

Section II

Schedule of Requirements

Request for Proposal

**Provision of communication support services to SEA
for the EU Accession process**

(UNOPS-SIDAPRO-2022-S-003)

e-Sourcing reference: RFP/2022/41644

TERMS OF REFERENCE

for

Communication support services to SEA for the EU Accession process provided through the Nordic support for Progress of North Macedonia project

1. Background

A) The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) is funding a project “Support to progress in North Macedonia - Government reform agenda in the EU-accession process” implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The objective of the project, funded by the SIDA, is to support the enhancement of the EU integration capacity of the Republic of North Macedonia by providing technical assistance to government institutions during the accession period. SIDA has allocated funding for the implementation of the project in North Macedonia for 48 months, starting from January 2019.

The main objective of the project is to support the government of North Macedonia in preparing for accession negotiations by enhancing its administrative capacities and human resources for EU integration and the achievement of the priorities of the government reform agenda in the accession process. The Project also supports effective communication of the benefits of the EU accession process to the public and works on increasing awareness of the effects of the EU accession process through involvement of civil society and media throughout the accession phases.

B) The Government of Norway is funding a sub-regional programme “Nordic Support for Progress in North Macedonia” implemented by the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). The project consists of socio-economic development support to the more undeveloped parts of the country and also envisages support to the national authorities responsible for leading the renewed efforts on the EU accession process. The Government of Norway has allocated funding for the implementation of the Project in North Macedonia for 48 months, starting from September 2018.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to a more balanced socio-economic development and to contribute to the implementation of the Stabilization and Association Agreement and EU accession negotiations priorities.

Locally, the project aims to increase employment opportunities, support social cohesion, as well as to enhance local infrastructure in the less developed areas with a focus given to the inclusion of youth, women and vulnerable groups in the labour market. Nationally, the project aims at supporting the government to improve its capacity for EU integration and government reform agenda in the accession process.

Both projects are implemented in coordination and with the active participation of institutions at the national and local level. These partnerships enable the achievement of sustainability of project results through shared responsibility, enabling long-term realization of citizens' interests.

The Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) is the project key partner, responsible for the sustainability of the project results. Direct beneficiaries of the Nordic Support for Progress of North Macedonia Project are selected Ministries of the Government of North Macedonia, civil society organisations (CSOs) and media. The final beneficiaries are the citizens of North Macedonia.

More information is available on the website www.nordiskapoddrska.org.mk.

This activity that is defined by this ToR is fully funded by the Swedish International Development and Cooperation Agency (Sida) as part of the Activity 2.1 Communicate Government and donor support to the EU Accession process. The aim is to promote North Macedonia's overall EU accession objectives, goals and progress and to promote the benefits of the activities and achievements of the Nordic Support for Progress of North Macedonia Project.

2. Justification of the Intervention

A transparent and well-communicated process of EU integration is one of the key priorities of the project. This is also a priority for the government as it is noted in the National Strategy for EU integration of North Macedonia¹ as well as the Strategic Plan of the Secretariat for European Affairs 2020-2022². The media is recognized as one of the key stakeholders in the strategy for information and communication to the public about the process of EU integration of the country. Reporting about the EU and the accession path requires special skills and knowledge of the EU, its key institutions, their competencies and procedures, the decision-making process as well as the responsibilities of national and sub-national institutions. The activities described in this ToR should complement the activities implemented by the Nordic Support for Progress of the North Macedonia Project and the communication department of the Secretariat for European Affairs related to the EU integration process of the country.

3. Objective

The overall objective of the intervention is to contribute to raising public awareness of the EU accession of the country, the process of EU integration, the efforts of the government especially of SEA, (EU institutions, competencies, and decision-making), as well as the overarching societal benefits of the EU integration and Europeanization.

The specific objective includes strengthening the capacity of the Secretariat for European Affairs (SEA) to actively communicate its jurisdiction, the SEA activities, the EU integration process, future accession negotiations, EU and other donor assistance geared toward meeting North Macedonia's strategic goal for membership in the EU.

