this Action.

### **1.3.4. Particular added-value elements**

The Applicants bring with them unique match of experience and best practices available in Georgia. Lead applicant, CSF (formerly OSGF) is one of the most experienced CSOs in Georgia with unmatched track record and experience of administering complex and impactful development projects, including grant-making and advocacy. CSF has traditionally been a convener of civil society, media, academia, activists, as well as government representatives and policy makers making it easier for the Action to naturally become a gravitation point for actors from various sectors. In addition, CSF has supported and coordinated the work of the Strategic Communications Team, that came together as an informal initiative group of around 25 CSOs during the pro-EU protests of March 2023, and has since successfully supported civil society and media through strategic communications advise, trend analysis, message framing, and pre-emptive actions. This best practice shapes the approach of this Action. ISFED and GGSA have both significant experience of monitoring, research, investigation and reporting into the FIMI actors, behaviour, content using advanced tools and software. ISFED was one of the pioneering organizations globally that developed a robust social media monitoring methodology and has contributed to [EU guide](#) for Civil Society on Monitoring Social Media during Elections. GGSA pioneered fact-checking in Georgia, is a signatory of EFCSN; and a partner to Meta's Third-Party Fact-checking program. GGSA contributed to the Thematic Inquiry Working Group at the Parliament of Georgia, and is currently part of DE-CONSPIRATOR, a multi-stakeholder, multi-disciplinary Horizon Europe project. CRRC is one of the most trusted public opinion research providers in Georgia. It has undertaken more than 300 data collection endeavors, including large-scale media and disinformation studies. Since 2020, it has been carrying out a comprehensive audience research for the USAID Information Integrity Program.