

## **Request for Proposal (RFP)**

**For: Media websites support in domain of data protection, media policies and digital security**

**Date: 13 August 2021**

**Contractor: Thomson Foundation**

The [Thomson Foundation](#) (TF) is issuing this Request for Proposal for the services in domains of consultant and expert support to media outlets to develop customized data protection policies, media related policies and security protocols on their newly developed websites.

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

- Together with TF and 'Media for All' program team review the completed process of website design for 15 media outlets and assess the additional needs in domain of their internal capacity building,
- Create the capacity building plans and realistic timeline based on needs assessments,
- Provide capacity building support to selected media outlets in domain of data protection, media policies and digital security, in the format that is the most suitable for beneficiaries – groups sessions or individual mentoring,
- Produce educational and instructive materials for media outlets and e-learning platform 'Journalift'.

### **Rationale**

TF and 'Media for All' project team identified realistic capacity gaps and shortcomings of media outlets when it comes to their digital presence, development and active implementation of specific websites related policies (such as data protection, media and digital security policies). Taking into the account the principles of adaptive management and learning, we proposed this activity to fill the gaps and create sustainable capacities within media teams the project is working with.

Based on multiple sources – primarily on assessment on websites and overall digital presence of WB media, baseline capacity building assessment and inputs from the due diligence process and project activities, we identified the current state of development and additional capacity gaps and needs in this regard. According to the findings, some key features that were crucial for good quality user experience and secure online presence did not meet the requirements. For instance:

- Around **50% of the online media did not have a digital certificate** that ensures a secure and encrypted connection between the websites and users.
- Around **33% of the websites did not have a privacy or cookie policy** and only over **50% of the websites had an impressum**.
- **33% of the media portals did not include their terms of service** anywhere on their website. These are some of the most important features that media websites need to provide in order to appear reliable and trustworthy to users.
- Around **25% of the media portals did not have search optimization for their content or tags** on their articles.

Within the period March – July 2021, 'Media for All' team support development of completely new websites for 13 media outlets, while additional 2 will be completed by the end of October 2021. The list has been selected based on assessment and realistic needs of these media.

It was of utmost importance that both media outlets and vendors are involved in the process of creating a detailed plan for building an architecture that will anticipate the final output and implementation of it, on proper positions, including new formats that will be chosen by media outlet with assistance on creating it and giving them skills on how to produce it. These gaps will be filled through intensive and tailored capacity building support. There are also additional media, that are on reserve list, that could be supported same way, as assessment indicated.

**Expected deadline for delivery:** 6 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](mailto:AnisaC@thomsonfoundation.org) by 15 September 2021 (by midnight).

## Clarification Requests

Should you need any additional information or clarification, please write to Ilcho Cvetanoski via email: [IlchoC@thomsonfoundation.org](mailto:IlchoC@thomsonfoundation.org)

## Award Criteria

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

- Clarity 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 media development in domain of digital including GDPR, digital security and media policies
- 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.

TF 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, TF 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 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](#).