



## NATO STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

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### INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF AUDIENCE RESEARCH IN THE WESTERN BALKAN COUNTRIES

To be supplied to the NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (NATO StratCom COE)

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<b>Issuer</b>	Ms. Sanda Svetoka
<b>Suppliers Response date</b>	May 4, 2020 submitted via e-mail <a href="mailto:tender@stratcomcoe.org">tender@stratcomcoe.org</a> by 23:59 hrs (Eastern European Time zone: UTC +02:00).

## **Invitation to Tender for the Provision of Audience Research in the Western Balkan countries**

You are kindly invited to submit a tender to provide audience research in the Western Balkan countries for the NATO StratCom COE's project.

By participating in this tender you are indicating your acceptance to be bound by the guidelines set out in this letter. We provide below the key details of the NATO StratCom COE requirements, which you should take into account in your response. Please acknowledge via e-mail safe receipt of this letter within two working days together with your confirmation of your intention to tender.

To simplify exchange of information regarding this Invitation to Tender (ITT) please nominate a Bid Manager and relevant contact details: phone and e-mail address.

Please direct any questions regarding the ITT content or process to Ms. Sanda Svetoka. You should not contact other NATO StratCom COE personnel unless directed to do so by the appointed NATO StratCom COE representative. The NATO StratCom COE reserves the right to disqualify and reject proposals from suppliers who do not comply with these guidelines. All questions should be submitted in writing to the e-mail: [sanda.svetoka@stratcomcoe.org](mailto:sanda.svetoka@stratcomcoe.org).

As part of this tender process the NATO StratCom COE makes no obligations in any way to:

- (i) pay any supplier for an ITT response; or
- (ii) award the contract with the lowest price proposal or any Bidder; or
- (iii) accept any ITT information received from suppliers; or
- (iv) include suppliers responding to this ITT, in any future invitations; or
- (v) any other commitment to suppliers whatsoever.

Looking forward receiving your response.

Yours Sincerely,

Ms. Sanda Svetoka  
Senior Expert, Doctrine Concept and Experimentation Branch  
E-mail address: [sanda.svetoka@stratcomcoe.org](mailto:sanda.svetoka@stratcomcoe.org).

Whilst care and attention has been exercised in the preparation of this document, it remains subject to contract and all warranties whether express or implied by statute, law or otherwise are hereby disclaimed and excluded.

These limitations are not intended to restrict continued business discussions between the NATO StratCom COE and suppliers.

Any proposal received by the NATO StratCom COE is subject to contract with the NATO StratCom COE.

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## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. NATO Strategic Communications Centre of Excellence (NATO StratCom COE), based in Riga, Latvia, contributes to the improved strategic communications capabilities within the Alliance and Allied nations. The NATO StratCom COE designs programmes to advance StratCom doctrine development and harmonisation, conducts research and experimentation to find practical solutions to existing challenges, identifies lessons from applied StratCom during operations, and enhances training and education efforts and interoperability.
- 1.2. NATO StratCom COE is running a tender to conduct the research of audiences of six Western Balkan (WB) countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH), Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia. The end product should provide comparative analysis of audience attitudes, beliefs and perceptions in the respective countries by using qualitative and/or quantitative research methods.
- 1.3. The contract will be awarded in two weeks after the announcement of the winner. The contract shall be executed by the end of September 2020.

## 2. Background

Since 2018 the NATO StratCom COE conducts a project that is dedicated to information environment analysis of the Western Balkans (WB), and susceptibility of the WB countries to the hostile information campaigns. Several analytical reports have been developed in the framework of this project. The audience research is foreseen as next step of the project to gain better knowledge of the characteristics of information environment of the WB, as well as identify the potential for hostile actors to influence the public opinion in the WB countries.

