Request for Quotation (RFQ)
For: Design and development of website
Date: 10 November 2020
Contractor: Thomson Foundation

The Thomson Foundation is issuing this Request for Quotations for the services of back-end and front-end development, design, and maintenance of a multilingual website (from now on referred to as: platform), that will serve as a E-learning and knowledge hub for media professionals in the region of Western Balkans (WB).

The goal of the platform is to share knowledge, tools, and information to the media outlets from WB with regards to quality reporting, innovation and business development.

We are seeking to hire a vendor to provide us with the services of:

- Creating and defining the structure of the platform as well as providing guidance in defining the content strategy and web presence as well (main content will be created and prepared by the Thomson Foundation);
- Responsive design of the platform (mobile, tablet, and desktop);
- Full back-end and front-end development of the platform with a system that enables later customization of categories and website sections;
- Customization should not be restricted only on categorise and sections, but also implementable on advanced functionalities;
- Embedding already produced e-learning courses (hosted on EdCast) and publishing them on the platform;
- Multilingual publication: the platform should be available in Albanian, Bosnian/Croatian/Montenegrin/Serbian (BCSM), Macedonian, and English (one website with multiple language versions);
- Performing basic on-site and off-site SEO settings for the platform;
- Purchasing hosting package and domain name registration for the account of Thomson Foundation;
- Ensuring basic accessibility of published content and general website structure for persons with disabilities (as explained in the WW3 Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.1);
- Ensuring that the platform is fully GDPR compliant (cookies management system and other GDPR elements are at place);
- Training the TF and other dedicated staff on content publishing and daily maintenance of the platform;
- Develop and include privacy policy page;
- Website support and maintenance for the period of 12 months from the date of final delivery and launching of the platform.

The vendor is expected to fulfil their tasks with full awareness and respect of the Principles for Digital Development.

Expected deadline for delivery: 3 months from the date of signing the contract.

Elements of the quotation

Interested vendors are kindly invited to send us the quotation with the following information:

- Indicative price for these services given in GBP;
- Short portfolio of the agency/company - with key achievements, partners or clients listed;
- A list of the services that potential vendor is able to provide;
- Contact details of the vendor.

Quotation validity

We kindly expect that the quotation remains opened for acceptance by the TF, for a minimum of thirty days from the date when it is submitted.

Instructions for submitting

You are kindly asked to submit your quotation to Mr. Ilcho Cvetanoski via email: IlchoC@thomsonfoundation.org by 30 November 2020 (by midnight).

Clarification Requests

Should you need any additional information or clarification, please write to Mr. Ilcho Cvetanoski via email: IlchoC@thomsonfoundation.org / mobile: +387 63 637 692

Award Criteria

Quotations provided by the interested vendors will be evaluated upon the competitiveness of the overall price offered.

The Thomson Foundation reserves the right to organize online meetings and seek additional information from the agencies/companies that have sent their quotations prior to finally selecting the vendor.

By issuing this RFQ, the Thomson Foundation is not bound in any way to enter into any contractual or other arrangement with any potential vendor.

ABOUT THE PLATFORM

TF envisaged the development of a website that will serve as an online resource hub for sets of activities. Its long-term goal, following 2022 and the end of the project, is **to become a locally owned resource base for media outlets from the entire WB region** - offering knowledge, tools and technical support with regards to business development.

PURPOSE

- To provide user friendly **multimedia educational content** and hands-on knowledge on various topics related to media business operations and business development;
- To promote the concept of **continuous e-learning** trough tailor-made courses for media outlets;
- To host **already prepared online tools**, and make them easily accessible so media outlets can use them to improve their digital operations and grow;
- To generate **peer-to-peer knowledge and experience sharing** amongst local and regional media outlets from the entire WB region.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The platform will be open and available to the general public, but the primary focus is the media professionals' community and the grantees of the Media for All - Supporting Greater Media Independence in the Western Balkans project. The main beneficiaries of the project are local media outlets throughout the WB - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia. So, in that light the platform should be intuitive, self-explanatory, and easy to use.

COMPONENTS OF THE PLATFORM

E-learning courses

Through the course of the project, 8 E-learning courses will be developed and published. They are envisioned as combinations of video, text, visual and other interactive educational materials such as quizzes, tests and all sorts of assignments.

These E-learning courses will be created and hosted on the EdCast platform. From this location E-learning courses should only be embedded and made available to the users of the platform.

Note: The potential vendor is not expected to produce the courses or to develop the e-learning platform.

All the courses will be available in Albanian, BCSM, Macedonian, and English and their distribution should be enabled for every language option on the website.

Educative content

Besides the E-learning courses, the platform is envisioned to contain other educational multimedia content that covers different needs and levels of capacities in a user friendly and easily consumable format and style.

The following topics and areas, related to media operation and business development ought to be covered:

- Business models for media outlets: guidebooks, good practice examples, case studies from the region, news and global trends;
- Community building and audience engagement: content research tools and advice, templates for community building strategies, good practice examples, tips and tricks;
- Local and regional media outlets: special set of advice tailored for small local teams of journalists;
- Traditional media corner: special tips for TV channels, radio stations, magazines and paper editions on digitalisation and growth;
- Management: best tools for online newsrooms, workflow, elements of project management for media (application of agile methodologies i.e.), HR;
- Digitalisation: how media outlets can digitize their business operations and grow;
- Online and physical security of journalists;
- Blog section with personal opinions and columns;
- Global trends, research and reports relevant to media outlets;
- Editorial tools and techniques;
- New content creation concepts: solution journalism, MoJo, brand newsroom, etc.;
- Marketing and sales;
- Innovative techniques for news distribution;

- Advertising: native, brand newsroom concept, display etc.;
- Most important media industry related news from the region: new major acquisitions, changes in ownership of media outlets, regulatory changes, media laws, etc.

OTHER FUNCTIONALITIES THAT THE PLATFORM SHOULD HAVE

- Ability to add content from frontend (not only from the administrator area) through a user-friendly and widely used Content Management System such is WordPress
- Creation of unlimited content categories, sub-categories, articles and autonomous articles;
- Upload of photos, embed video or document files using media manager tool;
- User roles and capabilities with a structured system for roles and privileges for website editing and maintenance – more than one type of user role where users can have different permission etc;
- Download or read document files directly;
- Advanced tasks for content search functionality;
- Content archiving;
- Search function by news, type of publication, author, type of resource, events, etc.;
- Full access to administration area;
- Users and users' groups management feature;
- Sitemap for SEO and easy navigation experience;
- Basic tasks based on security with particular focus on protection of personal data;
- Basic tasks for website performance (page speed - load times);
- Sign up for newsletter;
- Social sharing features.

ABOUT THE 'MEDIA FOR ALL' PROJECT

The aim of this CSSF funded media freedom programme is to develop and strengthen the editorial independence of the media, enabling them to provide citizens with a more diverse range of media content, and thus to encourage open, informed and active discussion amongst target audiences in the 6 WB countries - Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, and Serbia.

The main beneficiaries of this programme are media outlets and those working within the media sphere (e.g. editors). Also, the programme will be focused on increasing citizens engagement with a wider range of media, and potentially (over the longer term) increase the levels of trust in the media that demonstrate more balanced editorial policies.

This project lasts until mid-2022 and operates across the six WB countries. Program is implemented by the British Council (lead partner), Balkan Investigative and Reporting Network (BIRN), Thomson Foundation and INTRAC.

The role of Thomson Foundation (TF), as implementing partner of this program, is to provide tailored and mentored support to business development of selected media outlets. More on TF activities HERE.