



*Office of Inspector General*

## MEMORANDUM

**DATE:** October 17, 2019

**TO:** USAID/Acting North Macedonia Country Representative, Gretchen Birkle

**FROM:** USAID OIG Middle East and Eastern Europe (ME/EE), USDH NFA Coordinator, Abdoulaye Gueye /s/

**SUBJECT:** Closeout Audit of the Fund Accountability Statement of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) Skopje, Strengthening Independent Media in Macedonia Project - Investigative Journalism and Cooperation Between Media and Civil Society in North Macedonia, Cooperative Agreement AID-165-A-12-00011, December 18, 2012, to March 31, 2017 (8-165-20-003-R)

This memorandum transmits the final report of the closeout audit of the fund accountability statement of the Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) Skopje, Strengthening Independent Media in Macedonia Project - Investigative Journalism and Cooperation Between Media and Civil Society in North Macedonia, cooperative agreement AID-165-A-12-00011, December 18, 2012, to March 31, 2017. The auditee contracted with the independent certified public accounting firm BDO DOO, Skopje to conduct the audit. The audit firm states that it performed its audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards and the OIG Guidelines<sup>1</sup>. However, it did not have an external quality control review program and a continuing education program that fully satisfies the standards' requirements. The audit firm explained that Macedonia does not offer such a review program. With respect to the continuing education program, the audit firm states that they could not satisfy the standards' requirements because they could not fully obtain the U.S. Government auditing related hours.

The audit firm is responsible for the enclosed auditor's report and the conclusions expressed in it. We do not express an opinion on the auditee's fund accountability statement; the effectiveness of its internal controls; or its compliance with the award, laws, and regulations.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> On June 30, 2017, USAID OIG rescinded its "Guidelines for Financial Audits Contracted by Foreign Recipients," recognizing the Agency's role to impose requirements on its implementing partners and contractors as a management function.

<sup>2</sup> We reviewed the audit firm's report for conformity with professional reporting standards. Our desk reviews are typically performed to identify any items needing clarification or issues requiring management attention. Desk reviews are limited to review of the audit report itself and excludes review of the auditor's supporting working papers; they are not designed to enable us to directly evaluate the quality of the audit performed.

The audit objectives were mainly to: (1) express an opinion on whether the fund accountability statement for the period audited was presented fairly, in all material respects; (2) evaluate the auditee's internal controls; (3) determine whether the auditee complied with the award terms and applicable laws and regulations. To answer the audit objectives, the audit firm performed the subject financial audit that covered \$772,919, from December 18, 2012, to March 31, 2017.

The auditors expressed an unmodified opinion on the fund accountability statement and did not identify any questioned costs. The audit firm did not identify any material weaknesses in internal control, or any material instances of noncompliance with the agreement terms, conditions and applicable laws and regulations.

The report does not contain any recommendations for your action.

We appreciate the assistance extended to the audit staff during the engagement.

The OIG does not routinely distribute independent public accounting reports beyond the immediate addressees because a high percentage of these reports contain information restricted from release under the Trade Secrets Act, 18 U.S.C. 1905 and Freedom of Information Act Exemption Four, 5 U.S.C. 552(b)(4) ("commercial or financial information obtained from a person that is privileged or confidential").

Enclosed: a/s