

REQUEST FOR Communication Expert

Date:	11 April 2021
Campus:	Beirut
Title:	Communication Expert
Reference Number:	
Project:	Equality for Everyone: Gender Reform from Grassroots to Government
Award Number:	S-NEAAC-17-GR-1050
Sponsoring Agency	U.S. Middle East Partnership Initiative

Dear Sir/Madam,

The Lebanese American University (LAU) invites you to participate in the tender for the provision of professional services as detailed in the attached document.

Kindly submit your bid as per detailed instructions and within the set deadline. Only bids submitted in conformity with the requirements of this tender will be considered.

LAU reserves the right to accept or reject all or any part of the quotation submitted.

This tender includes two sections: Section A detailing the solicited services, and Section B detailing the proposal submission method.

For inquiries or regrets, please respond back to the provided email address within the set period for clarifications. LAU reserves the right to amend or cancel this tender at any time.

Respectfully,

Section A – Solicited Services

A1. Organizational Information

The Lebanese American University (LAU) is an American institution of higher education that has been operating in Lebanon since 1924, with initial roots as the first school for girls in the Ottoman Empire. Committed to serving Lebanon, the Arab world and beyond, LAU offers diverse academic opportunities in the fields of arts and sciences, business, engineering, architecture and design, pharmacy, medicine and nursing. The university is accredited by the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), and many of its academic programs have received accreditation from field specific organizations. LAU operates in two campuses, one in Beirut and another in Byblos.

The Arab Institute for Women (previously Institute for Women’s Studies in the Arab World) at the Lebanese American University was established in 1973 to focus on advancing women’s empowerment and gender equality through research, education, development programs, and outreach at the national, regional and international levels.

A2. Project Synopsis

This project is funded by the U.S. Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) for the purpose of strengthening the relationship between existing civil society organizations and elected officials to increase government accountability and impact reform on gender related issues specifically parental leave policies.

A3. Project Objective

The project’s overall objective is to promote universal parental leave and progressive childcare policies among Lebanese working parents as an entry point to achieving greater gender equality in Lebanon.

This request for proposal responds to the third objective of the project, formulated as follows: Improved attitudes related to shared childcare responsibilities and parental leave within Lebanese families and the Lebanese community

A4. Scope of Required Services

The communication agency who will be hired is expected to create a communication plan according to the advocacy plan already created. The communication plan will use a massive online and offline media presence and will aim at promoting the draft bill and the policy brief produced and will be published within the context of objective one and the successes achieved under objective two.

This activity shall be undertaken for the purpose of creating and launching a national advocacy campaign with a creative communication plan to positively influence community’s knowledge and attitudes concerning parental leave and childcare responsibilities; development practices have proved that even if the legislative environments are enabling, communities’ attitudes need to be addressed in order for change to happen on a societal level. This campaign will center around one or two social media hashtags that will be developed released over Twitter and Facebook. Inspired by the #MeToo campaign, release a social media initiative (name and hashtag to be used will be decided on at a later stage with hired experts), that will ask users across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter to tag the Institute in their own personal stories related to issues of childcare and parental leave policies in their places of work. The social media campaign will also include a series of infographic video clips, no longer than 2 minutes, exploring the issues raised by the testimonials in Activity 1. These videos will tell the story of our social media campaign, beginning first with the exploratory testimonials and slowly building into the tens and hundreds of testimonials gathered under the #hashtag. In order to reach to the largest segment of the Lebanese public, the campaign will not be limited to social media and will use creative campaigning strategies. The implementation of the communication plan will be supported by the AiW at LAU through the team working on the project and the commissioned experts.

(The advocacy expert and the company who will be producing the videos will be selected and commissioned by LAU separately). All coordination related to the tasks involving other commissioned experts will be conducted through The AiW at LAU.

A5. Expected Deliverables

The expert shall design and support in the launching of a national advocacy campaign with a creative communication plan to positively influence community’s knowledge and attitudes concerning parental leave and childcare responsibilities. Number of experts and gender-focused CSOs will be engaged to become partners in the national advocacy campaign to promote legal gender reform in Lebanon, specifically focusing on parental leave policies in the country.

