

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Strong Cities Network – Online Extremism Index

About ISD

ISD is a global counter-extremism organisation dedicated to powering new solutions to extremism and polarisation. For 10 years, we have responded to the rising challenge of extremist movements and the ideologies that underpin them, delivering cutting-edge programmes built from world-leading expertise in communications and technology, education, grassroots networks, knowledge and research, and policy advice.

As a non-profit organisation with teams in London, Beirut, Toronto and Washington D.C., ISD enjoys strategic partnerships with the world's leading technology companies and supports more than a dozen prominent governments and institutions in stemming the rise of violent extremism and hate.

About the Strong Cities Network (SCN)

The Strong Cities Network (SCN) is a global network of mayors, policy-makers, and practitioners, building social cohesion and community resilience to counter violent extremism in all its forms. The SCN comprises more than 120 member cities, each with specific lessons, practice or challenges surrounding violent extremism. It serves as a platform for communities, countering violent extremism (CVE) professionals and local political leaders to connect with their counterparts around the world to learn from one another's experience to inform and develop their own local practice.

In just over three years, ISD's SCN team has delivered more than 70 global events and capacity building workshops, reaching over 4,000 practitioners, 500 city officials, 100 mayors, and a dozen national ministers and senior politicians from over 61 countries. Local leaders, as result of participation in SCN, have begun to take ownership of CVE efforts by working more closely with civil society and national governments. This increased ownership however requires an accurate understanding of local indicators of extremism or terrorism, which in today's digital world must be based on a mix of online and offline indicators.

Project context

The SCN has funding of **up to a maximum of \$70,000 USD** for the creation of a bespoke data analysis function to capture, geo-locate and analyse online extremist-related content at regional and local levels (hereby referred to as an "online extremism index").

This capability will be deployed in support of on-the-ground capacity-building work taking place in Sub-Saharan Africa, the Western Balkans and South Asia. It is intended to provide insight into the nature and quantity of extremist and hateful speech on key social media platforms in each region and will assess key narratives, geographical concentration and provide some network mapping. Content, platforms and language processing needs will

need to be able to cater to each region. In the Western Balkans, this will be highly localised to the municipal level, aiming to profile the nature and quantity of extremist and hate speech in North Macedonia, with a focus on Kumanovo and Skopje. In South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, it will aim to provide a broader regional assessment of extremist/hate speech. For indicative purposes, Bangladesh/India and Kenya/Tanzania/Nigeria/Cameroon are key geographies in South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa respectively, to which the findings and analysis of the regional indices will need to be relevant.

The development of this capability and analysis is designed to inform a comprehensive programme of work taking place under the SCN, which will include the identification of 3-4 strategic pilot cities in each region. This work will identify the key infrastructural, policy and training needs for municipalities to be able deliver effective local prevention activities in partnership with civil society organisations and key civic stakeholders.

Mayors, city-level policymakers and local community stakeholders have a deep understanding of the drivers and risks related to violent extremism in their own communities but too often have an incomplete picture of the nature and extent of online risks that may emanate from and/or affect their own towns and cities. The development of the online extremism index will aim to bridge this gap, with findings informing how the SCN develops and directs its offline capacity-building efforts.

Scope of work

ISD is seeking to contract an expert technology partner to produce a range of outputs that will contribute towards the delivery of an Online Extremism Index to assess the nature and extent of extremist and hate speech online in three critical global regions.

The Online Extremism Index will need to be used in multi-lingual contexts, draw upon a broad array of online and, where possible, offline data sources and produce meaningful analysis for city level practitioners using data visualisation.

ISD will take the lead in communicating the findings to local level practitioners via its existing contacts, including briefing local level stakeholders, drawing upon the partner for support and clarification where needed. Rigorous attention will be paid to ethical practice and guidance governing the sharing of findings beyond ISD and project partners.

Working in close cooperation with the SCN team, the successful contractor will need to produce, in priority order, the following key deliverables across a 14-month project timeframe, completed by the end of September 2020:

- a) The production of 1 x Online Extremism City Profile with a focus on collecting and analysing data relevant to a municipality based in the Western Balkans. Data should be collected in real-time with a comprehensive analysis provided on two occasions: once at the project commencement to serve as a baseline, and then on a second occasion towards the end of the project to serve as comparison. A preliminary findings report should be produced on the first occasion, with a full report

presenting analysis of key findings and trends produced on completion of the second data-scraps. Reports will be produced in close cooperation with ISD who will lead the analysis of the key findings into policy recommendations.

