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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Partner country

Sri Lanka

1.2. Contracting authority

European Commission, represented by the Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka

1.3. Country background

Sri Lanka is a multi-ethnic, multilingual and multi-religious island nation with a population of **21.8 million** spread over a land area of 65,610 km². Currently, around **25% of the population are young people between 18 and 34 years old**.

Sri Lanka is recovering from a series of crises, including an almost three-decade civil war that ended in 2009, the Easter bombing attacks of 2019, the 2020-2022 COVID-19 pandemic, a sovereign, external debt default, which led in 2022 to the worst economic and political crisis the country witnessed since independence.

Sri Lanka faces persistent inequalities in income, geography, and social groups. The **Gini Index is 37.7**, signalling high income inequality, with only slight recent improvement. The **Human Development Index is 0.776**, but drops to 0.630 when adjusted for inequality, showing significant losses due to unequal resource access. Economic crisis, inflation, and job losses have deepened disparities, especially for informal and low-income workers. Gender inequalities remain entrenched, with women facing limited access to formal employment, social protection, and particularly the decision-making spaces. Fiscal constraints further limit the state's ability to provide inclusive services and support equitable growth.

The multifaceted crisis which culminated in 2022 stemmed from a confluence of pre-existing vulnerabilities and external shocks, leading to a rapid contraction of the economy (by 9.5% over 2022-2023), a sharp depreciation of the Sri Lankan Rupee (by about 81% in 2022¹), near-depletion of foreign exchange reserves, fuelling unprecedented levels of inflation (44.8% in 2022), and causing critical shortages of essential goods such as fuel, medical supplies and food. This had a severe impact on the Sri Lankan society and economic fabric. The number of micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), which form the backbone of the Sri Lankan economy (over 75% of businesses and 52% of the GDP), declined by more than 40%³, and value addition in several sectors declined. Declaring bankruptcy in April 2022, with more than USD 83 billion in public and external debt, Sri Lanka recorded the first sovereign default in the Asia-Pacific region of the 21st century⁴.

Since 2022, and the political leadership change, Sri Lanka has been on the recovery path. With debt restructuring and support from the International Monetary Fund (IMF)⁵, while initial projections suggested moderate economic growth of 2.2% in 2024, the economy has outperformed expectations with 5% annual growth (including a 5.3% surge in Q1 2024), indicating stronger-than-anticipated economic progress and stabilization, though key challenges remain on the path to full recovery and longer-term development. External challenges have revised growth projections downwards, for 2025. In addition, poverty rates have decline by 2.7% in 2024 – albeit remaining rather high at 24.5% (Income below USD 3.65 per person per day, 2021 PPP), twice the level of 2019. Household incomes, employment, and overall welfare are still well below pre-2019 levels, and the poverty rate

1 World Bank, Sri Lanka Development Update, April 2024.

2 Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2023

3 Sri Lankan Department of Census and Statistics, February 2024.

4 Moody's, May 2022

5 In March 2023, the IMF approved a USD 3 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) for 4 years

remains so far alarmingly high. Public management and investment, including in critical and longer-term infrastructure and policies, are hindered by the country's high public debt burden, existing fiscal policies and limited fiscal space restricting revenue collection. Despite their pivotal role in the economy across strategic sectors, the poor performance of Sri Lankan State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) has become a heavy fiscal burden with significant macroeconomic implications, being unable to leverage their resources to create value for stakeholders and catalyse growth, and lacking transparency and accountability. In addition, this has had adverse effects on the development of value chains as it crowded out productive investments⁶. Labour markets continue to struggle, leading to increased emigration and household incomes remaining below pre-crisis levels. Additionally, development challenges further complicate the situation, with infrastructure gaps and social inequalities, exacerbated by the crisis.

The outlook is moderate, especially due to the expected impact from reduced exports caused by trade-related uncertainties (US tariffs). Limited economic opportunities and consequent increased outmigration of skilled workers pose concerns for the recovery, and the quality of public service delivery, particularly in an aging society. Ensuring an enabling environment for the economy to grow and to attract investments is a key priority for the government.

In terms of the political situation, **Sri Lanka is the oldest democracy in the region** and the National People's Party (NPP), a non-elite leftist political party, won the presidential elections as well as the parliamentary elections in 2024, and the local government elections in 2025. Due to the political stabilisation, the government was able to complete the debt restructuring agreements with creditors and continues the IMF Extended Fund Facility (EFF) programme. The government's priorities include comprehensive political, social and economic reform programme, a strong anti-corruption platform and the promise of national reconciliation. Expectations from the voters are high, especially on accountability for corruption, inclusive economic growth and political reform, and a difficult and uncertain trade environment as well as international environment and increased competition in the Indo-Pacific constitute challenges.