4. The Scope of Intervention

The selected contractor will plan and develop the most effective approach and methodology and carry out the subsequent activities for the successful completion of the Technical Assistance, including, but are not necessarily limited to the following:

1. Understand the Project objectives and activities and in particular those related to this intervention. Get acquainted with Project documentation that is relevant for this assignment. Conduct Initial Analysis of the existing practices of media coverage of the EU integration process. Get an overall idea about the current progress by conducting a desk

¹ https://www.sobranie.mk/WBStorage/Files/Nacionalna_strategija%2006.09.04.PDF

²

<https://www.sep.gov.mk/data/file/Sloboden%20pristap%20na%20informacii/%D0%A4%D0%98%D0%9D%D0%90%D0%9B%D0%95%D0%9D%20%D0%A1%D0%9F%202020-2022.pdf>

research of the relevant progress reports, North Macedonia's recent achievements and political/technical bottlenecks in the process.

2. Provide media analysis of one recent month (the month before signing of the contract), and subsequent media analysis and clipping services for the period of engagement. Provide monthly traditional media analysis as well as online and social media analysis. Based on the analysis, provide recommendations for improvement.
3. Develop an action plan for communication of the EU integration support including communication of the major EU integration activities of SEA for the period of implementation of activities. The key objective of the action plan is to ensure wider media coverage and attract wider interests and deepen public awareness related to the importance of the EU integration process and boost the visibility and impact of major concepts and milestones in the EU integration process. The action plan should contain a detailed description of the media/PR/visibility deliverables, products, or events, their objective, number and frequency, the language and the stakeholders involved in their production, distribution or organisation. The action plan should contain communication activities related both to the EU accession process and to the activities and benefits of the Nordic Support project.
4. Upon request by SEA and/or the project, support the organisation of four (4) mid-scale events in North Macedonia, for up to 30 to 50 participants with physical presence in a minimum 3 star venue, in line with the Government's recommendations and protocols related to the COVID-19 pandemics. Those events will target promotion of the project support for EU accession and key project outputs. This should include provision of support in the development of a concept for the event, logistical arrangements (renting a hall, branding, translation services, catering needs, etc), and media and stakeholder relations in terms of the development of a list of invitees, invitation distribution, ensuring the presence of media and stakeholders during the event, including promotional materials for the event. The supplier will be responsible for covering all costs related to the organisation of the events.
5. Provide monthly digital PR support, as well as video and graphic design services for the implementation. This should include the development of at least 15 short videos in full HD resolution or animated of at least 1 minute each for social media (including pre and post-production services, development of scenarios, recording, and video and sound editing and graphic design).
6. Conduct an analysis of public opinion and attitudes towards the EU accession process (public opinion poll) in line with the best practices for conducting similar surveys. The questionnaire and the methodology applied need to be approved by SEA and UNOPS. The analysis should also provide information on the most suitable channels for communication and the type of information that should be shared.
7. Provide design services as requested by SEA with up to 50 designs for the social media channels pitches, 10 infographics, and content for the web portal and other external communication channels.
8. Develop a crisis communication plan for the work of the project and the Secretariat that will include possible scenarios and adjustments of communication activities for the period of implementation of activities.

9. Conduct a comparative analysis of the communication activities of at least one similar institution in the region and one in the EU countries. Based on the findings of the comparative analysis, provide recommendations for best communication practices to be adapted to local context.
10. Provide content and writing support (press releases, speech writing, social media pitches) as well as review for communicating the EU integration process for the period May 2022 – November 2022. This should include at least 30 press releases, 90 social media pitches, 10 speeches (in Macedonian, English, or Albanian as required) including proofreading and language editing, and review and suggestions of other content developed by the project and by SEA, but no more than additional standard size 2,000 pages of content.
11. Provide media and stakeholder relations for promotion and transparency of the EU integration process of North Macedonia with suggested media appearances in national, regional, and international media, topics to be discussed, and suggested timings for implementation.
12. Provide on-the-job training for written and digital communication to public relations personnel of the Secretariat. The training should cover topics such as: Strategic communication, Digital campaign planning, creation and implementation, Storytelling and writing skills, Media monitoring and analysis, and design and video editing skills. The training

Expected timing for implementation of the activities

Development and finalisation of an action plan – first 20 days from the signing of the contract

- Conduct an Initial Analysis of the existing practices of media coverage of the EU integration process. Consult with the project and the Secretariat for European Integration on the plan of activities for the implementation period.
- Develop a detailed action plan with the proposed time schedule, topics covered, tools used, and implementation methodology in coordination with the project and SEA.
- Provide the concept for the events, including the suggested topics, formats, and dates for the organization.
- Develop and submit a detailed list of deliverables.

