



Ministry of Finance
Male', Maldives

Terms of Reference

Short-Term Consultant (Firm)

“To Enhance Public Relations, Media Engagement and Digital Communications on Economic Reforms”

Invitation Number: (IUL)13-PMU /13/2024/115

Project: Maldives Competitiveness and Growth Project (P179286)

Loan No./Credit No./ Grant No.: IDA-73050, IDA-E1690

Assignment Title: To Enhance Public Relations, Media Engagement and Digital Communications on Economic Reforms

Reference No: MV-MOF-MV-422455-CS-CQS

A. Background

The Maldives Competitiveness and Growth Project (MCGP, “the project”) is a new 5-year investment project financed by the World Bank for the Government of Maldives (GoM) through Investment Project Financing (IPF) with Performance-Based Conditions (PBCs), declared effective on 23 June 2023 and to be implemented by the Ministry of Finance (MoF). The overall Project Development Objective (PDO) is to strengthen private participation in and financial sustainability of State-Owned Enterprises (SOEs), and the support mechanisms for the competitiveness of small and medium enterprises (SMEs). The project comprises of three components which are as follows:

Component 1: Accelerating SOE Reforms

- i. Sub-component 1.1: Increasing Private Participation in Ownership of Select SOEs
- ii. Sub-component 1.2: Improving Governance of SOEs at the Program and Corporate level
- iii. Sub-component 1.3: Reforming SOE Public Service Obligations

Component 2: Fostering SME Competitiveness

- iv. Sub-component 2.1: Digital Financial Infrastructure
- v. Sub-component 2.2: SME Growth Acceleration Program

Component 3: Project Management

MoF is responsible for formulating and implementing economic policies, managing public finances, and overseeing the fiscal health of the country. The Maldives currently faces significant fiscal challenges, including high public debt, budget deficits, and limited fiscal space, which necessitate urgent and comprehensive economic reforms. These fiscal challenges include

inefficiencies and wastages in the governance and operations of SOEs, provision of indirect subsidies through SOEs on essential goods including fuel and food, national social health insurance scheme “Aasandha” and the broader public health and social protection system, and project management and implementation of Public Sector Investment Program (PSIPs). MoF is working on a comprehensive economic reform agenda to eliminate these market failures, strengthen governance and accountability and enhance the targeting and quality of public services to promote sustainable development and ensure long-term prosperity.

Through MCGP, the GoM seeks to address the issues highlighted above and support the homegrown economic reform agenda through multiple strategic interventions and targeted consultancies. In this regard, one of the key prerequisites for the success of the project and overall economic reform agenda would be to develop and implement a comprehensive Communications Strategy, to alleviate and address the concerns raised by stakeholders proactively and achieve project objectives in a timely manner. The project is thus seeking to utilize the services of a local firm (Consultant Firm) specializing in public and media relations, social media management, website management, and digital content creation to work together with the project’s communications team in alignment with the Government’s economic reform communications strategy to fill in the additional communications capacity required for the economic reform agenda.

B. Objectives

The broad objectives of this Assignment are as follows:

1. Assist in the development and implementation of a strong communications program on economic reforms supported by the project to;
 - a) Mitigate the risks associated with potential public misperceptions,
 - b) Foster a better understanding of the reform objectives,
 - c) Engage stakeholders,
 - d) Build trust, and
 - e) Ensure transparent communication throughout the implementation process
2. Develop, oversee, and implement public relations (PR), media relations, marketing, and outreach strategies on economic reforms, including developing content for social media and digital communications, managing media relations, etc.
3. Coordinate with and support the GoM to align communication efforts from all relevant agencies on economic reforms and enhance the communications capabilities and digital footprint of the GoM on economic reforms supported by the project, through providing capacity building and producing multimedia content and publishing them online and on social media platforms.

C. Scope of Work

1. Develop, oversee, and manage content for the project website, social media platforms, and traditional media channels, including all writings in Dhivehi and/or English (statements,

articles, press releases, opinion editorials, speeches and social media captions) and graphic works required for this Assignment, including a brand identity for all MoF communications.

2. Develop a detailed media and communications protocol outlining clear guidelines for social media utilization, media interactions, and event coordination.
3. Identify and implement on-page and off-page Search Engine Optimization (SEO) to improve the project’s online presence.
4. Manage media inquiries, interview requests and organize and conduct press conferences, editor’s briefings, interviews and other media related activities and events and produce scripts as required.
5. Develop and maintain a network of contacts within the local and international media for press release, interviews and TV and radio appearances. Maintain contacts with industry representatives, special interest groups, media, government organizations, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) and the public, and developing critical knowledge of issues and the related public environment. Work with local media professionals to spread fact-based information about project developments.
6. Collaborate with the project’s Communications Specialist to ensure cohesive and synchronized communications across various channels. Implement audience engagement strategies such as proactive marketing to disseminate information on economic reforms and collaborate with GoM and private parties involved in conducting public relations and marketing campaigns, as needed for the project.
7. Prepare material and personnel for media appearances on radio and TV Channels to disseminate information on private participation and the other SOE reform components of MCGP and ensure that stakeholder views and concerns are heard and addressed by monitoring social media sites, alerts, blogs, and traditional media outlets on related topics, researching and coordinating appropriate responses in a timely and effective manner.
8. Engage Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including Island Councils and Women's Development Committees (WDCs) to ensure that information about economic reforms reaches groups without access to traditional or social media sources.
9. Develop and assist in the implementation of PR and communication policies for conflict resolution and crisis management during the development and implementation of the planned economic reforms.
10. Provide capacity building for relevant GoM staff on media and public relations.