The **European Union and Sri Lanka relations date back to 1975**, when the European Commission and the Government of Sri Lanka concluded a Commercial Cooperation Agreement. The current relations' framework is found in the **Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development of 1995**.

In 2023, the **European Union and its Member States ranked Sri Lanka's largest trading partners**, bringing also the highest number of tourist arrivals to the country. Since 2017, Sri Lanka has benefited from the [Generalised Scheme of Preferences Plus](#) (GSP+). It offers a full removal of customs duties on a wide array of products, given the condition that Sri Lanka makes progress on human and labour rights and works towards sustainable development.

Finally, the current development cooperation partnership between the European Union and Sri Lanka is framed in the [Multiannual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 for Sri Lanka](#). It focuses on two priority areas, which aligns with the EU's [Global Gateway Strategy](#): **green recovery, and inclusive and peaceful society**.

1.4. Current situation in the sector

The European Union's strategic communication and public diplomacy efforts in Sri Lanka are jointly implemented by the Press and Political section (EEAS) and by the Strategic Communication Coordinator (INTPA), in support of a common objective to make the European Union more visible, known and understood in the country.

Ensuring the strategic priorities of the EU are known, understood and well perceived in the country by both specialised and general public audiences is essential to position the EU as a trusted partner.

6 Central Bank of Sri Lanka, 2021

The focus will be not only on what the EU does, but why, including by emphasising shared values, interests and impact; and promoting the EU's leadership role on these key priorities.

Following a shift in approach in July 2022, Strategic Communication is now centralised at the level of the Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka, aiming at putting in motion a campaign driven approach, while moving away from the fragmented project-based communication. This means that implementing partners are still responsible for ensuring the minimum legal requirements for visibility in line with the [guidelines](#). However, they are no longer asked to produce communication plans and products. By centralising the resources at the level of the Delegation, and by engaging a communication agency, the EU aims to professionalise its communication outputs and to ensure greater recognition and awareness of its work with partner countries. The contractor will be asked to implement campaign-driven communication actions with a 360° approach⁷.

One full time strategic communication coordinator based in Colombo is responsible for managing this contract at the Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka and the Maldives.

1.5. Related programmes and other donor activities

[A new approach to Strategic Communication](#) is implemented since 2022, consisting in centralising communication efforts within the EU Delegations and focusing on campaign-driven communication. Some communication and visibility actions are still being carried out under the EU-funded programmes and projects in Sri Lanka, though these are being progressively phased out.

The EU's current vision, interests and priorities in Sri Lanka and the wider Asia-Pacific region are outlined by various EU strategies, notably the [Indo-Pacific Strategy](#) and [Global Gateway Strategy](#). These comprehensive strategies outline the EU's positive offer to the Asia-Pacific region, from sustainable and inclusive prosperity to connectivity, climate, research, inequality reduction and human development. They are underpinned by shared values and principles, including democracy, human rights including women in all their diversity and groups in vulnerable situation, security, sustainability, and equality. The contractor will support the Delegation in positioning these strategies, vision and its overall impact in Sri Lanka through targeted campaign-driven actions.

Additionally, the contractor will be responsible for designing a tailor made campaign for Sri Lanka. If campaigns from headquarters are relevant, these can be used as the basis for the Sri Lanka campaign when appropriate.

2. OBJECTIVES & EXPECTED OUTPUTS

2.1. Overall objective

The overall objective (Impact) to which this action contributes is to position the EU in Sri Lanka as a strategic partner of choice by focusing on the added value and the positive impact of our partnership with the country, particularly through Global Gateway strategy.

2.2. Specific objective(s)

The specific objectives (Outcomes) of this contract are as follows:

- **Outcome 1:** To measurably increase awareness, understanding and perception of the European Union, its value offer, its action and its impact in Sri Lanka.

⁷ The 360-degree communication campaign is an integrative approach blending in online and offline media channels aiming at position a brand and its messages to a specific target audience.

Outcome 2: To position the European Union as a partner of reference in Sri Lanka, which brings tangible and sustainable results to the country, in particular through the Global Gateway Strategy.

- **Outcome 3:** To strengthen and establish partnerships with multipliers (e.g., celebrities, influencers) which strategically boost citizen's awareness and engagement with the EU on its strategic policy areas of focus in Sri Lanka.

