

Request for Proposal (RFP)

For: Research on polarizing and conflict narratives in Montenegro and their effects on media professionalism

Deadline application: 20 October 2021

Contractor: Thomson Foundation

The [Thomson Foundation](#) is issuing this Request for Proposal for the research services on polarizing and conflict narratives in Montenegro and their effects on media professionalism under the 'Media for All' project.

The 2021 Montenegrin episcopal enthronement, on 5 September 2021, provoked a series of violent protests against the enthronement of Joanikije Mićović of the Serbian Orthodox Church as the Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral that took place at the historic Cetinje. Media outlets from Montenegro, partly in Serbia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, with different political stances and editorial agendas took variety of perspectives and positions while reporting on this event, promoting and creating exclusive and conflicting narratives that further kept the tension within the country and the region. There are indications that, as result of exclusive and conflicting reporting citizens of Montenegro are object of disinformation and manipulation that is created on variety of sides in the conflict. Also, this endangers professional and unbiased media that operates in Montenegro both on national and local level.

The goal of research is to identify the main and mutually conflicting and exclusive narratives that escalated during the episcopal enthronement in Cetinje, Montenegro, on 5 September 2021¹, to define their ideological foundations, political protagonists, and associated media groups in Montenegro and the region. The aim is to examine the implications of such narratives on the political and ideological positions of the actors, as well as their impact on the media environment in Montenegro and the region, especially on media that project 'Media for All' supports in Montenegro.

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

- Conducting desk research on Montenegro and its media landscape
- Developing methodology for research, adapted to the remote working mode
- Create a representative sample consisting of media that represent different camps including beneficiaries 'Media for All' project works with
- Data collection
- Data analysis and compilation of report
- Consultation with TF team to present initial findings prior to finalization of report and drafting recommendations
- Finalising conclusions and recommendation for TF and 'Media for All' project team

Expected deadline for delivery

4 months from the date of signing the contract, not later than mid-February 2022

¹ The 2021 Montenegrin episcopal enthronement protests are a series of violent protests against the installation (enthronement) of Joanikije Mićović of the Serbian Orthodox Church as the Metropolitan of Montenegro and the Littoral that took place at the historic Cetinje Monastery on 5 September 2021.

Elements of the proposal

Interested applicants should send their proposal that include the following:

- Research proposal indicating above mentioned services
- Portfolio of applicant indicating relevant research activities in similar fields
- Short portfolio of the applicant including the list of key personnel that will be involved in research
- 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 Mr. Davor Marko via email: DavorM@thomsonfoundation.org by 20 October 2021 (by midnight).

Clarification Requests

Should you need any additional information or clarification, please write to Mr. Ilcho Cvetanoski via email: IlchoC@thomsonfoundation.org.

Award Criteria

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

- Comprehensiveness of research
- Quality of research proposal including methodology, timeline and indicated understanding of the primary goal of research
- At least five relevant research reports related to media sector in Montenegro or Western Balkan region
- Qualifications and experiences of the key research staff
- A proven experience in conducting research and assessment for programming will be an added value
- Having research expertise that combines media, political and sociological analysis would be an added value
- 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 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 project results and learning on [Journalift](#) platform and more on TF activities [HERE](#).