

PART A – FULFILLING RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Albany Associates has assembled this consortium to offer a high quality response to the requirements set out in the ITT. All three companies – Albany Associates, ORB, and M&C Saatchi World Services - are well known to one another, and have collaborated many times over the past five years, during which time we have developed a good understanding and an effective modus operandi.

Albany has over 12 years of project management experience, and is currently managing projects for the CSSF in the Baltics and Sudan, and have provisionally been awarded work in Central Asia. In addition to this, there are numerous other projects under management for a variety of funders including the UN and the US Government. With budget sizes often reaching the multi-millions, the project types include research, outreach and strategic communications.

ORB, a market leader in high quality research in fragile and conflict environments, will conduct the substance of the target audience analysis, from questionnaire design and revision, through data collection and final analysis of the findings using both bivariate and multivariate statistical techniques. ORB will also be responsible for managing the qualitative and quantitative fieldwork training, and for travelling to each of the target countries to monitor qualitative data collection.

M&C Saatchi World Services, a world renowned creative and digital agency with a strong track record in the Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus with competencies in cutting-edge digital research and campaigning technology, will provide digital analysis using its Human Digital capability. This is a high quality social media and influencer analysis, which blends technology platforms with human-led verification and analysis. The results of which will be combined with the fieldwork to shape opportunities for appropriate communications.

Our consortium approaches this tender with a strong background in conducting Target Audience Analyses (TAA) and recent project experience working with both HMG and the US Government on similar projects. Combined, we offer a best in class solution that can deliver significant value to the FCO. Our consortium is well positioned to deliver face to face data collection combining: i) our local team's detailed knowledge of the three countries in question; ii) a strict training and data-checking regime; and iii) the latest technology that allows us to monitor field teams' movements and implementation of the survey with precision.

When grounded in high quality data collection, analytical outputs can be created that provide the FCO with an in-depth view of the target audience and produce accurate baseline metrics that can be measured over time. This will require a questionnaire and sample that are designed with the aim of enabling multi-variate analysis to be performed. Our team has successfully designed multiple TAA studies in the past, enabling clients to target certain population segments using the most appropriate media channels. Figure 1 of the Appendix shows a correspondence map taken from a study in Somalia. This summarises the relationship between media usage (in blue) and attitudes to extremism (in red). Vulnerable extremists and extremist sympathisers are on the left (though these are far apart) and anti-extremists and extremist-rejectors close together on the right. The map demonstrates that if the area of interest were for example vulnerable extremists, then the best media channel to target this audience would be short-wave radio (illustrated by their close proximity in the red circle).

ORB is also currently finalising the Russian TAA study tendered through the MoD Military Strategic Effects Framework, which has very similar objectives to those called for in this tender. We are therefore confident we have assembled the right team to execute your requirements. We propose a dual pronged approach to fulfil the research aims and objectives:

1. A nationally represented quantitative study with qualitative focus groups in each of the three countries

In each of Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus we suggest a survey with sufficient interviews to produce a nationally representative survey of adults (18+). To ensure that in depth analysis can be done among those who speak Russian "in a home setting" a 'boost' sample of Russian Speakers will also be conducted. As the desired outcomes of the research concern predominantly Russian speaking households, we suggest a stratification of the sample between Russian and local-language interviews in each country, so that attitudes among Russian speakers can be effectively compared with a control group of the wider population. When the survey is complete, weights can be used to enable the sample to be analysed as a nationally representative dataset if

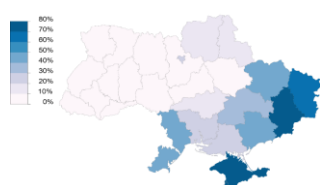
required. Our suggested base sizes for each country are as follows, however these can be adjusted to meet the needs of the FCO:

- Belarus** (n=2000 Nationally representative)
- Moldova (Including Transnistria)** (n=500 Moldovan Speakers & n=1000 Russian Speakers)
- Ukraine (Including Crimea and Sevastopol)** (n=500 Ukrainian Speakers & n=1,500 Russian Speakers)

In any quantitative survey, it is essential that the questionnaire is administered in whichever language and dialect that is most familiar to the respondent. This helps to limit the possibility that the interviewers will be regarded as ‘outsiders’ and increases the likelihood that the respondent will give candid responses – something which will be particularly important in this study. In this context, the gender balance of the field teams is also taken into consideration. In each country we will have separate Russian and local language translations, with each carried out by interviewers who are native language speakers.

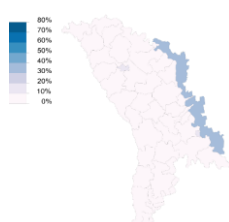
A random sample of the Russian-speaking population in each country will therefore need to be drawn. Our team proposes using the best available census data to select sampling areas where we are most likely to reach these populations. This will include all regions currently recognised by the FCO (including Transnistria in Moldova and Crimea/Sevastopol and the Donbass in Ukraine). Prior to fieldwork, a detailed sampling plan will be drawn and provided to the client for final approval (further details of this procedure are outlined below).