Implementation period – 6 months from the acceptance of the action plan but not later than 30 November 2022

- Execute the action plan as agreed with the project and SEA.
- Conduct a mid-term review of the validity of the action plan and the effectiveness of the activities. Adjust the implementation plan accordingly.
- Conduct monthly meetings for analysis of work done in the previous, as well as present the plan for the month to come.
- Prepare and submit the final report by 5 December 2022.

5. Outputs

Following outputs must be delivered during the project implementation and elaborated within the proposed plan for implementation of this intervention:

- A detailed implementation plan that will include a list of events and activities to be implemented and the timeframe of execution;
- Analysis of existing practices of promotion of EU integration;
- Crisis communication plan;
- Training curricula for written and digital communication;
- Final report of the training.

6. Important Considerations

The entire process should be closely coordinated with the project office and SEA nominated persons. The project office will support the contractor in coordination and guidance in the implementation of activities. Please note that the services defined in this ToR should pay particular attention to the Government recommendations and protocols related to COVID-19. Some activities might be altered/adapted depending on the epidemiological situation in the country.

7. Monitoring and Reporting

The contracting entity will remain in close contact with appropriate UNOPS personnel and will discuss and agree on all relevant matters during the implementation of the activities. As specified above, SEA will be closely coordinated for the implementation.

The electronic copies of all reports or any other materials pertained to the services will be made available to UNOPS in English. In particular, but not limited to:

- Detailed action plan that will include a list of events and activities to be implemented and time schedule of execution;
- Analysis of existing practices of promotion of EU integration;
- Comparative analysis;
- Crisis communication plan;
- Training curricula for digital communication;
- Inception and final report.

8. Other Considerations

The working language when contacting UNOPS is English and all official correspondence should be in English. Reports on the progress of activities as well as the final report will be submitted in the English language. The activities will be conducted in Macedonian as the main language for the delivery of outputs, with provided translation into Albanian and English as per the needs of the project and SEA.

EVALUATION METHOD AND CRITERIA

Proposals shall be evaluated as specified in the document titled Section I: Instructions to Bidders, and following evaluation criteria included in the Evaluation Criteria section of this tender.

The overall evaluation will be completed in accordance with the **cumulative analysis methodology**, under which the technical and financial aspects will have pre-assigned weights of 70% and 30% of the overall score respectively. A two-stage procedure is utilized in evaluating the proposals, with the evaluation of the technical proposal being completed prior to any financial proposal being opened and compared.

In the First Stage, the technical proposals are evaluated on the basis of its responsiveness to the Terms of Reference (TOR) and as per Evaluation Criteria. The offers which have the financial information included in the technical proposal envelope will be rejected.

All the formal and qualification requirements will be considered as mandatory and eliminatory (pass/fail). When the Bidder is a Joint venture (consortium), all of its members must meet the formal and eligibility requirements, and the same applies to subcontractors. Qualification criteria refer to all joint venture (consortium) partners combined.

Only proposals meeting or exceeding the eligibility, formal and qualification criteria shall be considered substantially compliant and will be evaluated against the technical criteria set out in the tender (section Technical criteria). The proposals will be rated by assigning numeric points, whereas only proposals that meet the minimum technical threshold of 49 points shall be deemed substantially compliant.

In the Second Stage, the financial proposals will be opened only for submissions that passed the minimum technical threshold of 49 points in the evaluation of the technical proposals and are deemed substantially compliant. The lowest cost financial proposal (out of technically compliant) will be selected as a baseline and allocated the maximum number of points obtainable for the financial part (i.e. 30). All other financial proposals will receive a number of points inversely proportional to their quoted price; e.g. 30 points x lowest price / quoted price.

The winning proposal will be the one with the highest number of points after the cumulative analysis (points obtained in both technical and financial evaluations, respectively, are added up). The contract will be awarded to the Bidder that submitted the winning proposal with the highest score based on the cumulative analysis.

