

Date: 10 June 2025

Number: 41/2025/LED-RFP

## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **STRATEGIC COMMUNICATIONS PARTNERS FOR INCLUSIVE LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA**

Local Economic Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina

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#### **General Information**

- Project: Local Economic Development in BiH (LED in BiH), P220057/01
- Project period: 1 August 2023 – 31 July 2027
- Contract duration: 15 July 2025 – 15 July 2027
- Country: Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH)
- Implementation: Caritas Switzerland Office in BiH and NIRAS
- Type of contract: Framework Agreement

#### **1. Introduction**

The "Local Economic Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (LED in BiH) project, implemented by Swiss Caritas and NIRAS with support from the Swiss Government, aims to strengthen the capacities and cooperation mechanisms of LED actors, including the public sector, private sector, and civil society. The project fosters inclusive economic planning and implementation processes, enabling stakeholders to develop long-term strategic visions for their regions. By improving the business environment and promoting innovation, the project seeks to enhance economic opportunities and increase incomes for women and men.

The project operates in 11 local government units, organised into two clusters:

- **Cluster 1:** Zenica, Žepče, Tešanj, Dobož, Dobož Jug, Zavidovići, Kakanj, and Teslić.
- **Cluster 2:** Banja Luka, Čelinac, and Prijedor.

Running from August 2023 to July 2027, the project focuses on two outcomes:

**Outcome 1:** Local actors collaborate to improve the business environment and adapt to future challenges.

**Outcome 2:** Local actors implement joint activities to maximise their locality's comparative advantages.

#### **2. Purpose of the Request for Proposals**

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RfP) is to identify and contract qualified service providers to support the implementation of strategic communications, visual identity, and event management services under the "Local Economic Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina" (LED in BiH) project.

The selected partners will contribute to the delivery of inclusive, coordinated, and impactful communication and outreach activities that strengthen the project's visibility and enhance stakeholder engagement. The services are organised into three LOTs:

- **LOT 1: Strategic Communications** – to operationalise the communications strategy, ensure coherent messaging, and manage stakeholder and media engagement;
- **LOT 2: Visual Identity** – to develop a consistent and engaging visual identity and associated promotional materials;
- **LOT 3: Event Management** – to conceptualise, organise, and deliver interactive events that promote knowledge exchange, dialogue, and visibility.

The service providers will work closely with the project team and contribute to the strategic communication goals of the project, including inclusive participation and dissemination of results. Given that the project does not have a dedicated in-house communications function, the selected partners are expected to provide comprehensive and independent support aligned with project needs and timelines.

### 3. Eligibility

Eligible applicants are individual organisations or consortia. In case of a consortia, proposals must demonstrate a clear plan for workload distribution between consortium members. Consortia must designate one Lead Service Provider as the primary point of contact for LED in BiH, ensuring quality assurance across all deliverables and coordinating reporting and compliance with project timelines.

Service Providers may apply for ALL three LOTs but will be awarded a contract for a maximum of TWO LOTs; in case of applying for multiple LOTs clearly specify preferred LOTs in order of priority.

## 4. Instructions for Proposal Submission

### 4.1. Required Documents

Applicants must submit their proposals **in two separate PDF documents**:

#### 1. Technical Proposal (as one PDF file)

- A maximum two-page cover letter explaining the service provider's suitability, relevant experience, and availability.
- Proposed methodology for implementing the assignment.
- At least three references from the past five years, preferably relating to development projects that involved engagement with local government units, the private sector, and civil society organisations.
- CVs of key experts. If subcontractors are foreseen in the delivery of services, their credentials must also be included in the proposal.
- Signed Declaration of Compliance with Exclusion Criteria (Annexe 3b).

#### 2. Signed Financial Proposal

- A summary of prices per deliverable in BAM (please complete Annexe 2).

Offers must be valid for at least **30 days** after submission.