2.3. Expected outputs to be achieved by the contractor

The contractor will conceptualise, design and implement strategic communication actions in order to achieve the intended objectives of this contract. The expected outputs of this contract are as follows:

- **Output 1 to Outcome 1:** Design and implement a multi-channel content marketing strategy focused on promoting the key priorities implemented under the cooperation portfolio, in particular those under Global Gateway, with key target audiences.
- **Output 2 to Outcome 2:** Develop and implement 360° brand awareness campaign targeting younger, EU unaware audiences around the EU's Global Gateway value offer in Sri Lanka.
- **Output 3 to Outcome 3:** Set up partnerships and collaborations between the Delegation and multipliers who will further our reach and direct engagement with key target audiences, especially youth between 18 and 35 years old in Sri Lanka.

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

3.1. Assumptions underlying the project

The aim of this action is to support the European Union's partnership with Sri Lanka. It will help the European Union to advance key strategic priorities as outlined by the EU's Global Gateway Strategy, the Multi-annual Indicative Programme 2021-2027 and any future related strategies. By targeting specified audiences through professionally designed and implemented strategic communication activities, the action will contribute to measurably increased awareness, understanding and perception of the European Union's partnership with Sri Lanka. Other EU policies, such as the General Scheme of Preferences Plus (GSP+), are assumed to equally contribute and reinforce the positive perception about the European Union in Sri Lanka.

3.2. Risks

Risks that may affect the quality of the project include:

- **Crisis communication:** Unexpected crises may have an impact on the roll-out of the communication actions planned.
- **Disinformation:** Country-wise disinformation may be considered a risk requiring regular monitoring.
- **Thematic priorities:** Broad selection of policy-areas of action may pose risks when it comes to prioritising where to focus our efforts.
- **Expertise:** Lack of a high-quality 360-degree communication agency that can support the Delegation in implementing the full spectrum of these terms of reference.
- **Policy coherence:** Any negative change to the EU's current market access regime (GSP+) could adversely affect how the EU is perceived in Sri Lanka.

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. General

The Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka wishes to engage the services of a specialised agency in communication, marketing and advertising to design and implement a content marketing strategy and communication campaign on the EU-Sri Lanka partnership priorities, first and foremost those under Global Gateway. This work will complement, without duplication, the press and information responsibilities managed by the Political, Press and Information team of the EU Delegation, fully respecting guidelines issued by DG INTPA headquarters.

For the purposes of this call for tenders, the selected agency will support the Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka in designing and implementing large-scale campaign with a **planned sequence of inter-related communication actions sharing a common creative concept and narrative, targeting pre-defined audiences with a common intervention logic, and having a specific timeline and dedicated budget**. The outputs shall deliver defined and measurable outcomes.

4.1.1. Project description

Strategic communications play a key role in strengthening the EU's role in the world. Fragmented, project-specific partner-implemented communication and visibility activities have largely failed to demonstrate the EU's added value as a partner for Sri Lanka and its people. By consolidating resources and equipping itself with a full time Strategic Communications Officer, the Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka is able to plan and execute multiannual strategic communication actions with the scale and focus necessary to be effective on a national scale. Through this assignment, we seek to work with a 360° communication agency able to propose innovative and attractive tools to reach our objectives and engage with our target audiences.

A communication campaign is generally composed of the following steps (here shown with examples of activities that may be required):

- **Analysis and design:** definition of objectives, definition and segmentation of the target audience, designing the creative concept, designing the content strategy and the dissemination strategy including key performance metrics and the intervention logic to reach them.
- **Implementation:** production of the interactive and engaging campaign content, the actual rollout and dissemination, with tailoring of the implementation to the national, regional or local level as needed. Implementation activities are closely linked to monitoring, performance measurement and optimisation efforts.
- **Monitoring, performance measurement and optimisation:** developing an integrated monitoring and evaluation methodology for the campaign including regular reporting, ex-ante research and testing of the strategy and the assets, ongoing monitoring the dissemination activities, analysing the impact of the actions, tracking agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and cooperating with independent evaluators and any other related activity. Evaluation can run in parallel with other stages of the campaign.
- **Project management:** deploying the right team and project management tools to ensure smooth, effective and timely implementation of the campaign based on a detailed planner, clear validation workflows, and the necessary reporting.

4.1.2. Geographical area to be covered

The project will be carried out in Sri Lanka. Support to strategic communication actions with a regional scope may be envisaged.

4.1.3. Target groups

To achieve the objectives outlined above, strategic communications should focus on the following complementary types of audience:

- **Wider audience:** young Sri Lankan citizens (18-35 years old). These will be a mix of students and other young adults who are about to or have relatively recently joined the job market or are looking for work. Further research and profiling of the age group, and the development of different personas with a view to tailoring messaging to the target country form part of the services requested.
- **Specialised audience:** policymakers and the private sector, particularly those who may be involved in the Global Gateway and its priorities in the country. This should consist of 10% of our target only.