The Eligibility, formal and qualifications evaluation of the proposals

- Completeness of the Proposal - All required Questionnaires (including the attached DRiVE, Supplier Sustainability Questionnaire), Returnable Bidding Forms and other documentation requested under the Document Checklist section have been provided and are complete;
- Proposal is correctly completed - in English Language and in line with instructions;
- Offeror is eligible as defined in the document Section I: Instructions to Offerors, Article 4
- Offeror accepts UNOPS General Conditions of Contract as specified in Section IV: Contract Forms;
- The bid validity is 90 days;
- There should not be any adverse report regarding the provided services for at least Five years preceding the date of bid opening. No Adverse Action Confirmation Form H is required;
- The Bidder has completed and submitted the DRiVE Supplier Sustainability Questionnaire;
- Offeror should be a legal entity in continuous business of providing similar services as

- specified in the Schedule of requirements over the last five years prior to bid submission;
- Consortia can apply. Certificate of incorporation issued by the relevant government body is required (in the case of consortia, for each member).
- Financial capability - Offeror should have an annual turnover of minimum USD 50,000 (or equivalent in other currency) in any of the years 2018, 2019 and 2020. The last three financial reports, or any other document accepted by the relevant authorities, demonstrating the required qualifications, must be submitted.
- Operational capability- The submitted Brief description of the organisation (including the year and country of incorporation, management and personnel structure, types of activities undertaken and overall experience, project management controls, extent to which any work would be subcontracted etc), should demonstrate substantial operational capability of the consortium/company.
- The Offeror has proven track of records in at least the past five (5) years in the area relevant to this ToR namely, development and implementation of public awareness campaigns and work with national and local public institutions, the Media and/or UN or other international organisations. Copies of the contracts and portfolios for at least 3 successfully completed different engagements in the period of the past 5 years, in the total value of at least 50,000 USD (or equivalent in other currency), relevant for this ToR in the area of campaign design and implementation of the public campaigns, social media marketing and management, organisation of public events, outdoor promotions and/or competitions OR Reference letters issued by the purchasers of the services OR the list indicating names, titles and contact details of the persons which might be contacted as a reference, to qualify for further evaluation.
- Team Leader must have a minimum of a bachelor degree in a discipline relevant to the required expertise (such as Comm. and Media or relevant discipline) and min 7 years of profess. experience in design and implementation of awareness campaigns, including overseeing campaign delivery, quality control of the delivered service, client orientation and reporting in English language. A proven track record of delivering similar assignments in a project of a similar size and complexity is mandatory. CV of the Team Leader, demonstrating his or her engagement on at least 3 different projects relevant for this ToR, not necessarily the same as the Bidder's, is required. In addition, at least 3 reference letters OR the list indicating the names, titles and contact details of the persons which might be contacted as a reference for at least 3 different engagements relevant for this ToR (such as relevant campaigns, organisation of competition, communication training and social media management, event management).
- The team must consist of at least three team members – experts. Each team member has a minimum five years of professional experience relevant for the ToR. CV to be submitted along with a list of three contact points indicating the names, titles and contact details of the persons which may be contacted for reference check.
- The bidder shall demonstrate its commitment to support gender equality and women's empowerment through its operations. The bidder must provide a clear statement and supporting documentation that outlines how gender is mainstreamed internally. This should include the organization's current or future plans/activities with regards to:
 - gender diversity in the recruitment process (such as outreach to potential diverse candidates and equitable, non-biased interview practices)
 - ensuring equal pay between men and women for the same roles by providing pay gap analysis or pay stubs

Methodology of technical evaluation

Only proposals meeting or exceeding the eligibility, formal and qualification criteria shall be

considered substantially compliant and will be evaluated against the technical criteria set out in the tender (section **Technical criteria**).

The proposals will be rated by assigning numeric points, whereas only proposals that meet the minimum technical threshold of **49 points** shall be deemed substantially compliant.