D. Deliverables

The Consultant Firm will be responsible to deliver the following within the duration of their contract:

#	Deliverable	Payment Breakdown (%)
1	Present a detailed work plan for all tasks and phases of work, with specified deadlines, <u>within 1 week of contract effectiveness</u>	5%
2	Develop a content strategy for the project website, social media	10%

	platforms, and traditional media channels, including branding and social media guidelines for MoF, with measurable targets for engagement and reach, <u>within 1 month of contract effectiveness</u>	
3	Develop a detailed media and communications protocol outlining clear guidelines for social media utilization, media interactions, and event coordination, <u>within 1 month of contract effectiveness</u>	10%
4	Develop and disseminate <u>at least 6</u> educational materials* on the benefits of three areas of economic reforms	30% (5% for each educational material)
5	Secure <u>at least 6</u> media appearances on TV, radio or alternative communications channels to disseminate information on <u>at least 3</u> reform components and develop tailored content for each appearance	30% (5% for each media appearance)
6	Conduct <u>at least 1</u> capacity development exercise (workshop or otherwise) for relevant GoM staff on media and public relations	5%
7	Present <u>at least 2</u> performance reports summarizing the performance of engagement strategies and activities, analyzing key metrics related to audience engagement, media coverage, social media reach and interaction, website traffic, and stakeholder feedback	10% (5% for each report)

* Educational material should articulate the specific goals and objectives of the reform, expected impacts and tangible benefits, and should be based on verifiable data, facts and credible research.

E. Reporting & Working Arrangements

The Consultant Firm will report to the MCGP Project Director regularly and share updates at a frequency agreed with the Project Director. The Consultant Firm may also be required to present updates and findings to the MCGP Project Steering Committee and senior officials at MoF.

The Consultant Firm is expected to work in close coordination with the communications team at MoF including the project's Communications Specialist, an international Communications Strategist, the Project Management Unit (PMU), other local and international consultants, and officials from relevant Government agencies. The Consultant Firm is expected to work both off-site and on-site (at MoF), as may be required.

The Consultant Firm shall provide all reports and relevant data and materials, including but not limited to media engagement analyses, social media metrics, content calendars, documents, multimedia assets, and any other records or documentation generated or utilized to fulfill the Assignment.

F. Duration of Services and Payment Terms

The Assignment is expected to take up to 6 months. The Consultant Firm is expected to commence their services in May 2024.

The Consultant Firm will be required to submit a monthly timesheet detailing the work undertaken during that time period.

MoF will be procuring the consultant through funding under the MCGP. Payment of the consultancy firm will be tied to the key deliverables as presented above and paid upon approval by MoF on completion of the deliverables.

G. Qualifications & Experience Requirement

The Consultant Firm should meet the following requirements:

- A team with diverse communications-related skillsets, including professionals with backgrounds in communications, public relations, journalism, digital marketing, graphic design, and multimedia production.
- At least 2 years of demonstrable experience of the firm in providing comprehensive communications services, including in the fields of public relations, media engagement, and digital communications.
- Proven expertise in developing and implementing successful communications strategies and campaigns, including managing content creation, social media management, and media relations.
- Experience working with diverse stakeholders, including government agencies, media outlets, civil society organizations, and the public, to effectively communicate complex topics and initiatives.
- Familiarity with the economic landscape of the Maldives, with an understanding of the challenges and opportunities related to economic reforms and development initiatives, will be an added advantage.
- Experience in handling communications in urgent and emergency situations, with a focus on crisis management and reputation management, will be an added advantage.
- At a minimum, the firm is required to provide detailed resumes of 3 key staff members with the following competencies that will be assigned to this consultancy:

Position	Requirement
1. Public Relations Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree in Communications, Public Relations, Journalism, or related field. • Minimum 3 years of experience in public relations, media relations, journalism or a similar role, preferably with experience in reporting on economic, finance and public development topics. • Experience in developing comprehensive crisis communication protocols and procedures for addressing potential crises. • Experience in designing and delivering workshops or training sessions related to media relations and public speaking. • Strong relationship management, excellent communication, messaging and negotiation skills.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proficiency in both English and Dhivehi languages, with the capability to produce communications materials in both languages as needed for local audiences.
2. Media Outreach Specialist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree in Journalism, Public Relations, Communications or other related field. • Minimum 3 years of experience in journalism, public relations and/or communications. • Experience in strategy development for storytelling, narrative development, journalism and public awareness campaigns. • Experience in organizing and managing press conferences, media briefings, and other media events. • Ability to monitor media trends and adapt strategies to enhance engagement and outreach efforts. • Proficiency in both English and Dhivehi languages, with the capability to produce communications materials in both languages as needed for local audiences.
3. Content Developer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree in Journalism, Public Relations, Communications, Digital Marketing or related field. • Minimum 3 years of experience in content creation, digital media, journalism and/or marketing. • Excellent writing skills with a keen eye for detail, ability to research and produce high-quality content on various topics, proficiency in storytelling and narrative development. • Proficiency in graphics design software with experience in developing different types of digital content. • Proficiency in both English and Dhivehi languages, with the capability to produce communications materials in both languages as needed for local audiences.

H. Selection & Evaluation Criteria

A Consultant will be selected in accordance with the Consultant Qualification Selection (CQS) method set out in the Procurement Regulations of the World Bank. From the firms that have submitted an EoI, the firm with the best qualifications and relevant experience will be selected and invited to submit its technical and financial Proposals for negotiations.

Key Experts will not be evaluated at the shortlisting stage. However, Firms are required to clearly state the proposed position for each Key expert proposed.