## 3. Requirements

- 3.1. Conduct audience research in order to provide both country-specific and region specific (comparative) analysis on the research questions indicated below.
- 3.2. Detailed requirements:
  - 3.2.1. **Develop the methodology on how to research audience in the countries of analysis.** The methodology should employ modern quantitative and/or qualitative research methods and should answer following research questions:
    - 3.2.1.1. To identify media consumption habits;
    - 3.2.1.2. To understand the perceptions of the risks and vulnerabilities at the individual, national and regional level;
    - 3.2.1.3. To identify social/ethnic/religious identities and other variables potentially leading to divisions in the societies and perceptions about their potential to cause conflicts within individual countries and WB region;
    - 3.2.1.4. To understand the perceptions of the country's foreign policy directions, including attitudes towards EU and/or NATO integration, regional cooperation and cooperation with other countries outside WB;
    - 3.2.1.5. To identify the political values and perceptions of the government's role;
    - 3.2.1.6. To identify the resilience to disinformation campaigns that are related to crisis situations like pandemic, migration, nature disasters etc.;
    - 3.2.1.7. To identify which narratives (identified by the NATO StratCom COE's research) resonate with population of the country or specific ethnic specific target groups, as well as identify reasons for level of high or low popularity of those narratives. Identify correlation between level of popularity of those narratives and sources of information respondents are using.
  - 3.2.2. **Conduct the audience research in the countries indicated in the tender.** The Bidder should demonstrate:

- 3.2.2.1. organisational and logistical capabilities, as well as cultural and language knowledge to conduct audience research in all six countries of analysis;
- 3.2.2.2. capability to apply both quantitative and qualitative research methods in all six countries of analysis.
- 3.2.3. **Develop report (in English language)** that would provide comparative analysis, based on the results of the audience research in six WB countries.

#### 4. Reporting

- 4.1. We would like to hold an initial meeting to clarify the methodology and delivery process as soon as the tender has been awarded (via videoconference or other means).
- 4.2. We would like to receive:
  - 4.1.1. the concept of methodology by May 25, 2020.
  - 4.1.2. initial draft of the report (including raw data), by the end of August 2020.
  - 4.1.3. the final draft of the report by the end of September 2020. Considering the restrictions imposed by state authorities due to COVID-19 pandemic, the extension of the deadline is possible. However, it should not exceed November 30, 2020.

#### 5. Deliverables

- 5.1. The tender submission should consist of:
  - 5.1.1. A written proposal for the delivery of the work as listed above (See Section 3.Requirements).
  - 5.1.2. Detailed budget for the delivery of the work (amount of VAT or any other kind of tax must be clearly specified for each budget position and marked as zero where not applicable). It should indicate the budget estimates for:
    - Methodology development;
    - Quantitative and/or qualitative methods proposed for the audience research **for each country**;
    - Development of final report.
  - 5.1.3. Copy of Bidder's Certificate issued by the national Commercial Register. If that is not applicable (for example, the Bidder is an individual), please provide an explanatory statement and a different form of a document confirming your identity and, if possible, permit to engage in a commercial activity.
  - 5.1.4. Evidence of the work experience with similar projects and Statement of previous work experience. The following experience is required for the Bidder to be eligible for selection:
    - 5.1.4.1. The evidence of the development of at least three similar audience research projects (national or international level) in last five years;
    - 5.1.4.2. The evidence of audience research projects that are conducted in at least three WB countries indicated in this ITT;
    - 5.1.4.3. The evidence of the experience with working with international customers or participation in international projects;
  - 5.1.5. Profile of the key personnel to be working on the Contract delivery providing evidence of skills, knowledge and experience (for example, a CV). The Bidder should also indicate the roles of the personnel working on the Contract delivery and the approximate time each of them are planning to spend for this work.
  - 5.1.6. At least two references from former customers (can be in email form with visible contact details, date and time when issued and recipient's address to whom the reference was emailed).

- 5.1.7. Information about any persons or entities that the Bidder may choose to sub-contract for work on the Contract delivery (company or person's name, other relevant credentials (like company registration number, website address, contacts, etc), and a short company profile or person's biography).

