

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Dashboard Development for Capturing and Identifying Content and Statistical Data on Online Hate Speech in Jordan

May 2024

1. About ISD

ISD is a global think and do tank dedicated to safeguarding democracy and human rights, and delivering solutions to weaponised hate, polarisation, disinformation and extremism around the world. Combining research and analysis with government advisory work and the design and delivery of international training, education and communications programs, ISD works to implement real-world, evidence-based responses to these challenges. ISD has teams in London, Amman, Berlin, Paris and Washington DC.

2. Project context

With its culturally diverse population, Jordan faces a significant challenge with the proliferation of online hate speech as internet usage expands. Hate speech targeting marginalized communities based on factors like race, religion, ethnicity, gender, and nationality is prevalent globally, including in Jordan. As the use of digital platforms continues to increase, experts argue that individuals inclined towards racism or homophobia have found virtual spaces that amplify their viewpoints and potentially fuel violent tendencies.

Recent studies conducted by the University of Jordan in 2021 and a 2022 study by Rased-Hayat Centre have highlighted the alarming rise of hate speech in the country. These studies indicated that the most common forms of hate speech identified include insults, threats, dehumanization, and calls for violence and discrimination. Motivations behind engaging in hate speech range from expressing anger to spreading ideology and inciting violence. Women, girls, persons with disabilities, migrant workers, and refugees are particularly vulnerable to online violence and discrimination. It is crucial to address this issue through the implementation of laws against hate speech, educational programs, awareness campaigns, and promoting unity among different groups. Responsible comedy and ethical standards are necessary to avoid perpetuating stereotypes and discrimination.

Based on ISD's assessment of the situation in Jordan, six key issues have emerged which require addressing.

- 1) Limited knowledge production in Arabic language about online hate speech and its consequences on different social groups;
- 2) Weak policy framework and institutional capacity to prevent and respond to online hate speech;
- 3) Limited human capacity among state and non-state actors to prevent and respond to online hate speech;

- 4) Media stakeholders are contributing in several ways to the proliferation and amplification of online hate speech;
- 5) Lack of data collection and analysis methodology on online hate speech which can inform evidence-based policies and programs of different actors;
- 6) Lack of awareness of society on hate speech and its society implications.

ISD's European Union funded project titled **Strengthening the Intersectional Prevention and Response mechanisms to Online Hate Speech in Jordan** will help address these issues through an intersectional, comprehensive, beneficiary-driven, and holistic approach, working towards meeting two specific objectives:

1. **Specific Objective (1):** Increased alternative Arabic content that counters hate speech online to strengthen social cohesion and individual resilience; and
2. **Specific Objective (2):** Enhanced policy framework and institutional capacity to respond to online hate speech.

To effectively address online hate speech, it is critical to adopt an intersectional approach that incorporates modern data science and collection. A wide range of tools and techniques are available for measuring and monitoring hate speech, including the use of keyword filters and crowd-sourcing methods for detection. To maximise the impact of hate speech detection initiatives, it is essential to embrace a combination of innovative approaches such as machine learning, natural language processing, and sentiment analysis.

It is in this context of addressing the hate speech in an effective manner that ISD would like to set up an online dashboard to make evidence-based data accessible to a wide range of the Jordanian and other Arabic speaking groups and communities. ISD leverages a wide spectrum of expertise from teams based in Germany and Jordan, who can ensure that context specific solutions are deployed across the project activities.

3. Scope of work

To support the delivery of this project, ISD will contract a service provider to establish an online dashboard to make evidence-based data accessible to a wide range of the Jordanian and other Arabic speaking groups and communities.

Working in close cooperation with the project team in Germany and Jordan, as well as alongside ISD's global Digital Analysis Unit, the successful contractor will need to produce, in priority order, the following key deliverables across a 22-month project timeframe, starting in July 2024 and completed by the end of April 2026.

The services required are outlined across three distinct clusters:

Cluster One: Development (2 months, July-August 2024)

- a) Develop an advanced data collection framework capable of real-time data collection from multiple social media platforms via APIs (Facebook, Instagram, X and YouTube).
- b) Implement a mechanism for anonymizing and ethically handling sensitive data, ensuring privacy and compliance with both local and international data protection regulations.
- c) Integrate advanced NLP and machine learning models tailored to Arabic language nuances, including dialects and slang, to accurately identify and categorize hate speech.
- d) Establish a real-time or close to real-time monitoring system that tracks online hate speech trends and emerging threats, with customizable alert thresholds for rapid response by stakeholders.
- e) Design a dashboard to show data aggregates of detected hate speech with a user-friendly interface that accommodates non-technical users, including government agencies, civil society organizations, and media professionals.
- f) Provide customizable modules and filters that allow users to generate specific insights, such as temporal trends, demographic analyses, and content categorization.
- g) Incorporate dynamic reporting tools that offer customizable reports, including automated executive summaries for quick insight dissemination.
- h) Include an in-dashboard tutorial and help section with resources for training users on effective utilization of the dashboard for their specific needs.
- i) Ensure the dashboard's infrastructure is scalable to handle increasing data volumes and user engagement without compromising performance.
- j) Develop a sustainability plan that includes technical maintenance, regular updates to data collection and analysis tools, and stakeholder engagement to ensure the dashboard remains relevant and useful over time.

Cluster Two: Continuous Adaptation (20 months, September 2024-April 2026)

- a) Develop a flexible framework that allows for quick integration of new data sources (i.e. new API access points) into the dashboard.
- b) Develop a system for continuous learning and model adaptation (model fine-tuning) based on new data, trends, and user feedback to improve accuracy over time.
- c) Regularly update the dashboard's user interface and user experience based on user feedback, usability testing, and new requirements from diverse stakeholder groups to ensure ease of use and effectiveness.
- d) Conduct semi-annual reviews of the technical infrastructure to ensure it can scale to accommodate increasing amounts of data and growing numbers of users without compromising performance.

