TERMS OF REFERENCE AND TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

European communication company to promote EaP innovation ecosystems and startups in European media outlets

1. General information

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| **Assignment name** | Provision of communication services for the EU4Innovation East project |
| **Beneficiary** | Expertise France – EU4Innovation East project |
| **Country** | Armenia, Moldova and Ukraine |
| **Duration** | 1 April 2026 – 31 April 2028 |

1. Context and justification of the need

EU4Innovation East is a regional project enhancing the competitiveness of the startup ecosystems in five Eastern Partnership (EaP) countries: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, the Republic of Moldova and Ukraine. At its core is a comprehensive strategy to foster high-performance incubators, expand funding and market opportunities, strengthen community ties and amplify the visibility of EaP startups. Through strategic co-financing, capacity building, regulatory support, and a commitment to gender equality, EU4Innovation East promotes a sustainable innovation landscape. By amplifying regional achievements and deepening cross-border connections, the project lays the groundwork for impactful growth. The EU4Innovation East project is implemented by Expertise France, funded by the European Union and co-funded by the French government.

Armenia, Ukraine, and Moldova are emerging innovation hubs in Eastern Europe, with vibrant startup ecosystems and growing contributions to the global technology landscape. To strengthen their international positioning, there is a need to increase visibility in European media outlets, highlight success stories, and promote cross-border collaboration.

1. Objectives

### General objective

To showcase and promote the achievements of EaP innovation ecosystems and startups in European media outlets.

### Specific objectives

* Enhance the visibility of innovation ecosystems and startups from Armenia, Ukraine, and Moldova in European media.
* Position these countries as dynamic contributors to Europe’s innovation and tech landscape.
* Support international partnerships, investments, and collaborations through strategic media outreach.
* Promote narratives of creativity, high potential and regional cooperation.

1. Description of the assignment

### 4.1. Planned activities

The service provider must provide the following activities:

### Media and outreach plan

Develop a comprehensive media and outreach plan targeting European outlets:

* Identify the relevant audiences with clear criteria for selection and segmentation.
* Draft the main narratives and messages for each audience
* Produce diverse content to maximize reach and engagement
* Include clear monitoring and evaluation with relevant metrics and KPIs

### Content Development and Dissemination

* Develop and disseminate compelling narratives, press releases, and feature stories that spotlight the achievements of startups and innovation ecosystems in Armenia, Ukraine, and Moldova, while also framing their collective strengths as a dynamic regional innovation hub. Content will emphasize both individual country success stories and the broader Eastern Partnership innovation ecosystem, positioning the region as a collaborative, high-potential contributor to Europe’s technology landscape.
* Secure consistent media coverage in top-tier European publications, online platforms, and broadcast outlets by proactively pitching stories, arranging interviews, and leveraging partnerships. Coverage will highlight both national achievements (Armenia, Ukraine, Moldova) and regional innovation narratives.
* Provide dynamic coverage of the participation of startups and delegations from Armenia, Ukraine, and Moldova at leading European tech events (e.g., VivaTech, Web Summit, ChangeNOW, Slush). The company should provide pre-event media briefings, press releases and post-event impact articles. Coverage will ensure visibility in both European media and digital platforms.
* Organize 2 journalists visits to Ukraine (one per year) to strengthen media presence and authentic storytelling about the country’s innovation ecosystem, ensuring curated itineraries with startup showcases, ecosystem tours, and meetings with founders, investors, and policymakers, while also managing all logistics such as travel arrangements, accommodation, meals, venue booking, interpreters, and on-site coordination. Each visit will be supported by pre-visit briefing packs, press kits etc.
* Provide multilingual content adaptation (English, French, German, etc.) to ensure resonance across diverse audiences.
* Monitor and evaluate media impact, providing regular reports and recommendations.

### Anticipated deliverables

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| **Deliverables** | **Estimated number of units** |
| 1. Media outreach plan | 1 Media outreach plan including a database of priority European media outlets, key journalists, core narrative pillars, editorial calendar, KPIs etc |
| 1. Drafted press releases, feature stories, articles | 12 – Moldova  12 – Armenia  12 – Ukraine  6 – regional focus |
| 1. Secured media coverage | At least 3 media mentions for each piece of content drafted (at least 126 mentions total) |
| 1. Coverage of delegations’ participation at major EU tech events (3 events per year) | At least 3 media engagements per event |
| 1. Journalists’ visits to Ukraine | 2 visits with at least 3 journalists per visit |
| 1. Yearly reports on the execution of the campaign. | 2 |

### 4.3. Coordination

The service provider shall designate a single contact person for project implementation purposes.