The offeror is expected to provide the following deliverables

Task	Deliverable	Terms and Conditions	Delivery Schedule	Quantity
Develop and implement a communication plan	The communication expert/company shall submit a communication plan after consulting with the AiW team, the company who will be creating the videos and the advocacy expert on the activities that need to be implemented.	<p>The national advocacy campaign need to be finalized by the end of July 2021</p> <p>Selected consultant must take into account stakeholder’s recommendations in the process of developing the communication plan.</p> <p>The expert/company shall continue supporting the AiW throughout the creation of the materials and the implementation of the campaign.</p> <p>The expert shall be supporting in the implementation of the social media and media campaigns through (posting 5 videos, 10 posters inclusive of a hashtag) monitoring what needs to be posted and when. In addition, the expert shall be supporting when feedback is requested on some comments on social media. The AiW team will handle posting on social media based on the communication plan created.</p> <p>Selected consultant shall include in the communication plan the relevant tools to be used, the target audience, stakeholders and a hashtag specific to the campaign.</p> <p>Selected consultant shall submit all developed materials to AIW.</p> <p>A first draft must be submitted for initial review by the AiW and final</p>	<p>The expert shall submit a draft 2 weeks after signature of the service agreement and a final draft 1 week after receipt of all the comments.</p> <p>The expert shall support the AiW during the implementation of the national advocacy campaign.</p>	<p>One communication plan</p> <p>One report submitted after the finalization of the national advocacy campaign.</p>

		<p>draft must be submitted based on AIW's comments and feedback.</p> <p>The documents shall be in English and shall be submitted electronically to LAU.</p> <p>The expert shall abide by LAU's Visual and editorial guidelines.</p>		
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A6. Period of Performance

The selected offeror will perform the services starting May 2021 to be completed no later than July 2021

Work may only start after LAU issues a purchase order.

A7. Location of Performance

All services must be completed at the following location: Deliverables to be submitted electronically to AiW.

Section B – Proposal Submission

B1. Deadline for Submission and Schedule

Proposals, as per set requirements henceforth, are required no later than 27 April 2021 15:00hrs (Beirut time).

When proposals are due by email, the system-generated timestamp will be considered the time of submission.

B2. Changes to this Tender

LAU reserves the right to cancel this tender at any time.

Such cancellation may be made by through a notice at the same site where the tender was released.

Furthermore, LAU reserves the right to modify this tender at any time prior to the submission deadline. A public notice will be released to that effect as well and LAU may consider, up to the discretion of the University, an extension of the deadline for the proposals submission.

B3. Eligibility of Applicants

Applicants to this request for proposals may be:

- Individuals;
- Single organization;
- Consortium of organizations;
- Group of individuals.

All bidders must ensure that at the time of the submission of their proposal they are not bankrupt, suspended, debarred, sanctioned, and/or subject to legal proceedings that may affect their course of business or their insolvency. Offerors/bidders with proven conflict of interest will be disqualified.

Individual applicants must clearly indicate their Ministry of Finance (MOF) Tax ID number and provide a copy of their registration at the MOF, specify their full street address, phone number and submit a copy of their ID. Firms must present a copy of their commercial registration, commercial circular and VAT certificate as applicable.

Organizations must present a copy of their commercial registration and VAT certificate as applicable.

Other documents are required.

- Most updated CV
- Cover letter outlining relevant experience and qualifications
- Financial offer in USD in PDF format duly signed, dated and stamped by the service provider, with detailed cost breakdown per deliverable.
- Filled-in biodata sheet

B4. Required Qualifications

LAU is looking for qualified eligible applicants who demonstrate the following experience:

- Masters degree in relevant field of study (law, legal studies, gender studies, labor...) with proven track records of projects/reports/consultancies.
- At least 5 years of experience working on advocacy and campaigning issues preferably related to gender
- Demonstrated experience in developing and conducting gender sensitive campaigns
- Demonstrated experience in communications and advocacy campaigns
- Proven proficiency in spoken and written English and Arabic
- Experience working with US funded projects is desirable
- Excellent communication skills
- Understanding of the Lebanese legal framework and gender context is essential

B5. Proposal Requirements, Submission & Language

The offeror is expected to present two proposals separately, a technical one, and a distinct financial one (each proposal through its separate submission). The technical proposal must **not** contain any budgetary or financial information. The financial proposal must be put on official letterhead of the offeror and duly signed and stamped. The financial proposal must include all information confirming the eligibility of the offeror including the Ministry of Finance Tax Number, VAT Number, registration number and date and any other documents listed under B3 as applicable. The financial proposal must clearly show costs distinctly and clearly related to Taxes, VAT, overheads, etc.

Only one offer may be submitted by a single offeror.

All proposals must be developed in English unless otherwise clearly specified under particular sections.