### 3.2 Submission Guidelines

Subject Line:

- RFP: "Public Call for Strategic Communications Partners" – [Your Organisation Name]

Attachments:

- Attachment 1: Technical Proposal – [Your Organisation Name]
- Attachment 2: Financial Proposal – [Your Organisation Name] (Password-protected PDF)

### 3.3 File Format

PDF is preferred. All documents required under the Technical Proposal **must be saved as one PDF file**.

### 3.4 Password for Financial Proposal

Applicants **must not include the password** in the initial submission.

After the technical evaluation is completed, the evaluation committee will request the password from the shortlisted candidates.

### 3.5 Language of the Offer

The offer is submitted in English.

## 5. Selection Criteria

### Key Competencies

#### For LOT 1 (Strategic Communications):

- Proven experience in strategic communications planning for development projects, including crisis management and stakeholder outreach.
- Expertise in multilingual content creation (Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian and English) for diverse audiences (private sector, government, civil society, citizens).
- Proficiency in media monitoring tools and data-driven reporting (KPIs, impact analysis).
- Demonstrated ability to collaborate with design and event teams to align messaging with visual and operational outputs.

#### For LOT 2 (Visual Identity):

- Strong portfolio in branding and graphic design for public-sector or NGO projects, with samples of animations, infographics, and multilingual materials.
- Experience in template development for non-designers (e.g., PowerPoint and Canva) and adherence to strict brand guidelines.
- Familiarity with print production processes (e.g., coordinating with local printers for banners).

**For LOT 3 (Event Management):**

- Track record in organising hybrid AND in-person AND virtual events for 10–200 participants, including workshops, webinars, and conferences.
- Expertise in logistics coordination (venue sourcing, multilingual interpretation, accessibility compliance).
- Proficiency in event technology tools (e.g., MS Teams or Zoom Webinars).
- Experience in post-event impact evaluation (e.g., survey design, feedback collection).

**Cross-Cutting Competencies for ALL LOTS:**

- Knowledge of Bosnia and Herzegovina's socio-economic context.
- Ability to work within tight deadlines and adapt to project needs.
- Commitment to gender equity and social inclusion in all outputs.
- Fluency in both the spoken and written languages of BiH (B/C/S) and English is required.

**Key Staff Requirements:**

Proposals must include qualified personnel with relevant experience and skills to successfully deliver the services described under the Terms of Reference. The following minimum requirements apply to key experts across the three LOTs:

**- Education:**

A university degree in a relevant field such as communications, public relations, journalism, marketing, public administration, economics, political science, or a related discipline.

**- Experience:**

- o A minimum of 10 years of professional experience in the relevant LOT area (strategic communications, visual identity, or event management).
- o Demonstrated experience in working with development projects, preferably those involving collaboration with local government units, the private sector, and civil society organisations in Bosnia and Herzegovina.
- o Experience in planning and delivering communication activities that promote gender equality and social inclusion will be considered a strong asset.

## 6. Award Criteria

The offers will be evaluated based on the quality and price criteria. The quality criteria weigh 60% and will assess the following criteria:

- Quality of the proposed methodology,
- Experience of the applicant in key tasks listed in the Terms of Reference under Scope of Work (Annexe 1),
- Qualification of foreseen personnel.

Weighing of the price criteria is 40%.

## 7. Exclusion Criteria

All applicants must sign and submit the **Declaration of Compliance with Exclusion Criteria** (Annexe 3b).

## **8. Timeline**

### **7.1. Deadline for Submission**

Technical and financial proposals must be emailed to [led@caritas.ch](mailto:led@caritas.ch) by 23:59 on Tuesday, 1 July 2025. Late submissions or submissions with missing components will be disqualified.

### **7.2 Selection**

The shortlisted applicants will be invited to an online or in-person interview.

### **7.3 Contract Start**

The expected start date of the contract is 15 July 2025.

## **9. Reference Documents**

**Annexe 1:** Terms of Reference for Strategic Communications Partners for Inclusive Local Economic Development in Bosnia and Herzegovina

**Annexe 2:** Financial Proposal Template

**Annexe 3a:** Exclusion Criteria\_BHS

**Annexe 3b:** CACH\_IC\_Declaration\_Exclusion\_Criteria