4.2. Specific work

The overall work of this contract aims at having a 360° communication team to support the cooperation section of Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka in delivering its campaign-driven strategic communication approach. Therefore, the specific work includes the following:

Research, design and preparation

- Based on input from the Contracting Authority, assess the European Union's presence and recognition in Sri Lanka, including in relation to other partners of the country, as a basis for campaign content and messaging.
- Taking into account information provided by the Contracting Authority, map and analyse the media landscape (print, broadcast, radio, digital, social media and other channels relevant to the audience) including media consumption trends and patterns.
- Map local stakeholders, media, celebrities, influencers, activists and digital content creators who may be engaged in targeted campaigns activations. Focus should be placed on multipliers which can help the Delegation reach new audiences, rather than have an institutional focus.
- Select and managing a network of local influencers for marketing purposes in line with the Delegation's strategic communication objectives.
- Develop a campaign strategy around the Delegation's Global Gateway priorities, tailoring audience-specific messages and selecting appropriate content formats. The strategy should include a list of deliverables to be produced and the most appropriate channels to reach the Delegation's audiences.

The contractor will design and implement one overarching campaign with a defined tagline that will be rolled out in waves with a planned sequence of inter-related communication actions. The contractor will ensure coherence between the different activations, including in terms of visual identity and brand positioning. All campaigns should be localised and translated into the relevant local languages.

For the campaign:

- Develop a dissemination strategy that identifies the optimal mix of paid, owned, shared and earned media channels aligned with the target audience's media consumption habits and the overall campaign objectives. The strategy could also include real-life events' activations and ex ante and ex post promotion of events that are impactful and cost-effective. It should consider national and local contexts and ensure that all selected channels work synergistically in an integrated media approach, guiding the audience through a cohesive media journey.

- Test the campaign concept and content (key messages, visual style, strategy elements, and dissemination approach) prior to launch, using both qualitative and quantitative research methods (focus groups, surveys, etc.) to validate the campaign's effectiveness and ensure it resonates with the target audiences.
- Develop a risk management strategy that anticipates potential challenges during the campaign's execution, taking into account the context of Sri Lanka and providing solutions to mitigate risks, ensuring the campaigns remain on track and achieves its objectives.

Campaign should be designed in a 360° approach, combining channels and online/offline activations to maximise reach and impact. Activities should, as much as possible, be designed in an integrated way to minimise sporadic, ad-hoc efforts.

Creative design and content production

- Create one overarching campaign concept with a single campaign tagline and visual identity. The messaging and visual identity of the campaign concept will be aligned with the [Global Gateway brand guidelines](#) and the [European Commission's Directorate-General for International Partnerships style guide](#).
- Draft key messages tailored to audiences' concerns and aligned with Global Gateway offer in the country.
- Produce engaging audio-visual content for the campaign, including videos in various formats (documentaries, reportages, mobile videos, content for social media, TV advertisement spots, etc.), artwork, graphic designs, infographics, animations and other forms of data visualisation aligned with digital trends, and files in the required formats for the channels identified in the dissemination strategies of the respective campaigns. The contractor will provide mock-ups and dummies for validation by the Contracting Authority.
- Draft and produce campaign-related briefings, communication packages and dissemination kits for the content creators, influencers, celebrities, etc. who will amplify key campaign messages among our target audiences.
- Draft, translate and adapt into and from English, Sinhala and Tamil, all material produced.
- Prepare cost-effective out-of-home and other real world activations as approved and planned (including negotiation and conclusion of partnership agreements, and making all necessary logistical arrangements).

The Contractor will make available to the Contracting Authority, the masters of the edited material, raw footage and full rushes of the audio-visual products. These must be accompanied by shot lists with time codes in English, whenever required. Formats and numbers of copies required will be determined by the Contracting Authority on a case-by-case basis.

Dissemination and advertising

The Contractor will be required to identify the most appropriate activation and dissemination measures, including earned media relations, earned and owned social media, paid advertisement and product placement to achieve the results of a given campaign.

- Develop a paid media plan to include the platforms, assets and activation strategies for the use of advertising in online media, out of home, print, radio, TV, as part of the campaigns strategy.
- Develop a social media strategy before implementing social media communication activities. As a minimum, this strategy will define, in detail, the platforms, the target audiences on each platform, the assets and activation strategies that will be used, the workflows and deadlines, and the performance monitoring.

- Map, negotiate and conclude relevant partnerships with media, content creators, influencers, artists, with a particular relevance for the target audience, on the basis of clearly defined terms and conditions that specify objectives, KPIs, budget and deliverables in line with the campaign strategy and available resources.
- Co-produce and disseminate native content with online and offline media, including TV, resulting in a transparent mix of native content and advertisement with a pre-defined agreement on editorial freedom.
- Monitor, optimise, and report on all advertising activities.