The proposals must be sent as following (applicable as ticked only):

- Electronically by email as per instructions under B6 and B7

B6. Technical Proposal Requirements

The technical proposal must include at least the following documents, properly paged, with a cover page placed on official letterhead:

- CV of offeror (if individual applicant(s))
- Detailed technical proposal covering the following areas:
 - Background
 - Proposed Implementation Methodology
 - Monitoring and Evaluation
 - Timeline
 - Overview of Deliverables
 - Company Profile
 - Team Qualifications
 - Organizational Chart reflecting team working on the project
 - Overview of Relevant and Demonstrated Past Experience
 - Risks and Contingency Plans
 - Other requirements as specified here:
- Sample work completed with at least three other clients;
- Three independent references including names, contacts (phone and email), position, organization name, and summary of work completed for each reference.

- Copy of the MOF registration;
- Copy of the commercial registration (firms);
- Copy of the VAT registration (firms).

Submission instructions of the technical proposal (ticked as applicable):

- For electronic submissions
 - 1- The technical proposal must be bound into a single PDF file with a cover page on official letterhead, duly signed and stamped on the cover page by an authorized signatory. The technical proposal must not include any financial information related to the costing of the assignment.
 - 2- The PDF file must be named: Technical Proposal – Company Name/Expert Name – Title (as per cover page of this RFP).
 - 3- The PDF file must be submitted in a separate email to the designated email address with the following subject: Technical Proposal – Company Name/Expert Name – Title

B7. Financial Proposal Requirements

The financial proposal must include at least the following documents, properly paged, with a cover page placed on official letterhead:

- Bio-data sheet for individual(s) consultant as per required form
- Detailed financial proposal with breakdown of costs per unit, reflecting clearly and distinctly any applicable taxes;

Submission instructions of the financial proposal (ticked as applicable):

- For electronic submissions, Applicable, RFP allows electronic submission:
 - 1- The financial proposal must be bound into a single PDF file with a cover page on official letterhead, duly signed and stamped on the cover page by an authorized signatory.
 - 2- The financial offer must clearly indicate the validity of the offer as per terms of this request for proposal;
 - 3- The PDF file must be named: Financial Proposal – Company Name – Reference Number (as per cover page of this RFP).
 - 4- The PDF file must be submitted in a separate email to the designated email address with the following subject: Financial Proposal – Company Name – Reference Number

The proposals must be submitted to the following email: vacancy.proc@lau.edu.lb

B8. Costing

All costs must be presented in USD, As reflected earlier, offerors who are subject to VAT should clearly and separately reflect the VAT in their financial proposal. Payment will be made via bank transfer.

Errors in the budget are the sole responsibility of the bidder and may result in disqualifications. Alterations to the bid after submission are not allowable. LAU reserves the right to request clarifications as needed.

All costs must be reasonable, realistic, allowable and allocable to the work being undertaken and based on demonstrated daily rates as proven through a record of salary history/past performance (bio-data sheet).

If the offeror intends to offer any discount or special price, such offers must be clearly made at the proposal stage containing the financial proposal only.

LAU will not cover the cost of any pre-award costs related to the preparation of proposals under this bid and therefore any offeror presenting a financial offer requesting the coverage of pre-award costs will be rejected.

Technical elements that are not costed in the financial proposal will be considered as free of charge. LAU reserves the right to reject the offer. The financial offer must clearly reflect and detail each deliverable distinctly and separately.

B9. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated as follows:

- 1- Administratively for compliance and eligibility, and completeness of the overall offer, and reference checks as appropriate and applicable. Offerors who are not deemed eligible will not be given the chance to proceed to the technical and/or financial evaluation;
- 2- Technically for merit, completeness of all tasks and deliverables, feasibility of approach (if required), timeline, and meeting the required qualifications and capacity;
- 3- Financially for completeness, allowability, reasonableness, comparison to other eligible and qualified bidders, comparison to LAU's financial expectation.

LAU will make the final award based on:

Best value for money combining demonstrated and proven technical merit with cost effectiveness. LAU reserves the right to award to the offeror that does not have the lower bid if there is proven higher benefit to LAU;

Lowest Price

B10. Questions and Clarifications

For inquiries or regrets, you may reach out to the following:
equality4everyone@lau.edu.lb ;

No offeror shall communicate directly with LAU staff concerning this request for proposal. All communications must be in writing, within the open period for questions, and to the specified email only.

LAU will not hold a pre-bid meeting.

All questions must be received by 23 April 2021 at 2 p.m. Questions sent after the deadline will not be addressed.

Answers to the questions will be shared with all bidders if there is any additional and relevant information.

B11. Proposal Validity and Withdrawals

Proposals must be valid for at least: 60 days.

Offerors may withdraw their bids at any time after submission by submitting a written notice to the address specified under section B10. Nonetheless, offerors may not change or edit their proposal after submission even if the proposal is submitted way earlier than the deadline.

B12. Late Submissions

Proposals submitted after the official deadline as set in this document will not be considered and will be deemed ineligible and rejected.

