



CONSULTANCY TO DEVELOP A FIVE-YEAR JOINT COMMUNICATION STRATEGY (2024 – 2029) FOR THE CONSORTIUM FOR HUMAN RIGHTS AND MEDIA IN SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (CHARM) TERMS OF REFERENCE

1.0. INTRODUCTION

DefendDefenders was established in 2005 as the **East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project** and registered as a regional Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) in Uganda. DefendDefenders exists to strengthen the work of Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) in the sub-region by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution and by enhancing their capacity to effectively defend human rights. The core mandate of DefendDefenders is to promote the safety, security, and wellbeing of HRDs. To achieve this, DefendDefenders' work has to date focused on protection and security management, capacity building, technology development, as well as advocacy, research, and communications. DefendDefenders establishes and supports national coalitions of HRDs in various countries through which HRDs can come together and claim their rights at the national level. It also serves as host of AfricanDefenders (the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network) secretariat. AfricanDefenders is a network of five sub-regional organisations, dedicated to the promotion and protection of human rights Defenders (HRDs) across the African continent.

DefendDefenders is hosting the **Consortium for Human Rights and Media in Sub-Saharan Africa (CHARM)** that aims to promote and protect human rights and media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa. CHARM is a partnership of **CIVICUS, Civil Rights Defenders (CRD), DefendDefenders, Fojo Media Institute, The Wits Centre for Journalism, Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement (RFLD), and Magamba Network**. The partnership acknowledges the role that a free and active media and civil society have in the protection of robust democracies and the promotion of national development. The consortium has been operating since October 2019.

DefendDefenders is seeking a qualified consultant to develop a **comprehensive communication strategy** for the Consortium for Human Rights and Media in Sub-Saharan Africa (CHARM), with a primary focus on human rights, civic space, and media.

2.0. CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND TO THE CHARM PROJECT

The Consortium for Human Rights and Media in Sub-Saharan Africa (CHARM) aims to promote and protect human rights and media freedoms in Sub-Saharan Africa. The partnership of CIVICUS, Civil Rights Defenders, DefendDefenders, Fojo Media Institute, The Wits Centre for Journalism,

Réseau des Femmes Leaders pour le Développement, and Magamba Network acknowledges the role that a free and active media and civil society have in the protection of robust and inclusive democracies and the promotion of sustainable national development. Together as a consortium, these organisations offer a strong and unique contribution in the following areas: **Civil society building and civic space advocacy; Safety and protection of women/human rights defenders (W/HRD) and activists; Integration of gender and social inclusion; Media development and protecting/expanding media freedoms; Tech, innovation, and digital activism advancements; Inter-state and regional collaboration through consortium synergy effects.**

CHARM engages with civil society and media who support W/HRDs and their organisations and journalists, particularly those that represent constituencies with the most limited access to resources and opportunities in their unique contexts (such as women, young people, sexual minorities, people living with disabilities, racial and ethnic minority groups, Indigenous people, amongst others). Together, the consortium will contribute to change across four strategic outcome areas through **six pathways of change related to civic space, public support (to marginalised and traditionally excluded groups), coalition building, and access to better resources to sustain the work of civil society and media in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA).**

During the pilot phase, CHARM was able to achieve noteworthy successes and outcomes, including a reported 60% success rate on achieving planned objectives even during significant disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic and related lockdowns. Consortium members were able to strengthen their advocacy capacities and have effectively advocated for more democratic policies and laws that promote civic and media freedoms and demand government accountability. A vital approach for advocacy has been the investment by the consortium in research and building an evidence base alongside active relationship building with reputable media organisations and personalities. Specific activities that have yielded significant outcomes included campaigns, investigative journalism initiatives, capacity strengthening of sub-grantees, and digital security training of trainers for HRDs.

As CHARM has been operational for more than three years, the consortium has learned a variety of lessons to improve, expand, and sustain its impact. Among the key recommendations was to develop a comprehensive communication strategy. The strategy will serve as a roadmap for effective communication throughout the lifecycle of the CHARM consortium. It will detail the goals, target audiences, key messages, and communication channels to be employed. A well-crafted communication strategy is essential for conveying the consortium's mission, progress, and achievements to both internal and external stakeholders.

3.0. OVERALL OBJECTIVE OF THE CONSULTANCY

The overall objective of the consultancy is to develop a communications strategy that will effectively promote more awareness and understanding of the impact of CHARM while aligning the communications processes of consortium.

3.1. Specific objectives.

- a) Developing a communication and media strategy and action plan to guide the CHARM project implementation in the sub-Saharan Africa countries it operates in.
- b) Developing a strategy for enhancing visibility of the project and its outcomes – especially in relation to the new approach in strengthening and capacity building human rights defenders in the region.
- c) To increase the awareness and understanding of CHARM brand through engagement of information through various channels and platforms.
- d) To strengthen consortium wide communication by improving CHARM internal communication and collaboration across partners.
- e) To help come up with more coordinated, evidence-based advocacy and communication efforts.

4.0. SCOPE OF WORK.

The consultant will be responsible for the following:

- a) Conducting a thorough assessment of the consortium's existing communication practices, challenges, and needs. This includes analysis of the current communication practices, tools, and resources.
- b) Developing a comprehensive, clear and cohesive communication strategy aligning to the consortium's mission, vision and goals.
- c) Creating a detailed action plan with specific goals, objectives, key messages, target audiences, and recommended communication channels and platforms.
- d) Designing a crisis communication plan to address unexpected challenges or controversies.
- e) Providing recommendations for branding, visual identity, and content creation.
- f) Offering guidance on stakeholder engagement, advocacy campaigns, monitoring and evaluation, training, and financial transparency.
- g) Assisting with the development of language accessibility and cultural sensitivity initiatives.
- h) Maintaining compliance with data privacy and security requirements.
- i) Analyse the human rights issues the consortium addresses and identify key targets for our communication efforts.
- j) Define key messages, channels, and content strategies for each identified audience group.
- k) Develop a calendar of events outlining what content will be created, when, and by whom.
- l) Advise on the use of technology and tools to improve communication and outreach.

