

EOI/SEC/17/2020

PUBLICCALL FOR IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS ENGAGEMENT ON ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND  
FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION

Date of issuing: 30 November 2020

**Date of closure: 17 DECEMBER 2020 – (17:00 CET)**

**Ref#:** - Put Spotlight on Artificial Intelligence and Freedom of Expression (#SAIFE)

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To work with the Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) on the #SAIFE project, the OSCE seeks to hire as an implementing partner a civil society organization whose mission is **to defend digital rights, including freedom of expression and media freedom, and to provide professional, high-quality research, analysis, policy advice and advocacy on human rights-friendly digital governance.**

The tasks (specified under point 2) below) will include co-organizing four expert meetings (on content moderation and content curation) and the development of policy guidance and recommendations on how to safeguard freedom of expression when artificial intelligence (AI) is deployed. The Implementing Partner will have an overarching role across all four expert meetings and develop, together with the RFoM Office, a resource toolkit or alike that will be jointly presented in 2021.

The costs will be covered from the budget of the OSCE project “The Impact of Artificial Intelligence on Freedom of Expression” and will be transferred to the selected implementing partner under conditions stipulated in the Implementing Partner Agreement and in line with the criteria described in the present Call. The Implementing Partner Agreement should start tentatively in December 2020 and will end tentatively after 12 months, in December 2021.

**The OSCE reserves the right to reject any or all applications received in response to this Public Call, if the requirements specified under point 3) are not fulfilled, if proposals are submitted after the deadline, if the applicant is ineligible as per point 5) or if proposals fail to include all supporting documentation specified under point 6) below. The OSCE also reserves the right to negotiate with any of the applicants in any manner deemed to be in the best interest of the OSCE.**

### **1) Background information**

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming one of the main tools for shaping and arbitrating information online. Content moderation and content curation are often an automated procedure, with algorithms and AI deciding on which content is taken down or to whom it is disseminated. If implemented responsibly, AI can benefit societies in various positive ways. However, there is also a genuine risk that such technologies have a detrimental impact on fundamental freedoms. When driven by commercial, political or state interests, the use of AI could seriously jeopardize our human rights, in particular the freedom of expression and media pluralism.

The Office of the OSCE Representative on Freedom of the Media (RFoM) has launched a project to promote, among all stakeholders, a clearer understanding of government, regulators, and internet

intermediaries' policies and practices in their use of AI and the profound impact they have on the future of media and quality information and the realisation of human rights online. Through this project, the RFoM Office aims to develop policy recommendations on the most effective ways to safeguard freedom of expression and media freedom when using artificial intelligence within four main thematic areas of concern: (a) security (b) hate speech (c) media pluralism and (d) surveillance.

## **2) Specific tasks of the implementing partners shall include:**

In line with the findings stemming from the project work so far, support the RFoM Office in developing policy recommendations on the most effective ways to safeguard freedom of expression and media freedom when using artificial intelligence and particularly machine-learning technologies.

To this end, under the overall supervision of the RFoM Office, the selected implementing partner shall engage in the project activities as follows:

1. Participate in an online kick-off meeting to discuss tasks, outcomes, responsibilities and timelines related to the partnership agreement, tentatively in December 2020;
2. Drafting and reviewing preparatory documents and papers;
3. Co-organizing four expert meetings (on the four main areas of concern identified in the project), including by providing content, mapping stakeholders and experts, compiling most relevant resources and background materials;
4. Based on the results of the expert meetings, develop, together with the RFoM Office, a resource toolkit or other outcome; deadlines and concrete steps, including the elaboration of overarching policy recommendations, roadmap for the OSCE and cooperation with expert meeting chairs, will be specified in the Implementing Partner Agreement;
5. Provide a mid-term narrative and financial report; tentatively by May 2021;
6. Building on the outcome of the four expert meetings and the development of initial policy guidance and a resource toolkit or other outcome, further collaborate with the RFoM Office on policy development and advocacy tools, particularly in the content curation; collaboration tasks such as research, cooperative initiatives with interdisciplinary stakeholders or advocacy for procedural safeguards will be specified in the Implementing Partner Agreement;
7. Provide the OSCE with narrative and financial reports for the above-described service, upon completion of activities and according to the schedule that will be specified in the Implementing Partner Agreement, tentatively by December 2021.