All campaign products must be delivered by the Contractor to the respective media or intermediate media-buying agency and will be produced by them, the Contracting Authority, or another Contractor, in the necessary formats for the distribution channel. For social media campaigns, the Contractor shall take into account the latest rules in terms of political advertising and must have the necessary local teams to ensure proper coordination. Community management in all languages used in the ads must be foreseen.

The Contractor may suggest or be required to seek earned partnerships with content creators, digital networks, multipliers with particular relevance to each target audience. The aim is to forge strong links with these third parties. These key partners will be consulted from the start of the campaign. Their tasks may include drafting of content, artistic expression, engaging with target audiences, and distribution of communication messages, materials and toolkits.

With regard to the mapping and activation of third parties, the Contractor is expected to provide a detailed methodology, substantiating choices and involving all contributing parties, including the EU institutions and bodies.

The Contractor is responsible for outreaching, liaising with, and managing the relations and partnership with these third parties, in order to generate their endorsements. The involvement of the European Commission in these partnerships must be transparent to the target audiences. All partnerships are subject to the approval of the Contracting Authority.

Monitoring, performance measurement and optimisation

The Contractor will closely monitor and report, to the Contracting Authority, on the outcome of actions undertaken under the current contract. They will be tasked to:

- Develop an integrated monitoring and evaluation methodology for the campaigns including regular reporting, ex-ante research and testing of the strategy and the assets.
- Monitor the dissemination activities, analysing the impact of the actions, tracking agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and cooperating with independent evaluators and all other related activities that might be required.
- Implement both quantitative and qualitative monitoring of the performance of the dissemination activities, based on credible target values for KPIs and clear benchmarks.
- Measure the impact of the specific products on the various platforms and target audiences with a view to measure the ongoing progress of the campaign towards its objectives and allow for optimisations of production and dissemination.
- Prepare and provide periodic reporting on the monitoring activities including the essential points of the analysis, conclusions and recommendations.
- Develop a dashboard with real-time information about the performance of the campaign according to KPIs and other agreed indicators.

Benchmarks, indicators and metrics, including output, results and impact indicators and KPIs, are developed based on the intervention logic and communication objectives of each campaign. The taxonomy used by the European Commission to measure the performance of communication must be taken into account. The Contracting authority may propose a minimum set of relevant campaign-level and channel-level KPIs. The Contractor may propose additional indicators and KPIs in line with the campaign's objectives. They must comply with Europa analytics and the European data protection rules⁸. The same metrics shall apply across all activities and to all contracted parties delivering products and services.

Examples of campaign-level KPIs can be found in the European Commission's corporate Key Performance Indicators⁹ as an example, which can be adapted by the Contractor according to the needs and specificities of the activities proposed.

4.3. Project management

The Contractor will be required to offer project management services including overlooking the whole project, liaising with the services/suppliers needed throughout the duration of the campaign, ensuring timely delivery, the quality of the deliverables, managing and coordinating all involved parties.

The Contractor must deploy the right project management expertise and tools to ensure smooth, effective and timely implementation of all activities. Such management tools must include a detailed planner with regular status updates, clear validation workflows and the necessary reporting on the outcome of the campaign. The Contractor may use any project management methodology and approach to set up these tools.

The following minimum project management tasks are expected from the Contractor:

- Continuous management of information flows between the Contracting Authority and any service providers managed by the Contractor, as well as any other players involved.
- Coordination and supervision of all services before, during and after the campaign and any other activity.
- Ensuring quality and timely delivery of main deliverables and on all stages of the activities
- Continued updates of the planner; keeping the Contracting Authority up-to-date on campaign preparation and implementation and immediately flagging up any unforeseen delays.
- Drawing up of meeting agendas and meeting minutes.

4.3.1. Responsible body

Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka based in Colombo.

4.3.2. Management structure

The contractor will work under the supervision of the Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka, which has the overall responsibility for policy, strategy and coordination guidance. The contract is managed by the Strategic Communication Officer, under the responsibility of the Head of Cooperation, in line with the Cooperation Facility guidelines for strategic cooperation (May 2023).

Based on the priorities defined with the Delegation, the contractor will submit a detailed implementation plan, every six months, with specific timeline and list of activities. The first

⁸ https://commission.europa.eu/europa-analytics_en

⁹ <https://commission.europa.eu/system/files/2023-02/2022%20EC%20Comm%20indicators.pdf>

implementation plan must be submitted within one month of the contract signature date. The implementation plans are subject to review and validation by the Programme Manager and the Head of Cooperation on a six monthly basis.

