

Statement of Requirements **Independent Media Development in the Baltic States**

INTRODUCTION

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is looking for a consortium approach to provide ongoing support to independent media in the Baltic States (Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania).

This project is part of the FCO's Counter Disinformation and Media Development (CDMD) Programme, which implements new and innovative media development projects to bring plurality and balance to Russian-language media, and to counter Russia's international efforts to sow disunity through disinformation and propaganda. The Programme provides core support and capacity building for public and independent media outlets. This includes enabling better access to quality news and non-news programming.

OBJECTIVES

The overall objective of this project is to bring balance and plurality to the Russian language media space in the Baltic by identifying independent Russian language media in the Baltic States that have potential for growth. The successful contractor will help editorially independent, online and traditional media (including TV and Radio channels) to build audience share and increase resilience to hostile Kremlin messaging in the Baltic States.

1. Scope

This project will have a broad focus on the following:

- Public sector broadcasters (media organisations and outlets) which broadcast in the Russian language;
- Editorially independent private sector media organisations and outlets which produce content with a focus on, but not limited to, Russian speaking audiences;
- 'Hyper-local' media organisations and outlets, producing content with a focus on Russian speaking audiences. This might include traditional electronic and print media as well as new media (social media, video-bloggers, etc.)

We encourage innovation and thinking within this broad scope. More detail on the sort of work we would like to cover is listed below. Baltic Governments are an important stakeholder and the consortium should be prepared to coordinate with them, as well as with UK Diplomatic Missions and other international partners.

Our internal analysis has established some baselines by which this project could measure its impact over the three years. Details will be provided on contract award. A key finding of the analysis was a difference in media consumption between older/younger Russian speakers. It also encouraged joint editorial policies for multi-lingual media organisations. It is important that media interventions in this project reach younger and older audiences particularly through radio, as well as independent social media channels, and traditional media outlets.

The preferred supplier will have established networks, be prepared to work in a consortia, and will be able to:

- Identify key target audiences in co-ordination with FCO and other stakeholders including other UK government departments, individual Embassies and civil society actors with Media expertise.

- Develop and utilise established local partners in each of the Baltic States with experience and expert knowledge of the media landscape. This will include traditional TV and radio as well as different forms of online media activity which is new, innovative and attractive to online audiences.
- The ability to source expert consultants/mentors and trainers from within own organisation or other organisations who have expert knowledge and experience in media development (including English language training for journalists).
- Extensive project management skills for managing large value projects of similar size to this one. This will include the ability to keep risk registers, conduct due diligence, maintain sub-contractors, and produce detailed reports of activity on monthly/quarterly basis as required.
- The ability to show sufficient resources to complete the project, on-time and on-budget.
- Ability to handle sensitive information, an awareness of working on behalf of FCO and acting accordingly, and be party to a strict non-disclosure agreement;
- Ensure thorough due diligence is conducted on potential partners including on 'do no harm' and gender sensitivity on their content.
- Provide a secretariat for a formal governance board that will scrutinise delivery and prioritise interventions. This will arrange meetings, collate papers, minute meetings and track progress towards agreed actions.
- Use the Target Audience Analysis to plan the project activities (FCO to supply this to winning consortium).
- Work closely and co-ordinate with other international donors and partners with financial contributions and assistance, and with other CDMD implementers in-country.
- Flexibility to allow ad-hoc tasking to support hyperlocal media organisations, as directed by the FCO.
- An ability to identify gender issues and design and implement activities in a gender and conflict sensitive manner.

The supplier is asked to assume that they will deliver an entirely independent set of services should they win the competition.

The supplier is responsible for due diligence of potential partners and for assessing, reporting on and mitigating all risks at a project level.

2. Outputs and Deliverables

It is anticipated that the project outputs will be conducted across the three Baltic States: Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania. It is intended that the contract will:

- Deliver tailored capacity building activities including, but not limited to leadership training, business model development, production training. Activities will depend on individual organisational needs.
- Support development of joint editorial policies for outlets producing news and content multilingually (in Russian and titular languages) with an objective to encourage a unified information space.
- Organise targeted training for media personnel through staff exchanges with established independent and professional media organisations in Europe.
- Facilitate high quality co-productions between Baltic-Russian language media organisations to embed capacity building and upskilling training that includes content on gender issues and conflict sensitivity; this might include developing relationships with the BBC Russia Service for example.

- Provide content acquisition and dubbing support aimed at Russian speaking audiences in the Baltic countries.
- Offer flexible core support (e.g. core funding) to a select number of smaller media organisations which are subject to strict organisational audit.
- In coordination with Embassies in the region (posts) and host governments, facilitate the sharing of good practice between UK and local regulatory organisations and vice versa.
- Seek innovative solutions to provide online Russian language audiences with plurality and choice.
- Funding and capacity building on specific projects such as growth of social media engagement, or advising titular language broadcasters to be more inclusive of minority language groups.
- Support challenge to gender inequality in media organisations and the content they produce.
- In coordination with other CDMD partner organisations the project will also cover media initiatives aimed at improving critical thinking and/or media literacy skills, with a particular focus on social media and youth; to support media start-ups aimed at young audiences.
- The project is overt, and we should not deny or disguise activity. The Baltic Board will approve an outline engagement / communication plan for the project.

3. Reporting and M&E

The implementing partner (and any potential sub-contractors) will need to allow access to HMG or third party monitors during the project's lifetime if requested by the Authority.