- m) Design a monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of the strategy.
- n) Offer training and capacity-building support to consortium members in communication.
- o) Develop a clear timeline for the implementation of the communication strategy.

5.0. KEY DELIVERABLES

- a) **A Comprehensive Communication Strategy document:** The consultant will come up with a document that outlines the goals, target audiences, key messages, and communication channels for the CHARM consortium. This document should serve as a roadmap for effective communication throughout the CHARM'S lifecycle.
- b) **A Stakeholder Engagement Plan:** Create a stakeholder engagement plan that identifies and prioritizes key stakeholders, their interests, and the strategies for engaging and building relationships with them. This plan should ensure that all relevant stakeholders are informed and involved in the consortium's activities.
- c) **Content Development and Distribution:** Generate high-quality content for various communication channels, including press releases, newsletters, social media, and website updates. Develop a content calendar and distribution plan to ensure a consistent and engaging flow of information to the target audience.
- d) **A Monitoring and Evaluation Framework:** Establish a framework for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the communication strategy. This should include key performance indicators (KPIs) to measure the reach and impact of communication efforts and regular reporting mechanisms.
- e) **Capacity Building and Training:** Provide training and capacity-building sessions for CHARM consortium members to empower them with the knowledge and skills required to implement the communication strategy effectively. This can include workshops on media relations, social media management, crisis communication, and more.

6.0. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS FOR THE EVALUATION OF RESULTS

- a) Timely delivery of the deliverables
- b) Satisfactory and written reports and quality strategy document that meets the standard of CHARM.
- c) Engagement of relevant stakeholders
- d) Presentation of draft strategy to stakeholders and obtain feedback to incorporate into the general CHARM Strategy.

7.0. DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The assignment shall be for **90 (ninety) days** from day of engagement, including review of draft and submission of final document.

8.0. REPORTING PROCEDURES

The consultant will brief the CHARM Coordination team, through Ms Joyce Kimani, the Project Communication Officer. The successful candidate will be required to provide email updates via the email: JoyceK@defenddefenders.org copying mariak@defenddefenders.org every Friday, and a virtual meeting as requested during the assignment. Any changes or extension to the timeline provided should be communicated to the coordination team, with valid reasons provided. DefendDefenders has the right to decline the request to extend the contract.

9.0. EDUCATION, EXPERIENCE AND SKILLS REQUIRED FOR THE CONSULTANT

The consultant should have the following qualifications and experience:

- Advanced degree in Journalism, Mass Communication, International relations, international development, or other relevant fields for the assignment.
- At least 7 years proven experience in policies and/ or communication strategies development.
- A deep understanding of human rights issues and adherence to human rights principles.
- Experience in developing communication strategies for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly in the human rights sector.
- Proven previous working experience consisting of substantial involvement in research / assessments, evaluations, and/or reviews in related areas.
- Experience in the use of media technology, social media for public information/advocacy and public awareness
- Excellent analytical, communication, and project management skills.
- Excellent written and spoken English language.
- Demonstrated ability to work in a multicultural environment and establish harmonious and effective relationships.

10.0. EVALUATION AND SELECTION PROCESS

Detailed summary of the Technical and Financial Evaluation:

Evaluation Criteria		Max Score
<i>Criteria and maximum scores as listed in the terms of reference</i>		
A	Methodology and Understanding of the work	35
	Understanding of the project's objectives	15
	Clarity and feasibility of the work plan	10
	Methodology and proposed approach	10
B	Relevant experience and qualifications	25
	Advanced degree in Journalism, Mass Communication, International relations, international development, or other relevant fields for the assignment	5
	At least 7 years proven experience in policies and/ or communication strategies development	5
	A deep understanding of human rights issues and adherence to human rights principles	5
	Experience in developing communication strategies for non-governmental organizations (NGOs), particularly in the human rights sector	5
	Proven previous working experience consisting of substantial involvement in research / assessments, evaluations, and/or reviews in related areas	5
C	Skills	10
	Excellent analytical, communication, and project management skills	5
	Demonstrated ability to work in a multicultural environment and establish harmonious and effective relationships.	3
	Excellent written and spoken English language	2
Totals		70

Financial Evaluation.

The proposal with the lowest evaluated price shall be given a full score and the other proposals shall be given financial scores that is inversely proportional to the lowest price proposal using the formula below:

Financial score= Lowest price proposal/Proposal Price X 30

13.0. CONTACT INFORMATION:

Please submit all relevant documents to the following email: procurement@defenddefenders.org and copy in MariaK@defenddefenders.org. Address the

same emails for any inquiries or clarification regarding this open call. We look forward to receiving your proposals and working with the chosen expert to consolidate our communication efforts.

14.0. PROHIBITION OF CORRUPTION

The Consultant shall not engage in any form of bribery and corruption in relation to the services under these TORs, including but not limited to offering, giving, receiving, or soliciting any form of undue advantage, whether in cash or in-kind, to or from any person, whether within or outside the Client's organization.

15.0. CONTRACT AND DISCLAIMER

The selected consultant will enter a formal contract with DefendDefenders that outlines the terms and conditions of the engagement. DefendDefenders reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal received and is not bound to accept the lowest or any proposal.
