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Project: Supporting Freedom of Expression in the Media in North Macedonia

Lot number: 5.6

Reference number: IPA/2020/420-934

Title of the Project: Supporting Freedom of Expression in the Media in North Macedonia

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TERMS OF REFERENCE

Position: Consultant for business plan development

Reports to: Project Manager

BACKGROUND

Professional standards and media ethics are declining with the extensive spreading of tabloid journalism and inefficiently handled hate speech and disinformation on Internet portals and in social media. In recent years social media have become the fastest way in reaching the public and as a result the effect of the content presented in these media have a strong impact on the public. Hate speech, calls for violence and lynch are spread in different ways and are often treated as news on certain internet news sites. Around 23% of the 68 adjudications made by the CMEM in 2018 concerned discriminatory and hate speech. In 2019, the CMEM's Complaints Commission received 83 complaints, 83% of which referred to the electronic media (Internet portals). 20% (or 12 complaints) were related to hate speech and promoting discrimination on any grounds. According to the findings of the Monitoring report of the 'EU Guidelines for Media Freedom and Media Integrity 2014-2020' for 2017 in all countries of the Western Balkans, journalists' associations or informal groups of journalists are promoting Code of Ethics, but they do not have efficient remedies to enforce changes for the better. This is the area where more efficient measures against hate speech and other type of unethical media behaviour need to be introduced.



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The action takes a holistic approach to media literacy, based on the belief that different stakeholder groups in society with various roles and responsibilities (editors, journalists and other media workers, government institutions, CSOs, citizens) in the sphere of media production and consumption need continuous support in building their capacities to develop a critical stance toward informing, to prevent and refrain from production and dissemination of narratives that are false, offensive, biased, harmful to individuals and groups in society.

The project is fully consistent with the programmatic objectives of CMEM and its efforts to support professionalism in journalism and the media in North Macedonia. The project supports and further expands the activities in addressing issues that have been identified as challenges to objective and unbiased reporting and informing, such as adopting and abiding to the professional and ethical standards in the media, partnership with the Association for Journalists of Macedonia and the Union of Journalists (SSNM) in monitoring and reporting on pressures and threats made against journalists, and further development of professional standards in media work through cooperation, networking, and regular identification and taking responsibility for breaches of the Code of Ethics.

The **target groups** of the project are: at least 50 media outlets in North Macedonia, editors and journalists, CSOs active in the fields of media freedom, freedom of expression, and professional media and journalists' work (some of these include the AJM, SSNM, the Macedonian Institute for Media), the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, the public broadcaster the National Radio-Television, the 5 biggest commercial TV-stations, as well as the citizens of North Macedonia.

Several groups are the final beneficiaries of the project: media outlets in North Macedonia, editors and journalists, CSOs active in the fields of media freedom, freedom of expression, and professional media and journalists' work, the Agency for Audio and Audiovisual Media Services, the public broadcaster the National Radio-Television, as well as the citizens of North Macedonia.

The project has the following objectives:

Project objectives:

The **overall objective** of the project is: Strengthened press freedom and freedom of expression in the media in North Macedonia.

The **specific objective** of the project is: Enhanced self-regulation in the media in North Macedonia.



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The primary issue addressed by the action is the problem of support for freedom of expression through development of ethical and professional standards in the media in the country. The emergence of new media, and particularly the raising influence of social media have exacerbated the problem. The history of political influence in the field of media and the work of journalists is a problem that seriously jeopardizes the objective of ethical reporting of the media in the country. Political influences are effected in many ways - through the ownership structure of the country's media, through more or less direct pressure on the media and journalists, but also on the importance that political elites have for the financial sustainability of the country's media.

CMEM will continue to promote the press complaints tool as a mechanism for identification and a tool for processing of media cases involving violation of the Code of Ethics. Accumulated knowledge and information about specific cases will be presented in case study reports and widely disseminated to various stakeholder groups (journalists and media workers, the authorities, the citizens and CSOs). The wide application of the tool will not only promote greater accountability and self-regulation among the media, but will also contribute to the development of a compendium of knowledge regarding identification and treatment of incidents involving unprofessional and unethical reporting and strengthen the media literacy objectives of the action.

Assignment Objective

The specific objective of the assignment is to support the business development process for CMEM. This activity is described in detail in Activity 1.3.1 – 1.3.3 of the project.

A 1.3.1 Organization of at least five consultation meetings with stakeholders (media, experts, CSOs) regarding CMEM business plan and membership model. (Month 7 – Month 10)

With the increase of CMEM's membership and regular activities, the organization is faced with pressures for expanding its capacities and strengthening sustainability. To support the sustainability of the operations of CMEM, a business plan will be developed, particularly focused on development of a sustainable model for membership fees and diversification of the funding sources of the organization, The business plan will represent a roadmap for expansion and diversification of sources of support for CMEM, and a plan for capacity development of the organization. The process of the development of the business plan will involve CMEM's staff, associates, volunteers, and external collaborators in a process of deliberation and planning. At least five consultative meetings will be organized with relevant stakeholders (media, CSOs such as AJM, experts) to discuss strategies for ensuring sustainability of the organization, potential of implementation of a membership fee model for media-members, support in the development of the business plan).