Ukraine – Distribution of Russian-Speaking Population



Areas with high densities of Russian speakers are highlighted in the map above in blue. According to the 2001 census, there were a total of 14,273,670 people who speak Russian as a native language living in Ukraine. Source: 2001 Census: http://database.ukrcensus.gov.ua/MULT/Database/Census/databasetree_en.asp

Moldova – Distribution of Russian nationals in Moldova



At the time of writing, detailed information on Russian-speakers in Moldova is not available from the 2004 census. Areas with high densities of Russians are highlighted in the map above in Blue this will be used as a starting point along with other academic data. According to the 2004 census, there were a total of 201,209 people who self-identified as Russian citizens living in Moldova. (Source: 2004 Census: <http://www.statistica.md/pageview.php?l=en&idc=295>)

Belarus – Distribution of Russian-Speaking Population

Russian is the dominant language in households in Belarus, and we therefore expect the large majority of interviews to be conducted in Russian. Unlike the other countries in this proposal, the sample of Russian speakers will not require a boost, nor do we expect to find large geographic disparities between Russian-speaking and Belorussian-speaking populations. Therefore, a nationally representative study will be sufficient to gather data that meets the project goals in Belarus.

2. Online sentiment analysis to measure ‘real time’ attitudes across the digital landscape

In order to give even greater depth to our suggested face to face (quantitative) approach to the TAA study, we would strongly recommend a secondary set of data obtained from social media, providing insight and valuable information regarding target audiences attitudes, motivations and behaviours. This will allow comparison and validation of data sets obtained and more importantly a rich set of accessible information feeds from relevant and trusted social media platforms – a must for the FCO given the importance of online media to our target audience.

M&C Saatchi’s Human Digital approach is the industry leading capability in this area and provides specific expertise in mapping key audiences of interest across all locally relevant open source social media platforms. Our approach is unique and blends best-in-class software and technological expertise with human-led verification and analysis to ensure that the insights we give our clients are accurate, actionable and secure. As a result of the exponential growth of the online domain, access to and the exploitation of bulk data is allowing

governments and brands to determine patterns and trends in human activity which provide clients significant commercial advantages over their competitors. These advantages can also provide a rich seam of insight for the FCO, specifically in relation to mapping audience.

For example, despite Ukraine having the greater population (45,002,497), its internet penetration is the lowest between all three countries, at 44.5% - meaning 19,678,089 had internet access in 2016. Penetration growth rates for Ukraine are projected low, at just 0.4% between 2015 - 2016. Belarus sees the highest internet penetration, at 59%, as well as the highest growth rate of internet users between the three countries. As a result of the 2014-15 amendments to the Belarus media law, and in response to the situation in Ukraine, website blocking has increased in recent years. However, YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and international blog-hosting services remained freely available, in addition to VK and OK. We deem that there is enough credible data across the 18-75yrs demographic to develop a coherent set of insights, employing business-as-usual methodology to analyse the online space.

Relatively cheap mobile subscription means internet access is increasingly becoming a mainstream activity for populations across all three countries and ensures that social media usage – particularly of western platforms such as Facebook and Twitter - will continue to expand across the entire adult demographic spread.

Initial Activities - Historical social media data across target audience communities will be analysed over a previous 12 month period to ensure that communities, topics and themes are consistently reliable, representative and weighted to reflect the broader population over a significant time period to add depth to the findings and shape the questionnaires to ensure meaningful output. This will provide key insights to this study and allow UK Government to gain an understanding of how audience attitudes have been changing over time, a valuable addition to this research, significantly enhancing the audience insight.

Benchmarking and Outputs - Online data sampling operates slightly differently to traditional sampling methods in that it is observed and analysed as it naturally occurs online. By establishing benchmarks the online insight will complement the fieldwork delivering a more holistic and robust view of the target audience. Once a representative dataset is developed, a set of qualitative and quantitative baselines will be established that will take into account as many key research foci as possible. The data provides an unprecedented addition to the in-field research making this combination of real time and face to face insight unmatched and a must for the FCO.

Measurement of the impact of local interventions over time will be delivered via dynamic dashboards and insight reports, allowing for fast, easy and real time access on key data for the FCO. M&C Saatchi's Human Digital team has a track record in developing benchmarks, and identifying difficult to access data on human behaviour, including for the P2P Baltic CSSF project, and has delivered insights to clients such as the UK Home Office, The Ministry of Defence, the US Department of Defence, making it a must-have addition to the face to face quantitative data that we propose conducting for the FCO.

Our understanding of the context

The Russian annexation of Crimea and subsequent support of Russian-backed separatists in the Donbas has raised concerns that under the pretence of defending Russian speaking minorities, the Kremlin may have intentions in other parts of the former Soviet Union including other regions of Ukraine, Moldova and Belarus. Although Russian interaction with each of these states is multi-levelled, complex and differs for each, broadly-speaking the Kremlin has sought increasing amounts of influence over Russian speaking media available in a range of countries throughout the region in order to influence the attitudes and behaviours of local populations in line with Russian political objectives.

Furthermore, Kremlin interest in backing and influencing the output of online media has grown exponentially. Like much of the world, media habits are shifting particularly amongst young Russian speakers in the region who use media differently to the older generations in that they rely a lot less on television and print and spend more time engaging on online platforms (which are much harder for the government to regulate).

As outlined in this tender, the FCO wishes to influence these channels and counter the narrative of the Kremlin. To do this effectively, statistically reliable research is required to understand who is susceptible to counter messaging and to test possible content and platforms which may be created for dissemination.