INVITATION TO TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF RESEARCH AND DATA ON A SEGMENT OF AUDIENCES IN 3 TO 5 NATO COUNTRIES

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

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<td>Ms. Vineta Mekone, Senior Expert, NATO StratCom CoE</td>
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<td>June 1, 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).</td>
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Invitation to Tender for the Provision of Research and Data on a Segment of Audience in 3 to 5 NATO Countries

You are kindly invited to submit a tender to conduct a research on the segment of audience in 3 to 5 NATO 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. Vineta Mekone, Senior Expert of the NATO StratCom COE. 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: vineta.mekone@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; 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. Vineta Mekone
Senior Expert, Operational Support Branch
E-mail address: vineta.mekone@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 programs to advance StratCom doctrine development and harmonization, 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 a research on a segment of audience in 3 to 5 NATO countries from different regions of Europe (Eastern, Central-Eastern, Western, Southern, Northern Europe), or Canada or the United States. The number and countries are up to the choice of bidder. The end product should provide comparative analysis of data including demographic data, data of the particular audiences’ attitudes towards security issues, their information sources, opinion leaders and lead to recommendations for strategic communications based on SWOT analysis.

1.3. The contract will be awarded in three weeks after the announcement of the winner. The contract shall be executed by the end of November 2020.

2. **Background**

This NATO StratCom COE’s project aims to analyze the same segment of audience in 3 to 5 different NATO countries. NATO StratCom COE is looking for one agreement with the primary research agency who will coordinate and lead the work of experts in the chosen NATO countries. To have comparable and credible data and analyses we are looking for experts with extended knowledge on the chosen countries’ audiences to be involved.

3. **Requirements**

3.1. The Bidder should possess or have access to cultural, and local and Russian language knowledge to conduct audience research in the identified countries of analysis.

3.2. Conduct a research based on publicly available data on the same segment of audience in 3 to 5 different NATO countries. On the basis of research and subsequent SWOT analysis draw up the recommendations applicable for strategic communications. The segment of audience, research questions will be identified and discussed during the research’s methodology online meeting before signing the contract.

3.3. Detailed requirements:

3.3.1. Publicly available data (statistical, analytical, research data) should be separately identified, analyzed and a tailored research should be done on a previously identified one segment of audience in 3 to 5 different NATO countries.

3.3.2. The segment of audience (group) is identified and agreed on with the Centre’s Senior Expert as well as different aspects of the group which should be analyzed including: media/social media consumption habits; engagement and key influencers on issues related to security, defense, international relations; key hostile, anti-NATO narratives favoured by the group;
main socio-demographic data and history experiences of the group. Additional requirements will be proposed by Centre’s Senior Expert and agreed on before signing the contract.

3.3.3. Basic principles of methodology for data gathering, analysis and research will be proposed by Bidder and discussed and agreed on with Centre’s Senior Expert before signing the contract. The respective online meeting among all involved researchers from 3 to 5 NATO countries and the Centre’s Senior Expert should be set within a week after the winner is announced via e-mail.

3.3.4. The chosen 3 to 5 NATO countries should be from different regions of Europe (Eastern, Central-Eastern, Western, Southern, Northern Europe) or Canada or the United States.

3.3.5. Gathered data should be shared with the Centre on a monthly basis during July 1 – September 31, 2020.

3.3.6. During the data gathering and analysis at least 2 online or in-person meetings among all involved researchers from 3 to 5 NATO countries and the Centre’s Senior Expert should be organized to discuss the progress and necessary changes with regards to collected data, research and recommendations related to the strategic communications.

3.3.7. The expected length of the report is 7000 - 10 000 words and recommendations.

3.3.8. Recommendations should include SWOT analysis and be applicable in the future StratCom efforts.

3.3.9. During November at least 2 online or in-person meetings among all involved researchers from 3 to 5 NATO countries and the Centre’s Senior Expert should be organized to discuss findings of the research, to do SWOT analyses and to draft the recommendations based on the data and the research.

4. Reporting

4.1. We would like to hold an initial online meeting to clarify the methodology and delivery process within two weeks after the winner is announced via the e-mail.

4.2. We would like to have:

4.2.1. Methodology should be agreed on within three weeks from the announcement of the winner via e-mail.

4.2.2. initial draft of the research including all the data by October 16, 2020.

4.2.3. the final draft of research including all the data, SWOT analyses as well as the recommendations by December 4, 2020.

5. Deliverables

5.1. The tender submission should consist of:

5.1.1. A written outline or design of proposed methodology and proposal for the delivery of the work as listed above (See Section 3.Requirements).
5.1.2. Budget for the delivery of the work (amount of VAT or any other kind of tax must be specified), including methodology, data gathering, research and recommendations. It should indicate the budget estimates for each chosen NATO country.

5.1.3. 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:

5.1.3.1. Researches and expertise in audience studies (please provide short summaries of completed projects, including references);

5.1.3.2. Researches and expertise in analysis of information influence activities including disinformation (please provide short summaries of completed projects, including references);

5.1.3.3. The evidence of the experience with working with international customers or participation in international projects;

5.1.4. 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

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<td>Confirmation of bid</td>
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<td>Questions</td>
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7. Respondent Instructions

7.1. This section provides detailed instructions to be followed in responding to this ITT. Included are Response Guidelines and the NATO StratCom COE Contact Information.

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 by 23:59 hrs (Eastern European Time zone) on June 1, 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;
   8.2.1.2. Competitiveness of price;
   8.2.1.3. Diversity of selection of the proposed countries.

8.2.2. Service capability:
   8.2.2.1. Researches and expertise in audience studies;
   8.2.2.2. Researches and expertise in analysis of information activities including disinformation;
   8.2.2.3. Knowledge of culture, languages of chosen 3 to 5 NATO countries and Russian language
   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 organizations;

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 extent of this tender, after receiving the bids (including price estimates).