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A 1.3.2 Organization of two one-day business planning workshops with at least 15 participants from the professional media/journalist organizations, representatives of CMEM's members (the media) and representatives from the bodies of the CMEM (Managing Board, Supervisory Board and the Press Complaints Commission) (Month 7 – Month 8)

For the purpose of the development of the business plan of CMEM, at least two workshops will be organized for members of the CMEM's team and associates related to development of objectives, means and action plan, and development of staff's capacity for implementation of the organization's business plan. Through the workshops organized and at least 5 meetings with relevant stakeholders (A1.3.1), a business plan of the organization will be defined. The first workshop will be devoted to the basic principles of the business plan, while the second workshop will focus more specifically on the process of the business plan development and discussion on strategies and tools for its implementation. At least 15 stakeholders – representatives from professional media/journalist organizations, representatives of CMEM's members (the media) and representatives from the bodies of the CMEM (Managing Board, Supervisory Board and the Press Complaints Commission) will take part in the workshops. The workshop will be moderated by and expert from an EU press council / member of the AIPCE (Alliance of Independent Press Councils of Europe).

A 1.3.3. Development of a Business plan of the CMEM (Month 8 – Month 10)

The business plan, which will be developed in cooperation with experts in the organization and functioning of self-regulatory bodies, will contain a model for implementation of membership fee system, for the media-members of the network of CMEM. The business plan will also contain a strategy for expansion and diversification of the funding sources of the organization and will guide the actions of the organization's team for a period of two years. Throughout the meetings organized with media - existing members of the Council, the project team will engage in promotion of the membership fee model and to ensure interest and cooperation from members regarding this issue. The key assumption behind the introduction of the membership model is that it will not only represent a relevant pillar of sustainability for the organization, but among membership-paying media will support a sense of ownership and stronger engagement for the realization of the goals of the organization, and participation in its activities. The draft version of the business plan will be finalized by month 9 and will be disseminated to relevant stakeholders for review and input. The final version will be completed by Month 10 of project implementation.



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Subject of procurement

Business Plan Development Expert to support the development of the new business plan for CMEM.

No. of expert days: 20

Duties

- Take part in the consultative meetings with the stakeholder (CMEM);
- Analyse all relevant documents provided by the stakeholder;
- Collect information of relevance from stakeholders and other data sources;
- Moderate two 1-day business planning workshops and collect relevant input for plan development;
- Provide a summary of the relevant findings from the workshop and discuss it with the stakeholder;
- Develop draft of the business plan;
- Collect and integrate comments and reviews from key stakeholders and CMEM;
- Produce a final version of new CMEM 5-year business plan and its presentation to the stakeholder.

Competences and previous experience

Qualifications and skills:

University degree in humanities and social sciences, philosophy or law. Masters would be an advantage.

Excellent command of English.

Excellent analytical, writing and reporting skills.

High level of professionalism and ability to work under short deadlines

General professional experience:

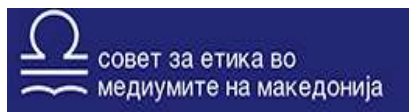
At least 7 years in the field of press freedom, media professionalism and ethics, media self-regulation and media ethics

Experience in project/programme management related to self-regulatory bodies, newsrooms and/or media organizations

Experience in consultancy and/or developing business plan/strategies, especially in the field of media self-regulation and/or complaint handling by media organizations, preferably on an international level.



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Specific professional experience:

At least 3 years of experience in media self-regulation and work of press councils in EU members states or wider.

At least 2 years of experience in management and strategies for sustainable financing of press councils.

Budget:

The total budget for the assignment is 3.600 Euros (gross amount).

The total amount will be paid after completion of the document (Business plan), by the end of November 2021. The Service Provider (CMEM) is obliged to pay the personal tax for the selected bidder according to the tax laws and procedures in North Macedonia.

The details, obligations and the payment process will be defined in the contract concluded between the Service Provider (CMEM) and the selected bidder.

The accommodation and travel costs will be covered by the Service Provider (CMEM).

Required documents

Interested candidates should submit the following documents:

- Declaration letter (Annex attached to this ToR);
- Curriculum vitae (CV), and two professional references attached to the CV
- The usual proof of nationality under the national legislation (passport).

Time frame:

Timeline	Description of the assignment	Output
5 days (by October 15 th 2021)	Preparation for the business plan development process	Brief overview of the initial findings and presentation prepared for the workshops
5 days (until 8 th of November)	Facilitation of two 1-day business planning workshops. The workshops will be held with physical presence.	Overview and summary of the relevant findings from the workshop and their presentation to the stakeholder (CMEM).
8 days (by November 25 th)	Development of the business plan	Business plan drafted and consultations held with the CMEM
2 days (by November 30 th)	Completion of the business plan and presentation of the finalized document.	Final version of the 5-year business plan.