The supplier will meet at least monthly with designated FCO reps and provide minuted records of these meetings to be agreed by the Authority. There will be flexibility on the nature and location of these meetings e.g. in London, in regional capitals or virtually. For costing purposes, the supplier should include the costs of their representatives attending regionally based meetings in the pricing model. A Risk register template will be provided to the supplier at contract award. This should be completed, updated on a monthly basis and agreed with the Authority.

As part of the wider reporting on the project, the consortium will present proposals for approval to an FCO chaired Governance structure - the Baltic Board – for discussion and approval. This Baltic Board will meet Quarterly (at least) and if circumstances arise for the Board approval of a proposal urgently, a “write-around” mechanism will allow for this. The contractor will work with British Embassies in the Baltics ('Posts') and the CDMD Programme team to determine a number of projects at the start of the financial year. Posts and the CDMD Programme will have a veto on any proposals through this Board. Posts and the CDMD Programme will also pass on any suitable projects to the contractor and retain the ability to fund CDMD work directly when needed.

The project will also report to the Baltic Board on its activity and performance. Membership of the Board will consist of FCO representatives, suppliers and other stakeholders. The supplier will need to report on progress against their theory of change, project plan, risk register and results framework as well against any performance level indicators provided by the CDMD Programme.

Contained within this report will include cross-cutting issues such as conflict sensitivity, 'Do No Harm' and promoting gender equality. In advance of the quarterly meeting the supplier

will submit a written report setting out progress made. Reports should be completed 14 working days after the end of the quarter. It may be necessary to have more regular contact outside of the monthly and quarterly meetings. The successful implementer may be required to report to the FCO with additional information e.g. increasing audience figures, on an ad-hoc basis.

The supplier will be asked to submit financial reporting and invoices on a monthly basis. At the end of Q3, a separate forward look proposal will be submitted which can be discussed over the Q4 period for the following years' work. A lessons learnt document will be required at the end of each financial year, the focus of which will be agreed with the CDMD programme team ahead of time. The supplier will also be expected to present any external audited reports as and when requested by the FCO.

4. Financial Management & Payments

The supplier will be reimbursed as per the CSSF Framework contract on a payment on delivery basis following the submission of monthly line by line fee and expense reports.

The supplier should expect FCO staff to make site visits to company premises (at least once a year) and to allow them access to financial accounts and bookkeeping as requested.

5. Break Points

The programme is subject to annual breakpoints based on the performance of the implementing partner, agreement for each year's objectives and activity, availability of funding, and the political situation on the ground. FCO aims to be predictable with regards to the amount of funding available and will consult the implementing partner early on this matter.

6. Budget

Bids will be invited to not exceed the following:

- £1,500,000 for year one (UK FY 2019/2020)
- £2,500,000 for year two (UK FY 2020/2021)
- £2,000,000 for year three (UK FY 2021/2022)

Total contract value should not exceed £6,000,000.

7. Timeframe

The project is expected to start in the July 2019 and be completed by 31 March 2022.

8. Gender

The UK sees gender equality and women's rights as central to promoting peace and stability overseas. This project should take into account any gender-related differences; consider its contribution to reducing inequality between persons of different gender; and ensure that the project does no harm to any particular gender group. If the project undertakes surveys, interviews or beneficiary analysis, the data must be gender disaggregated. Bidders should also be aware of the CSSF Approach to Gender.

9. Duty of Care

The Supplier is responsible for the safety and well-being of their Personnel and Third Parties affected by their activities under this Call-Down contract, including appropriate security arrangements. They will also be responsible for the provision of suitable security arrangements for their domestic and business property, including ICT security.

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HMG will share available information with the Supplier on security status and developments in-country where appropriate.

The Supplier is responsible for ensuring appropriate safety and security briefings for all of their Personnel working under this contract and ensuring that their Personnel register and receive briefing as outlined above. Travel advice is also available on the FCO website and the Supplier must ensure they (and their Personnel) are up to date with the latest position.

The Supplier will be required operate across Europe, with a focus on the Baltic States. The Supplier should be capable of deploying to any areas required within the Baltic region in order to deliver the Contract (subject to travel clearance being granted).

The Supplier is responsible for ensuring that appropriate arrangements, processes and procedures are in place for their Personnel, taking into account the environment they will be working in and the level of risk involved in delivery of the Contract (such as working in dangerous, fragile and hostile environments etc.). The Supplier must ensure their Personnel receive the required level of training and safety in the field training prior to deployment.

Tenderers must develop their Tender response on the basis of being fully responsible for Duty of Care in line with the details provided above. They must confirm in their Tender that:

- They fully accept responsibility for Security and Duty of Care.
- They understand the potential risks and have the knowledge and experience to develop an effective risk plan.
- They have the capability to manage their Duty of Care responsibilities throughout the life of the contract.

Acceptance of responsibility must be supported with evidence of capability. In providing evidence Tenderers should consider the following questions:

- a) Have you completed an initial assessment of potential risks that demonstrates your knowledge and understanding, and are you satisfied that you understand the risk management implications (not solely relying on information provided by DFID)?
- b) Have you prepared an outline plan that you consider appropriate to manage these risks at this stage (or will you do so if you are awarded the contract) and are you confident/comfortable that you can implement this effectively?
- c) Have you ensured or will you ensure that your staff are appropriately trained (including specialist training where required) before they are deployed and will you ensure that on-going training is provided where necessary?
- d) Have you an appropriate mechanism in place to monitor risk on a live/on-going basis (or will you put one in place if you are awarded the contract)?
- e) Have you ensured or will you ensure that your staff are provided with and have access to suitable equipment and will you ensure that this is reviewed and provided on an on-going basis?
- f) Have you appropriate systems in place to manage an emergency/incident if one arises?