The Delegation reserves the right to request changes in the overall campaign's strategy and respective implementation plan at any time, taking into account possible changes of environment, priorities, lessons learned and outcomes of ongoing actions.

The contractor is accountable for achieving the results outlined in these terms of reference and in the overall implementation plan abovementioned. In principle, monthly meetings with the EU staff will be held for the smooth management of the project.

If the contractor is a consortium, the arrangements should allow maximum flexibility in the project implementation. Arrangements offering each consortium member a fixed percentage of the work to be undertaken under the contract should be avoided.

4.3.3. Facilities to be provided by the contracting authority and/or other parties

The Contracting Authority will not provide office, secretarial, communication, logistical, transport or visa facilities. However, when physical meetings take place, these can be facilitated by the Project Manager in the Delegation's premises.

5. LOGISTICS AND TIMING

5.1. Location

The contract will be implemented:

On the place of performance with the following location: Colombo.

Home-based: Parts of the contract may be implemented "home-based" outside of the country. The offer should indicate the home-based location.

The following missions are foreseen: three to five per year in the country. This applies specifically to experts who may need to be mobilised on short-term notice.

5.2. Start date & period of implementation

The intended start date is 15 December 2025 and the period of implementation of the contract will be 36 months from this date. Please see point 3 of the main conditions for the actual start date and period of implementation.

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Personnel

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration, of the partner country or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be approved to work as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well as proof that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

The selection procedures used by the contractor to select the experts must be transparent, must guarantee the absence of professional conflicting interests and the absence of any discrimination based on former or current nationality, gender, place of residence, or any other ground. The findings of the selection panel must be recorded.

The Organisation & Methodology must include a paragraph demonstrating that a gender sensitive experts' selection procedure has been applied¹⁰.

All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

6.1.1. Key experts

Key experts have a crucial role in implementing the contract. These terms of reference contain the minimum requirements for the key experts.

Although minimum requirements for the experts are not selection criteria but award criteria meant to evaluate the technical quality of the offer, the compliance with these requirements is assessed on a YES/NO basis. If an expert does not meet the minimum requirements, the expert must be rejected on the basis of non-compliance. This means that the entire tender is rejected and shall not be evaluated further.

During the evaluation, higher scores will be awarded to the "Expert's Profile" that demonstrates, in addition to the minimum requirements, strengths in relation to the objectives, expected outputs, and scope of work. The award criteria may include additional desirable qualifications, skills and professional experience. These additional desirable criteria, will provide guidance on the elements that will be considered a strength and will receive higher scores.

The "Key Expert's profile" (Annex IV) shall be submitted by the tenderer for the following key experts:

Key expert 1: Team leader (minimum 120 days over the course of 36 months)

The Team Leader will be responsible for coordinating the work conducted by the Project Team and ensure the timely delivery of the requested services described under these terms of reference.

The key expert will oversee inter alia the overall project described in these terms of reference, such as the roll out of the campaigns strategy, implementation plan, 360° campaigns, influencer/celebrities management and any other required activities. The key expert will be responsible for meeting with the deadlines laid down in the implementation plan while ensuring quality control of every deliverable.

The Team Leader will build a team, or be able to call on a pool of experts with proven experience to deliver the requested services, i.e.: content strategist, marketing manager, designer, animator, video producer, etc. The proposed Team Leader should have the following profile:

Qualifications and skills

- Master's degree in communication, journalism, marketing and advertisement or any other fields relevant to this assignment, or bachelor in the same field plus four years of relevant professional experience.
- Proficiency (C2) in English (oral and written).

General professional experience

1. A minimum of five years of professional experience in strategic communication, campaigns management, creative direction or marketing and advertisement.

Specific professional experience

¹⁰ Note that gender balance refers not only to numerical parity, but also to the level of employment and remuneration, roles and functions.

1. Minimum five years of experience as a team leader in overseeing the roll out of communication campaigns, including multi-team coordination, creative direction and audiovisual production coordination.
2. Minimum five years of demonstrated experience in managing 360-degree public communication campaigns with national and international scope.