- b) 2 x Online Extremism Regional Profiles with a focus on South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, identifying key regional trends in extremist propaganda and online extremist/hate speech. Findings should be presented in full reports for each region, presenting analysis of the data. The partner will work in conjunction with ISD to draw out the policy implications on a global, national and local basis.
- c) Training of ISD staff in how to use the technology, conduct analysis and identify trends.
- d) Identification of key search terms and translation of data where necessary for languages not currently resourced at ISD dependent on the relevance for each region.¹ These would include but not be limited to:
 - Western Balkans: Serbian, Macedonian, Albanian*
 - South Asia: Urdu, Pashto, Hindi*, Bengali* and English
 - East/ West Africa: French, Swahili, Lugandan*, Fulanai*, Hausa*

The total budget available is \$70,000 USD, which must be inclusive of VAT and the costs of any technical licenses that ISD or the successful applicant may require. Bidders are strongly encouraged to consider value for money when developing their commercial proposals.

Technical specification

SCN is seeking to appoint a qualified partner organisation that bridges technology and research with substantial experience in the following areas:

Essential

- a) Working across a range of counter-terrorism and countering violent extremism related policy and research;
- b) Applying a broad mix of tech capabilities including, artificial intelligence, data analytics, social media analytics, natural language processing and other programmes;
- c) Working with a broad range of public sector organisations, including national and local governments in multiple countries;
- d) Building cooperative relationships with social media platforms and data holders; and
- e) Experience in data visualisation and creating user friendly interfaces for the presentation of data analysis.

Desirable

- f) Existing ownership of and the ability to leverage a relevant software/ technology solution
- g) Experience working within multi-lingual and politically sensitive environments

¹ A '*' indicates languages not available at ISD that would need to be resourced for the project.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based upon the service to be provided weighed against the cost of the service. This will be done in line with ISD's Procurement Policy.

Factors that will be considered include:

1. The responsiveness to the request for proposal and demonstrated understanding of ISD's business, needs and context
2. Relevant experience and qualifications
3. The results of the two references provided
4. Cost and value for money

Timeline

Proposals are due **by 17:00 UK time on Friday 5th July 2019**. The successful bidder will need to be able to start work by the end of July.

- **21st June:** Request for Proposals published;
- **5th July:** Deadline for proposal submissions (to tenders@isdglobal.org)
- **8th-12th July:** Proposals will be evaluated by ISD's Grants Manager, Senior Project Manager and the Head of the SCN
- **12th July:** The preferred bidder will be contacted by email
- Contract awarded and work commenced by the end of July 2019

The delivery of the project is expected to last a total of 14 months.

How to submit Proposals

All proposals must be submitted via email to tenders@isdglobal.org by **17:00 UK time on Friday 5th July 2019**.

All proposals should clearly state:

- Timeline and fee for this work, inclusive of VAT or any other taxes or surcharges
- The Partner's qualifications as they relate to each of the criteria outlined above
- The Partner's proposed personnel to conduct the activity with their 1 page CVs
- Two references

ISD reserves the right to reject any and all proposals submitted and to request additional information from all proposers.

Contractual arrangements

The contract will be awarded by ISD and will enter into force from the date of its signing by both parties, for the duration of the project until the satisfactory completion of all project deliverables and final reporting. The contract may be modified only through mutual agreement in writing signed by both Parties.

The Partner shall not disclose nor communicate any confidential information relating to ISD's business activities to any third party, save where required by law or with the express written consent of ISD. ISD reserves the right to terminate the contract if it finds that illegal or corrupt practices have taken place in connection with the contract award or submission.

The deliverables outlined in this tender may be subject to change, as required by the donor. The awarding of funding to the successful organisations by ISD is dependent upon ISD's receipt of funds from the donor.

For any questions regarding the contents of this request for proposals, please contact Duaa Khalid, Grants Manager via tenders@isdglobal.org.