## **3) Qualifications of the IP (mandatory requirements):**

Applicants that will not provide the below mandatory requirements will not be evaluated.

Each applicant organization:

1. Shall be a civil society organization whose mission is to defend digital rights, including freedom of expression and media freedom, and to provide professional, high-quality research, analysis, policy advice and advocacy on human rights-friendly digital governance;

2. Shall offer an expertise on the free speech dynamics and situation in the OSCE participating States as well as Mediterranean and Asian Partners;
3. Shall offer preferably an expertise on artificial intelligence and other forms of automation and machine-learning technologies;
4. Shall be registered in one of the 57 OSCE participating States;
5. Shall provide records of publications/researches on digital rights, including those developed as a result of projects funded by public or private donors;
6. Shall ensure gender and political sensitivity both in the record of publications/researches and in the working environment;
7. Shall ensure a proficient use of the English language, including technical language related to the topic;
8. Minimum 3 years of experience in developing research programmes, elaborating publications/researches and other written high-level contributions on the subject matter;
9. Shall ensure professionalism, transparency and accountability in managing funds provided by external entities.

Applicants will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Experience in providing professional, high-quality research, analysis, and/or policy advice on online freedom of expression and human rights-friendly internet governance;
  - 25 out of 100 points
2. Experience of researchers and policy analysts involved;
  - 15 out to 100 points
3. Records of publications/researches on human rights-friendly digital governance;
  - 25 out of 100 points
5. Records of publications/researches on digital rights, in particular freedom of expression and media freedom, in the OSCE region, including in the Mediterranean and Asian OSCE Partners for Cooperation
  - 20 out of 100 points
6. Budget to complete activities related to tasks described under no. 2) of the present Call
  - 15 out of 100 points

**4) The proposal should provide:**

**Technical Proposal (no prices should be included to the Technical Proposal):**

- a) One page brief description of the plan to implement the project.
- b) Supporting documentation, as requested under no. 6) below.

**Financial Proposal:**

- a) The Implementing Partner Agreement will cover 25,000 EUR for undertaking the tasks as per point 2).
- b) The Financial Proposal shall cover all expenses to be incurred for performing the services as specified including, but not limited to the cost of the remuneration of the Bidder's personnel and all other compensations, insurance and social charges as well as overheads, technical assistance,

supervision costs, and any other costs incurred by the contractor's personnel for the purpose of performing the services; and shall show a detailed cost breakdown per price categories;

c) progress payment(s) based on the specific tasks described under no. 2) above and in particular: 40% upon signature of the contract; 40% upon approval of the mid-term narrative and financial report; 20% upon approval of the final narrative and financial report.

As the OSCE is always interested in delivering products of the highest quality, the applicants are welcomed to present any suggestions or comments on how to improve the delivering of the requested services.

#### **5) Entities eligible to apply:**

- Civil society organizations whose mission is to defend digital rights, including freedom of expression and media freedom, and to provide professional, high-quality research, analysis, policy advice and advocacy on human rights-friendly digital governance.
- Applicants scoring below 80 will not be considered as eligible.

#### **6) Supporting documentation:**

Applicants shall provide information on their operational capacities:

- Registration certificate (accreditation)
- Statute (in English)
- Documentation proving experience in digital rights and internet governance, in English;
- A list of key personnel who will be involved in the project with CVs
- List of main publications/researches published on the subject matter, particularly those pertaining to the OSCE region, including Mediterranean and Asian OSCE Partners for Co-operation;
- Bank account details.

#### **7) How to apply and the procedures to follow:**

- This document
- Acknowledgement letter - ANNEX A; (applicants are required to submit Participation form **not later than 17 December 2020, 17:00 CET (local time)**)

Applicants must apply in English. Hand-written applications will not be accepted.

Applications (Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal must be delivered in separate PDF files) must be delivered to [tenders-at@osce.org](mailto:tenders-at@osce.org) on or before **17 December 2020, 17:00 CET (local time)**.

Any application submitted after the deadline will be automatically rejected.

**Please address all your queries or questions in writing to [Laurence.roche@osce.org](mailto:Laurence.roche@osce.org) up to 5 days before the submission deadline and kindly refrain from any telephone calls or personal visits.**