Guidance on expert time inputs:

- 1) Working days: performance of the contract (and therefore payment) is based solely on working days. The contractor will only be paid for days actually worked on the basis of the daily fee rate contained in the budget breakdown (Annex V). The time input for experts must be expressed in Full Time Equivalent (FTE). Tenderers must annex the ‘Estimated number of working days’ worksheet contained in the spread sheet for Annex V to their organisation and methodology (Annex III) to demonstrate the correspondence between the proposed methodology and the expert inputs.
- 2) The annual leave entitlement of the experts employed by a contractor is determined by their employment contract with the contractor and not by the service contract between the contracting authority and the contractor. However, the annual leave entitlement of experts must not exceed 60 calendar days per year. Moreover, the contracting authority can decide when experts take their annual leave since this is subject to approval by the project manager, who will assess any such request according to the needs of the project while the contract is in progress. A day of annual leave is not considered to be a working day. See Articles 21 and 22 of the general conditions.
- 3) The fee rates for all experts must include: the remuneration paid to the experts, all the administrative costs of employing the relevant experts, such as equipment, relocation and repatriation expenses (including flights to and from the place of performance upon mobilisation and demobilisation as well as leave), accommodation, expatriation allowances, leave, medical insurance and other employment benefits given to the experts by the contractor. It shall also include any security arrangement except when this is exceptionally included under the incidental expenditure. Furthermore, the fees shall also include the margin, overheads, profit and support facilities.
- 4) The delivery mode of the expert’s assignment is either on the place of performance or home based (see PRAG 2.5.5). The delivery mode, and the locations where the expert will undertake missions and the working days needed for each mission are indicated in section 5.1 of the terms of reference.

6.1.2. Non-key experts

The profiles of the non-key experts for this contract are as follows:

- Creative Director (senior expert with more than 5 years of experience in the respective field)
- Campaigns, Marketing and Advertisement Specialist - including media buying, influencer marketing, data analysis, etc. (senior expert with more than 5 years of experience in the respective field)
- Content Strategist, Copywriter, Editor (junior expert with more than 3 years of experience in the respective field)
- Graphic and Motion Designer (junior expert with more than 3 years of experience in the respective field)
- Video Producer(s) (senior expert with more than 5 years of experience in the respective field)

The “Key Expert’s profile” (Annex IV) should not be submitted for non-key experts. However, the tenderer will have to demonstrate in their offer that they have access to experts fulfilling the minimum requirements.

The contractor must select and hire other experts as required according to the requirements in the terms of reference and as described in the submitted organisation and methodology. It must clearly indicate the category to which the experts’ belong so that the applicable daily fee rate in the budget breakdown is clear. All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

The selection procedures used by the contractor to select these other experts must be transparent, and must be based on pre-defined criteria, including professional qualifications, absence of professional conflicting interests, language skills and work experience. The findings of the selection panel must be recorded. The selected experts must be subject to approval by the contracting authority before the start of their implementation of tasks.

6.1.3. Support staff & backstopping

The contractor will provide support facilities to their team of experts, including back-stopping, during the implementation of the contract.

Backstopping and support staff costs must be included in the fee rates.

6.2. Office accommodation

Office accommodation of a reasonable standard and of approximately 10 square metres for each expert working on the contract is to be provided by the contractor.

The costs of the office accommodation are to be covered by the fee rates.

6.3. Facilities to be provided by the contractor

The contractor must ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support their work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion.

For the specific assignment, the contractor must ensure that the necessary equipment is provided for the different experts, including for videography and photography production and post-production, analytics tools to retrieve data for digital campaigns.

6.4. Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the contracting authority / partner country as part of this service contract or transferred to the contracting authority / partner country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract that is to be acquired by the partner country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

6.5. Incidental expenditure

The provision for incidental expenditure, including the provision for expenditure verification, covers ancillary and exceptional eligible expenditure incurred under this contract. It cannot be used for costs that should be covered by the contractor as part of its fee rates, as defined above. Its use is governed by the provisions in the general conditions and the notes in Annex V to the contract.

The provision for incidental expenditure, including the provision for expenditure verification, will not be taken into account in the comparison of the financial offers.

All incidental expenditure incurred in the course of the contract as required by the Terms of Reference is to be invoiced at actual cost (per-diems are fixed flat rates and are considered actual costs). The reimbursement of actual costs shall include costs related to the payment of an incidental expenditure, such as bank charges.

The following incidental expenditure should be provided for:

- Travel costs
- Other costs
- Expenditure verification.

Travel costs

Missions are foreseen outside the place of performance/the home-based location (see section 5.1). For these missions the incidental expenditure should make provisions for costs linked to travel and subsistence allowances. Travel undertaken by the expert for mobilisation and demobilisation as well as for leave purposes shall not be considered a mission and will not be subject to payment of per diem.

Any air travel must be by economy class while long distance train travel may be by 1st class.

Costs for CO2 offsetting of air travel may be included. CO2 offsetting shall in that case be achieved by supporting CDM/Gold Standard projects (evidence must be included as part of the supporting documents) or through airplane company programmes when available.