## 6. Timetable

General	
Confirmation of bid	Please confirm you have submitted your bid by notifying <a href="mailto:sanda.svetoka@startcomcoe.org">sanda.svetoka@startcomcoe.org</a>
Deadline for submission	<b>23:59 hrs (Eastern European Time zone: UTC +02:00) on May 4, 2020</b>
Contract implementation date	<b>Upon agreement</b>
Questions	Questions arising from this document should be given to Ms. Sanda Svetoka until April 30, 2020
Full contact details	Ms. Sanda Svetoka, <a href="mailto:sanda.svetoka@stratcomcoe.org">sanda.svetoka@stratcomcoe.org</a> , +371 67335460

## 7. Respondent Instructions

7.1. This section provides detailed instructions to be followed in responding to this ITT.

7.2. Response Guidelines.

7.2.1. You will be required to submit a written proposal that complies with the indicated requirements (see Section 5. Deliverables). The proposal should be submitted electronically in PDF format.

7.2.2. **Please deliver the electronic copy to:**

[tender@stratcomcoe.org](mailto:tender@stratcomcoe.org)

**by 23:59 hrs (Eastern European Time zone: UTC +02:00) on May 4, 2020.**

7.2.3. The NATO StratCom COE will disregard any response submitted after the timetable deadline.

7.2.4. Bidders are expected to supply all required information, or clearly state the reasons for being unable to do so.

7.2.5. Any assumptions used in preparing responses should be clearly stated. Any appropriate supporting documents e.g.: brochures, demo videos, presentations, should be included.

7.2.6. If any of the requested documents in the Section 5. Deliverables is not submitted, the Contract Award Committee shall have the right to exclude the applicant from further participation in the procurement.

7.3. Questions relating to clarification of the ITT will only be accepted in writing to NATO StratCom COE representative. Likewise, all responses from the Centre will be written and may also be made available to other suppliers (subject to confidentiality). In the event that any answer materially affects the ITT specification, an amendment of the original requirements will be escalated to all suppliers. The NATO StratCom COE will attempt to answer any questions within one working day of receipt of that request; otherwise it will respond within that timescale notifying you of the estimated time to obtain the information.

7.4. The NATO StratCom COE reserves the right to modify the provisions of this ITT at any time prior to the scheduled date for written responses. Additional scope and requirements can be added. Notification of such changes will be provided to all suppliers.

7.5. Should you wish to propose a deviation from the specification please ensure that you clearly identify and highlight where appropriate in your response.

7.6. All information supplied in this tender to date, any further information supplied during the tender process will remain confidential and available only to the Contract Award Committee members.

## **8. Tender Assessments**

- 8.1. Evaluation Criteria and Process. A set of evaluation criteria has been prepared by the NATO StratCom COE for the evaluation of every Submission. Within each stage an initial evaluation will consider whether or not every instruction and requirement contained within the ITT has been fulfilled.
- 8.2. The evaluation criteria will be based all of the following aspects of the Bidders' proposals (not in order of significance):
- 8.2.1. Commercial
    - 8.2.1.1. Clarity of price (in EUR with VAT and w/o VAT);
    - 8.2.1.2. Competitiveness of price.
  - 8.2.2. Service capability:
    - 8.2.2.1. Capacity to apply both quantitative and qualitative audience research methods in all six countries indicated in ITT;
    - 8.2.2.2. Previous experience with conducting similar projects in the Western Balkans (in at least 3 countries indicated in ITT);
    - 8.2.2.3. Previous experience with developing comparative data analysis;
    - 8.2.2.4. Quality of previously delivered service (based on the evidence provided);
  - 8.2.3. Previous experience in cooperation with national government institutions and international organisations;
  - 8.2.4. Level of compliance with the Requirements, Reporting and Deliverables of the ITT.
- 8.3. You are reminded that through the process the NATO StratCom COE will continually assess all contact with the Bidders' organizations including compliance to the process, presentation. The NATO StratCom COE reserves the rights at its sole discretion to disqualify without further consideration any submission that does not satisfy this basic requirement.

## **9. Briefing for Unsuccessful Participants**

The NATO StratCom COE reserves the right to control the format and content of any such briefing, and to limit it in any way believed by the NATO StratCom COE to be appropriate (which includes, in exceptional circumstances, the right to refuse a briefing without giving any reasons for doing so).

## **10. Contract Details**

- 10.1. Contractual and payment details will be subject to negotiation with the selected supplier.
- 10.2. The NATO StratCom COE reserves the right to modify the scope of this tender, after receiving the bids (including price estimates).