A designated contact point within the Communication Department of the EU4Innovation East project will be assigned for coordination with the service provider on behalf of Expertise France.

A launch meeting shall be held three days after the contract award has been notified.

Close collaboration must take place with the representatives from the Communication Department of the EU4Innovation East project from assignment preparation right up to completion. Furthermore, regular exchanges must take place with the representatives of the Communication Department from the EU4Innovation East project on assignment progress and any difficulties that may be encountered.

1. Place, duration and terms of performance

Implementation period: 1 April 2026 – 31 April 2028

1. Qualifications and experience

The contracted company should have a proven history in successfully providing similar services, as following:

* Minimum of **5 years of demonstrated experience** in international communications, media relations as well as in content development and multilingual adaptation, ensuring resonance across diverse audiences.
* A strong track record of securing coverage in top-tier European outlets and managing cross-border campaigns.
* Proven capacity to organize and coordinate logistics for journalist visits and event participation, including travel, accommodation, and on-site support.
* Established networks with European media and familiarity with the innovation and startup ecosystem in Eastern Europe.

1. Application documents

The application and tender documents as well as all correspondence and documents relating to this consultation must be written in English.

In support of their offer, candidates must submit a file consisting of the following documents:

* A proof of a legal identity form;
* The expression of interest form and his appendices, the declaration of honour on exclusion criteria and absence of conflict-of-interest template and the identification sheet of a third party;
* The attached GDPR compliance verification form, used to verify that the bidder has implemented appropriate technical and organisational measures such that data processing complies with relevant data protection laws and regulations (GDPR and French data protection legislation), thereby guaranteeing the rights of data subjects;
* The draft contract, including the candidate's financial offer, duly completed, dated and signed.
* A technical offer comprising:
  + CVs of the experts designated for the implementation of the activities (specify);
  + The company should present a portfolio or corporate profile demonstrating at least 15–20 media placements in top-tier European outlets within the past year, alongside evidence of delivering multilingual content campaigns and supporting participation at major European tech events. To validate this expertise, it must provide case studies or references from at least three comparable projects in innovation, technology, or international development, together with samples of published coverage and documented KPIs such as audience reach, engagement metrics, and sentiment analysis. In addition, the company should show capacity to manage complex logistics for international delegations and journalist visits, proven by the successful organization of at least two large-scale media or stakeholder visits in the past three years.
* A detailed financial offer, including:
  + a breakdown of costs presented as a unit price schedule.
* The financial offer must also include all associated costs, such as travel, accommodation, materials, and any other expenses necessary for the successful implementation of the assignment:

The documents requested above are mandatory. If missing, the tender submitted will not be compliant and will therefore be rejected.

Electronic submission via the French government procurement platform at <https://www.marches-publics.gouv.fr/?page=Entreprise.EntrepriseAdvancedSearch&AllCons&id=2863777&orgAcronyme=s2d> is mandatory. Any submission via other means will be rejected

Deadline for submission: **March 13, 2026**

The period of validity of the tenders submitted is fixed at 120 calendar days from the deadline for submission of tenders.

1. Evaluation and selection

Expertise France will first check the eligibility of the applications and their ability to provide the service. Finally, it will evaluate the offers according to the following criteria:

* Criterion 1: Technical value (70%)
* Criterion 2: Price (30%)

The technical value of submitted applications will be assessed based on the following evaluation criteria, with a total of 70 points.

* The quality of work reflected in the company’s portfolio outlining the successful provision of communication services [35 points];
* Professional qualifications of the team experts participating in the project, evaluated according to their CVs. [15 points];
* Familiarity with the innovation and startup ecosystem in Eastern Europe [10 points];
* Established connections with top-tier European media outlets [10 points].

The applicants must achieve a minimum score of 70 percent in technical value in order to qualify for further consideration.

Expertise France may, if it deems necessary, open negotiations with all or some of the tenderers and will conclude the contract with the entity that submitted the best-rated tender in the light of these criteria.