Context

The Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) is the UK’s democracy assistance agency, working in partnership with political parties, parliaments, and civil society organisations around the world to create more inclusive, accountable, and transparent democratic systems. WFD strengthens the capacity of these key democratic institutions, helping ensure they have the systems, knowledge and skills to perform effectively. WFD also fosters improved democratic processes, bringing together individuals and institutions and encouraging them to work together to solve concrete problems, applying democratic values and principles.

Over the course of 2020-2021, WFD is leading on supporting democratic stability in Bangsamoro programme through the UK Conflict Stability Security Funding (CSSF) managed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and implemented by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD). Recognising the establishment of the Bangsamoro Organic Law (BOL) being a key entry point for locally owned institutions and processes to develop and adopt inclusive and accountable practices, the programme is designed with the overall aim of supporting the implementation of BOL. The programme will support the establishment of BOL by strengthening locally owned institutions to become increasingly accountable, inclusive, and pluralistic.

The programme combines:

1. Strengthening the Bangsamoro parliament as an institution and developing the expertise of its members and staff.
2. Supporting the development of existing and fledging Bangsamoro political parties and brokering dialogue between them around the emerging rules of the game within the new system of governance.
3. Supporting Bangsamoro women as political leaders and politically active citizens to coalesce around shared objectives and agenda and to be equipped with the right expertise to identify and influence key policy and legislative change.

Objective

Civil society can play a critical role in strengthening parliaments as an institution by sharing insights and lending expertise on specific issues and parliaments in turn can engage civil society in meaningful ways to become more inclusive, and transparent. This shift from working ‘for’ the people to working ‘with’ the people entails a commitment on the part of the parliament to establish platforms for exchange and dialogue and clear lines of communication with the civil society.

The transition period in Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) presents a unique opportunity to lay the foundations of a parliamentary system that not only values the contributions of civil society but actively seeks it by instituting mechanisms and protocols for dialogue and exchange with citizens. BARMM has a vibrant civil society with many independent organisations and groups working on policy, governance, and development issues.

The civil society organisations with their linkages and access to communities in both urban and rural areas, can play an important role in bringing the issues faced by the citizens to light in the parliament and assist lawmakers in addressing key policy, governance and development issues in innovative ways.

In this context, WFD would like to commission a scoping study to explore:
- the presence of civil society organisations and groups in the five provinces (Basilan, Lanao del Sur, Maguindanao, Sulu, Tawi-Tawi) and three cities of BARMM (Cotabato City, Lamitan, Marawi) along with their areas of focus.
- the current engagement and information sharing of CSOs and groups with the parliament; nature of issues, platforms used, frequency of exchange
- the key priority issues for CSOs and groups in the transition period
- skill building needs of CSOs and groups for advocacy, networking, and capacity building needs to better understand the parliamentary processes to engage effectively with the parliament
- perception of parliament’s openness to engage with citizens
- barriers to citizen engagement with the parliament (especially for more remote areas)
- opportunities for both formal and informal citizen engagement with the parliament

Based on the findings the study should also present recommendations for WFD to strengthen citizen-parliament engagement through programming highlighting any additional support required by the CSOs.

It is anticipated that this scoping study will be conducted remotely through interviews with civil society organisations and groups and as relevant, MPs and relevant offices of the Bangsamoro Transition Authority (BTA)

**Deliverables:**
The consultant conducting the study will be required to:

- Work closely with the Bangsamoro programme team and WFD’s Senior Transparency Advisor to finalise the detailed terms of reference and scope of the study
- Develop research questionnaire and methodology
- Identify CSOs and groups working in the BARMM and organise interviews (assistance will be provided by the programme team in Cotabato City)
- Organise and conduct interviews with selected MPs and offices of the BTA
- Draft a report of findings (format to be agreed with WFD) including a section on recommendations to strengthen citizen-parliament engagement
- Present the findings to WFD and a selected group of MPs and BTA officials.

**Timeline:**
December 2020 – February 2021

**Fees:**
£10k – 15k. Depending on the proposed workload and experience.

**Qualifications:**

1. Extensive experience of working with democratic institutions, civil society organisations and independent groups on policy, governance, or development issues.
2. Understanding of the political, cultural and social context in BARMM including key policy and governance issues in the transition period or experience of working in the broader Asia region on these issues

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1 Representation of CSOs and groups from all locations would be desirable; however, complete coverage may not be possible.
3. Understanding of the need for parliaments to be open, inclusive, and transparent to positively impact the lives of the citizens.

4. Demonstrated experience of conducting qualitative research to propose policy or programming recommendations.

5. Experience of providing technical expertise to strengthen civil society engagement with government, parliament or other democratic institutions will be preferred.

6. Experience of working in post-conflict and in-transition countries will be preferred.

Please send your updated CV and a brief proposal outlining the structure of the scoping study to saba.gill@wfd.org. We will receive applications on a rolling basis for this opportunity.