

## Terms of Reference Independent Media in the Baltic States

### INTRODUCTION

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is looking for a primary contractor to work with a consortia to provide ongoing support to independent media in the Baltic States.

### OBJECTIVE

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

The overall objective for this project in the Baltic States is to bring balance and plurality to the Russian language media space 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.

This project will have a focus on the following:

- Russian language public sector broadcasters media organisations and outlets;
- Russian language independent owned, private sector media organisations and outlets;
- Russian language 'Hyper-local' media organisations and outlets.

In addition, the project will also cover media literacy initiatives, with a particular focus on social media and youth; to support start-ups aimed at young audiences; to invest in multi-media skills of media outlets and into interactive social media content. There may be a requirement to work with the Baltic Governments to provide subject matter expertise.

Our internal analysis establishes a baseline by which this project can measure its impact over the three years. A key finding of the analysis was a difference in media consumption between older/younger Russian speakers. 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.

### 1. Project Scope

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

- Delivering tailored capacity building activities including, but not limited to leadership training, business model development, production training. Activities will depend on individual organisational needs. Activities will need to be designed in a way that promotes gender equality and conflict sensitivity;

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- Facilitating 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;
- Offering flexible core support (e.g. core funding) to a select number of smaller media organisations which are subject to strict organisational audit;
- Facilitating the sharing of good practice between UK and local regulatory organisations;
- Seeking innovative solutions to providing online Russian language audiences with plurality and choice for dedicated social media platforms; and
- Funding and capacity building on specific projects such as growth of social media engagement.
- Supporting the development of capacity to challenge gender inequality in media organisations and the content they produce; and
- Provide an analysis for audience focused media content.

### 2. Activities

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

- Develop and utilise established local partners with experience and expert knowledge of the media landscape in the Baltic States. 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 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, this will include the ability to keep risk registers, conduct due diligence, contracts with 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 acting on behalf of HMG and acting accordingly, and be party to 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.
- Use the Target Audience Analysis to plan the project activities (FCO to supply this to winning consortia).
- Working with other international donors and partners with financial contributions and assistance.
- 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 sensitive manner.

The purpose of this project is to help editorially independent, online and traditional media channels build audience share and increase resilience to hostile Kremlin messaging in the Baltic region.

### **3. Dependencies**

The supplier is asked to assume that they will deliver an entirely independent set of services should they win the competition. Items such as office space, translation costs, security, legal fees, and insurance, transport and accommodation costs should be included in the pricing model.

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

### **4. Reporting and M&E**

The supplier will meet at least monthly with the FCO and provide minuted records of these meetings. There will be flexibility on the location of these meetings e.g. in London or in-country capitals. For costing purposes, the supplier should include the costs of their representatives attending London based meetings in the pricing model. A Risk register to be updated on a monthly basis.

As part of the wider reporting on the project, a Governance structure which allows for the establishment of a Programme “Baltic Board” where the prime contractor is to present proposals for 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 Baltic Posts and the CDMD Programme team to determine a number of projects at the start of the financial year. Overseas Posts and the CDMD Programme team will have a veto on any proposals through this Board. Posts and CDMD Programme team will direct any suitable projects to the contractor and retain the ability to fund CDMD work directly when needed.

The project will report to a quarterly project board consisting of suppliers and representatives from different FCO stakeholders. The supplier will need to report on progress against their theory of change, project plan and results framework as well against any performance level indicators provided by the CDMD programme team.

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. It may be necessary to have more regular contact outside of the monthly and quarterly meetings. The successful contractor may be required to report to the FCO for additional information e.g. increasing audience figures, on an ad-hoc basis.

The supplier will be asked to submit financial reporting every quarter. At the end of Q3, a summary report 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.

**5. Financial Management & Payments**

The supplier will be reimbursed as per the CSSF Framework contract on a call-down 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.

**6. Break Points**

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

**7. Budget**

The proposed budget for a contracted amount of £2m a year for 3 years (£2m+£2m+£2m), to start in April 2018 (FY18/19) and to finish in March 2021 (FY20/21). Bids will be invited to not exceed the following:

- £2,000,000 for year one (UK FY 2018/2019)
  - £2,000,000 for year two (UK FY 2019/2020)
  - £2,000,000 for year three (UK FY 2020/2021)
- = £6,000,000 over 3 years

**8. Timeframe**

The project is expected to start in the summer 2018 and be completed by March 2021.

**9. Duty of Care & Security**

The FCO has no specific knowledge of any direct threat to the implementers of this project. The implementer will hold the duty of care responsibility for its staff and the security of the project; it is to ensure that all reasonable security measures (physical, information and communication) are taken to reduce the threat to as low as is reasonably possible, and to expose any risks that are identified. The project is overt, no attempt should be made to disguise activity. The project board will approve an outline engagement/communication plan for the project.