Per diem is a maximum fixed flat rate, covering daily subsistence costs for missions provided for in the terms of reference or the budget of the action, and if required approved by the contracting authority. For the conditions on the use of per diems, see 2.5.5 PRAG. Any subsistence allowances to be paid for missions undertaken as part of this contract must not exceed the per diem rates published on the website - https://international-partnerships.ec.europa.eu/funding/guidelines/managing-project/diem-rates_en - in force at the time of contract signature.

Other costs

Other costs will include:

- Costs related to the communication campaign (media buying, advertising, social media boosting, purchasing of advertising space) and their physical implementation (ie: collaboration with local artists or influencers, hiring of vehicles for campaigning caravan, printing and production of communication materials);
- Costs related to experts' communication: digital meeting subscriptions, organisation of online workshops/seminars, etc.
- Translation/interpreting costs;
- Costs related to the commissioning/development/editing of guidance material (guidelines, thematic reviews, concept notes), studies, research reports;
- Costs related to the ad-hoc contracting of services required to achieve some of the deliverables;

The provision for the travel costs and other costs in the incidental expenditure of this contract is EUR 375,000.00. This amount must be included unchanged in the budget breakdown.

Prior authorisation by the contracting authority for the use of the travel costs and other costs in the incidental expenditure is not needed.

Expenditure verification

The provision for expenditure verification covers the fees of the auditor/practitioner in charge of verifying the expenditure of this contract in order for the contracting authority to check that the invoices submitted are due. The provision for expenditure verification for this contract is EUR 15,000. This amount must be included unchanged in the budget breakdown.

This provision cannot be decreased but can be increased during execution of the contract.

6.6. Lump sums

No lump sums are foreseen in this contract.

7. REPORTS

7.1. Reporting requirements

Please see Article 26 of the general conditions. Interim reports must be prepared every six months during the period of implementation of the tasks. The narrative report should be based on the monitoring and evaluation system set up in the contract, using the Logical framework matrix (annex b8g) if included in the contract. In the latter case, a narrative report must inform all the results as measured by the indicators defined in the logical framework. The narrative report must be provided along with the corresponding invoice, the financial report and an expenditure verification report defined in Article 28 of the general conditions. There must be a final report, a final invoice and the financial report accompanied by an expenditure verification report at the end of the period of implementation of the tasks. The draft final report must be submitted at least one month before the end of the period of implementation of the tasks. Note that these interim and final reports are additional to any required in Section 4.2 of these terms of reference.

Each report must consist of a narrative section and a financial section. The financial section must contain details of the time inputs of the experts, incidental expenditure and expenditure verification.

To summarise, in addition to any documents, reports and deliverable specified under the duties and responsibilities of each key expert above, the contractor shall provide the following reports:

Name of report	Content	Time of submission
Inception report	Analysis of existing situation and work plan for the project	No later than 1 month after the start of implementation
6-month progress report	Short description of progress against the achievement of the results as spelled out in the Logframe (attached to the contract, if any). The progress report (technical and financial) should include problems encountered; planned work for the next 6 months accompanied by an invoice and the expenditure verification report.	No later than 1 month after the end of each 6-month implementation period.

Draft final report	Short description of the achievement of the results as spelled out in the Logframe (attached to the contract, if any). The draft final report should include a description of the problems encountered and recommendations.	No later than 1 month before the end of the implementation period.
Final report	Short description of the achievement of the results as spelled out in the Logframe (attached to the contract, if any). The final report should include a description of the problems encountered and recommendations; a final invoice and the financial report accompanied by the expenditure verification report.	Within 1 month of receiving comments on the draft final report from the project manager identified in the contract.

7.2. Submission & approval of reports

One copy of the reports referred to above must be submitted to the project manager identified in the contract. The reports must be written in English. The project manager is responsible for approving the reports.

8. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

8.1. Definition of indicators

The performance of the contractor will be monitored and evaluated against the approved six-monthly reports, quality of the deliverables and outcomes of the implemented communication actions against the objectives and expected results set at the start of the project.

8.2. Special requirements

The Contractor will transfer to the Contracting Authority, all source files corresponding to the products generated during the performance of this contract, particularly as part of the editorial, graphic, electronic and audiovisual activities.

Any material that the Contracting Authority might share with the Contractor, as background information for the production of products and delivery of services, must not be further shared or used by the Contractor without prior authorisation of the Contracting Authority. The Contracting Authority will always take the final decision regarding the production or execution of any products or activities. All proposals by the Contractor must take into consideration and integrate existing resources and assets, especially online platforms and products, such as websites, social media, audiovisual productions etc.

Video material must be registered on the [European Commission's AV portal](#) before publication and the original, editable files for all materials made available to the European Commission. The European Commission must also be provided with raw video footage and photo material on request. Performance and intellectual property rights and other fees payable for video, photographic and other assets must cover rights for Europe and the countries covered by the action.