B11. Award

LAU may award one or multiple offerors. LAU also reserves the right to break down the deliverables and make a partial award to an offeror based on a partial list of services. Accordingly, financial offers must clearly reflect each deliverable separately by presenting a clear breakdown of costs in the financial proposal for each deliverable distinctly. Only shortlisted/selected offerors will be contacted. LAU will make an award in writing only. LAU expects to make an award within the validity period. Additional documents may be required prior to award to demonstrate proof of eligibility.

B12. Terms and Conditions

LAU will apply the specific terms and conditions to any resulting service agreement out of this tender based on the sponsoring agency requirements and regulations.

It is worth noting that the service provider has no direct communication with the sponsoring agency during implementation and LAU is considered the source of direction, guidance and decisions only.

All information submitted by offerors under this tender is considered confidential as per LAU's applicable policies and procedures and will not be released publicly.

Any interference by an offeror in the tender process at any stage whether to influence or alter a decision making process will result in immediate disqualification of the offeror.

LAU performs business related to this tender in writing only and therefore, any communication related to this tender, received proposals, and resulting decisions are communicated solely in writing.

Standard Mandatory Provisions. Consistent with 2 CFR 200.113, the non-federal entity must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) for the Department of State, with a copy to the cognizant Grants Officer, all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or illegal gratuities potentially affecting the Federal award. Sub recipients must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the OIG and to the prime recipient (pass-through entity) all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or illegal gratuities potentially affecting the Federal award. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 “Remedies for Noncompliance”, including suspension or debarment. 4 Forward disclosures to: U.S. Department of State Office of Inspector General P.O. Box 9778 Arlington, VA 22219 Phone: 1-800-409-9926 or 202-647-3320 Website: <https://oig.state.gov/hotline>].

Publication for Professional Audience. Any publications or articles resulting from the award must acknowledge the support of the Department of State and include a disclaimer of official endorsement as follows: “This [article] was funded [in part] by a grant from the United States Department of State. The opinions, findings and conclusions stated herein are those of the author[s] and do not necessarily reflect those of the United States Department of State”. The non-Federal entity must ensure that this disclaimer be included on all brochures, flyers, posters, billboards, or other graphic artwork that are produced under the terms of the award.

Branding and Marking Strategy. The Recipient shall recognize the United States Government’s funding for activities specified under this award at the project site with a graphic of the U.S. flag accompanied by one of the following two phrases based on the level of funding for the award: 1) Fully funded by the award: ‘Gift of the United States Government’, 2) Partially funded by the award: ‘Funding provided by the United States Government’. Exemptions from this requirement may be allowable but must be agreed to in writing by the Grants Officer.

All programs, projects, assistance, activities, and public communications to foreign audiences, partially or fully funded by the Department, should be marked appropriately overseas with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity. The requirement does not apply to the Recipient’s own corporate communications or in the United States.

The Recipient should ensure that all publicity and promotional materials underscore the sponsorship by or partnership with the U.S. Government or the U.S. Embassy. The Recipient may continue to use existing logos or program materials; however, a standard rectangular U.S. flag must be used in conjunction with such logos.

The U.S. flag may replace or be used in conjunction with the Department of State seal, the U.S. embassy seal, or other DOS program logos.

Sub non-Federal entities and subsequent tier sub-award agreements are subject to the marking requirements and the non-Federal entity shall include a provision in the sub non-Federal entity agreement indicating that the standard, rectangular U.S. flag is a requirement.

In the event the non-Federal entity does not comply with the marking requirements as established in the approved assistance agreement, the Grants Officer Representative and the Grants Officer must initiate corrective action with the Non-Federal entity.

As a condition of receipt of this assistance award, the U.S. Flag and MEPI logo must be included in a prominent or easily visible place on all materials published or mass produced under this award.

All materials produced pursuant to the award, including training materials, materials for recipients or materials to communicate or promote with foreign audiences a program, event, project, or some other activity under this agreement, including but not limited to invitations to events, press materials, event backdrops, podium signs, etc. must be marked appropriately with the standard U.S. flag in a size and prominence equal to (or greater than) any other logo or identity.

In the event the recipient does not comply with the marking requirements as established in the approved assistance agreement, the Grants Officer Representative and the Grants Officer must initiate corrective action.

In the event that any public communications are produced, funded by the Department of State, in which the content has not been approved by the Grants Officer, the communication must contain the following disclaimer:

“This study/report/audio/visual/other information/media product is made possible by the generous support of the American people through the United States Department of State. The contents are the responsibility of [insert Recipient name] and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of State or the United States Government.”