

Request for Proposal (RFP)

For: Business support and consultation to foster media outlets' monetization potentials

Date: 21 July 2021

Contractor: Thomson Foundation

The [Thomson Foundation](#) is issuing this Request for Proposal for the services in domains of business planning and implementation, product placement, and monetization that will serve as a crucial impetus and support for the media outlets in the WB with realistic monetization potential.

In that regard, TF is seeking to hire a vendor to provide the following services:

- Together with TF program team and country based grant managers identify the group of media outlets with potential to monetise and gain revenue – 10 to 15 media outlets in total,
- Monitoring and overseeing the business plan implementation of selected media outlets with monetization potential,
- Providing customized business development support to selected media outlets to ensure that all technical and operational conditions for monetisation and introduction (of further development) of revenue channels are met,
- Organize 1 on 1 consultancy and mentoring sessions with selected media outlets to increase their business capacities in domains identified as crucial for monetization,
- Support TF and 'Media for All' project team to draw lessons learned from these processes and generate knowledge and guidance for the future similar interventions.

Achievements of mentoring program

From November 2020 to the end of January 2021, Thomson Foundation implemented the mentoring phase of the Media Acceleration Programme as part of the 'Media for All' project. The key achievements and results of the mentoring are the following:

- All involved 59 media outlets have developed localized and implementable business plans with detailed budgets, and submitted them for funding opportunity,
- Business development grants have been awarded to 55 media outlets after detailed quality assessment and funded with 1.26 million GBP,
- All 59 media outlets have successfully completed two E-learning courses: 'Community Engagement Strategies for Media Outlets' and 'Business Models and Monetization for Media Outlets' by completing all assignments and tasks,
- Media outlets have established a trusty and productive communication with 29 mentors assigned to help them in development and implementation of business plans.

Business plans implementation period that started from April 2021 and will last until March 2022, has been tracked through an intensive monitoring system and accompanied with customized and specific capacity building activities. It was noticed within the first few months of implementation that certain number of media are having potential for immediate monetization and they lack an adequate and tailored expert support to make it happen.

Justification and background

Taking into account the principles of adaptive management and learning, the process of mentoring help TF and Media for All project team identified realistic capacity gaps and shortcomings of media outlets when it comes to business development side and readiness to introduce new or grow existing revenue streams.

Based on multiple sources – evaluation of the online course on ‘Business models and monetization’, report on mentoring phase and capacity gaps and needs assessment report, it was noticed the following:

- Media outlets in the Business development grant scheme are not at the same level of development when it comes to capacities and knowledge related to business development and monetization,
- Even the smaller number of media that have monetization potential, lack the knowledge and skills, as well as guidance to maximize their potential and increase the overall and financial operation of their outlet,
- Knowledge, skills and tools provided within the course on ‘Business models and monetization’ for media outlets have been highly appreciated by the participants. 61% of respondents of the final evaluation questionnaire for the Media Accelerator Programme were fully satisfied with ‘Business Models and Monetization for Media Outlets’, rating e-learning with the grade 10. Participants have shared their impressions that mentoring in the future has to take more into consideration the socio-economic specifics of the country where it is being implemented, and to provide an in-depth tailored support in areas of business development and overall functioning of the media outlet as a business entity.

Final report about results of Media Accelerator Programme showed that media outlets have low knowledge about product development. General impression about Business plans of media outlets that are building new digital products is that they might have a hard time doing proper product development and creating a specification for the product unless they are contracting an experienced external person. Additionally, media outlets need further and deeper knowledge about business plan writing, fundraising, piloting and validating products and services, researching the target market and audience data analysis. Project team recognized the need to introduce professionals who have this knowledge to support them in this through product development and deepening their knowledge about business development and all its crucial components.

Expected deadline for delivery: 10 months from the date of signing the contract.

Elements of the proposal

Interested applicants should send their proposal that include the following:

- Proposal indicating and elaborating above mentioned services
- Portfolio of applicant indicating similar services conducted in the past
- Short portfolio of the applicant including the list of key personnel and their expertise
- Financial offer for above listed services
- Contact details of the vendor

Proposal validity

We kindly expect that the proposal remains open for acceptance by the TF, for a minimum of fifteen days from the date when it is submitted.

Instructions for submitting

You are kindly asked to submit your proposal to Anisa Curraj via email: AnisaC@thomsonfoundation.org by 31 July 2021 (by midnight).

Clarification Requests

Should you need any additional information or clarification, please write to Davor Marko via email: DavorM@thomsonfoundation.org.

Award Criteria

Proposals submitted within the indicated deadline will be evaluated in line with the following criteria:

- Clearness of proposal and services listed
- At least five relevant consultancies provided for similar clients in the region of the WB
- At least three relevant projects / references related to business, digitalisation and innovation in media sector
- Qualifications and experiences of the key consultant staff
- Value for money – price will not be a determining criteria, but the entire proposal and its quality will be also assessed against the indicated financial offer.

The Thomson Foundation will organize online meetings and interviews with shortlisted parties in order to clarify proposals and seek additional information prior to finally selecting the vendor.

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

About 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](#).