The points will be assigned in the following manner:

	Criteria	Maximum points for the criteria
1.1	<p>Brief description of the organization Experience of the organisation, general organisational capability and reputation of the firm and/or consortium which is likely to affect implementation of the campaign (description of the firm and background material to be provided):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - General capability of Offeror (single company, loose/strong consortium of 2 or more companies) to implement the campaign (management and personnel structure, types of activities undertaken, project management controls, extent to which any work would be subcontracted) - from 1 to 3 points; - Minimum 5 years of experience in communications, public relations and/or advocacy since registration date - 1 point; - More than 5 years of experience in communications, public relations and/or advocacy since the registration date will carry additional 1 point for each 5 years, up to a maximum of 2 points. <p>Maximum attainable: 6 points.</p>	6
1.2	<p>Technical and professional capacities, specialised knowledge and proven expertise: Specialised knowledge, proven expertise and experience of the company in the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Specialization and experience in implementation of public awareness campaigns in North Macedonia- 2 points; - Experience in working with ministries and/or other government institutions -additional 1 point; - Experience in working with media and/or CSOs on implementation of public information or education campaigns in North Macedonia additional 2 points; - Experience in implementing communication campaigns in the area of European Union Integration additional 2 points; - Experience in working with international organisations - additional 1 point. <p>Maximum attainable: 8 points.</p>	8
1.3	<p>Previous experience on similar engagements, relevant for the implementation of this ToR. Previous experience on similar projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimum 3 awareness raising campaigns with integrated social media management and marketing - 2 points; - More than 3 awareness raising campaigns with integrated social media management and marketing- additional 1 point; 	6

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experience in organisation of public events and outdoor promotions - additional 2 points; - Experience in conducting communication training - additional 1 point. <p>Maximum attainable: 6 points.</p>	
2.1	<p>Demonstrate solid understanding of the background and the need for increasing awareness about the European Union accession process. (from 1 to 5 points)</p> <p>Maximum attainable: 5 points</p>	5
2.2	<p>Quality (creativity, effectiveness and appropriateness) (from 1 to 5 points)</p> <p>Maximum attainable: 5 points</p>	5
2.3	<p>Expected outcomes are well described in the proposal. They are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and time bound. (from 1 to 5 points)</p> <p>Maximum attainable: 5 points</p>	5
2.4	<p>Proposed methodology - for the (including the development of the communication plan, the crisis communication plan, the public opinion survey, comparative analysis and the training plan) is appropriate, realistic, feasible, effective and promises efficient implementation of the activity. (from 1 to 10 points)</p> <p>Maximum attainable: 10 points</p>	10
2.5	<p>Time schedule and team resources estimates are well prepared and presented in a clear and understandable manner. (from 1 to 5 points)</p> <p>Maximum attainable: 5 points</p>	5
3.1	<p>Composition and structure of the team proposed. Qualifications of the combined expertise of the proposed team consisted of Team Leader, three Team Members/Experts and all other supporting personnel.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Proven experience of working as a team on at least one project carried out by the proposed team - 2 points; - Proven experience of working as a team on more than one project carried out by the proposed team - additional 1 point; - Gender balanced team (equal representation of male and female team members, including team leader - this will be evaluated based on the list of the proposed personnel) - additional 1 point. <p>Maximum attainable: 4 points.</p>	4
3.2	<p>Qualifications of key personnel proposed.</p>	8

	<p>The team leader:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a minimum of a bachelor degree in a Communication, Marketing, Public Relations or other relevant discipline to the required expertise - 1 point; - A minimum of 7 years of relevant professional experience in the area relevant to this ToR such as Communication, Media, Public Relations or relevant field - 2 points. - Proven experience in managing projects of a similar size and complexity, related to tasks set in ToR - 1 point; - An advanced diploma in a discipline relevant to required expertise - additional 1 point; - More than 7 years of relevant professional experience - additional 1 point; - Proven experience in managing projects related to the EU integration process and/or institutional reforms - additional 2 points. <p>Maximum attainable: 8 points.</p>	
3.3	<p>The team must consist of at least three team members – experts.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Each team member has a minimum five years of professional experience relevant for the ToR - 2 points; - Each team member has more than five years of professional experience relevant for the ToR - additional 1 point; - Each team member has proven expertise in realisation of campaigns in the Programme AoR - additional 1 point; - At least one team member has proven expertise in realisation of campaigns in the Programme AoR - 1 point; - At least one team member has proven expertise in realisation of campaigns engaging government institutions - 1 point; - At least one team member has proven expertise in realisation of communication training - 1 point; - At least one team member has proven expertise in realisation of campaigns pertaining to the EU accession process - 1 point. <p>Maximum attainable: 8 points.</p>	8