Cluster Three: Maintenance and repairs (20 months, September 2024-April 2026)

- a) Implement a robust system for testing and deploying updates to ensure new features and fixes are integrated without disrupting service.
- b) Implement a robust data backup system with regular intervals tailored to the dashboard's data volume and user activity levels. These backups should be encrypted and stored in multiple secure locations.
- c) Employ continuous monitoring tools to detect and respond to security threats in real-time. This includes intrusion detection systems and malware scanners.
- d) Conduct regular audits to ensure the system remains in compliance with local Jordanian laws, GDPR (for EU data subjects), and any other relevant international data protection regulations.
- e) Implement performance monitoring tools to track system responsiveness and resource utilization. Use this data to optimize performance, ensuring that the dashboard remains fast and reliable for all users.

4. Bidder Eligibility and Experience

ISD is seeking to appoint a qualified service provider that bridges technology and research with substantial experience in the following areas:

1. Eligibility

- Demonstrated ability to conduct work in Jordan, in line with the Scope of Work.
- All applicants will be subject to ISD's due diligence checks and will be required to demonstrate evidence of robust policies for fraud prevention, anti-corruption and safeguarding.

2. Essential

- Demonstrated experience in developing and deploying advanced data analytics, natural language processing (NLP), and artificial intelligence (AI) solutions, especially those capable of processing and analyzing data in Arabic and regional dialects.
- A track record of successfully implementing projects that involve real-time data collection, monitoring, and analysis across multiple social media platforms and digital channels.
- Experience in creating custom dashboard solutions that enable data-driven decision-making for diverse user groups, including government agencies, civil society organizations, academia, and media professionals.
- Strong capabilities in implementing robust cybersecurity measures, including data encryption, access control, and continuous security monitoring.
- Experience in providing customizable reporting and data export features, allowing users to generate tailored reports and visualizations that meet their specific requirements, in formats that facilitate easy sharing and presentation.
- Experience in designing and managing scalable, high-availability technical infrastructures capable of handling large volumes of data and ensuring consistent dashboard performance.

- Proven project management capabilities with the ability to coordinate complex projects, meet deadlines, and communicate effectively with stakeholders across various sectors.

3. Desirable

- Prior involvement in projects focused on detecting and countering online hate speech, especially those that address intersectional aspects and target vulnerable groups in the MENA region.
- Experience in developing and delivering training programs for diverse user groups, ensuring stakeholders can effectively utilize the dashboard for monitoring, analysis, and decision-making.
- Experience in a portfolio that includes innovative projects using technology to address social issues, demonstrating a commitment to leveraging tech for positive societal impact.

5. Bid Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based upon the services to be provided weighed against the cost of the services. Proposals will undergo evaluation with a focus on the quality of services offered in relation to the cost, assigning a 70 percent weight to quality and 30 percent to cost in the quality-cost ratio. This will be done in line with ISD's Procurement Policy.

Factors that will be considered include:

1. Understanding of the technical requirement (15%)

This section should detail the service provider's responsiveness to the requirements specified in this RFP document. It should highlight the service provider's understanding of ISD's unique needs and explain their approach and methodology for effectively delivering the requested services. Additionally, a work plan should be included to illustrate the timelines for implementing the proposed methodology for the project.

2. Experience and references of the service provider in similar projects (20%)

This section is intended to provide an overview of the service providers' similar past experiences in executing projects of comparable size and complexity. Service providers are expected to furnish a list of at least 3 relevant experiences executed in the last 3 years. Each entry should include the client's name, contract value, and pertinent project details for a thorough understanding of the provider's track record.

3. Qualifications and subject expertise of the proposed team (20%)

This section is dedicated to outlining the qualifications of the proposed team members for this assignment. Each team member's brief information, relevant qualifications, assigned role on the project, anticipated number of workdays, past involvement in similar assignments, and other pertinent details should be provided for a comprehensive understanding of their suitability for the task at hand.

4. Quality and effectiveness of suggested technology and solutions (15%)

This section should explain how the service provider will address the following as part of working on the project:

- a) innovation and technological advancement in developing the required dashboard, considering alignment with industry standards applicable to similar projects.
- b) functional suitability by assessing how well the proposed technology meets project requirements, emphasizing features, scalability, and adaptability.
- c) Performance and reliability by gauging the system's stability and responsiveness.
- d) Integration and compatibility with other systems, if required in the future.
- e) Sustainability aspect looks at the environmental impact, energy efficiency, and corporate social responsibility practices associated with the proposed technology.

5. Pricing and cost effectiveness of the proposal (30%)

This section outlines the requirement for detailing the proposed cost of delivering the specified services. Service providers are requested to submit a financial proposal which outlines all the costs they will incur in the delivery of the services, including staff costs, direct costs and any necessary overhead or administrative costs. Additionally, a budget narrative explaining each proposed budget item should be included. The fee for this work should be comprehensive, inclusive of VAT, taxes, or any other applicable surcharges.

The service must be priced at a maximum of €85,000.00, which constitutes the net amount. While €85,000.00 represents the maximum net price for this contract, any taxes the service provider will incur must be included in the budget breakdown within this net price. However, ISD will evaluate proposals based on their overall value for money and cost-effectiveness. Bidders are encouraged to align their submissions with the RFP requirements and prioritize value for money without necessarily reaching the budget ceiling.

6. Time frame

16th May 2024	Request for proposals published
28th May 2024	Deadline for registering any queries on the RFP, to be submitted to verwaltung@isdglobal.org by 23:59, CET time. Please include "Dashboard Development RFP Jordan" in the subject line of your email for any queries.
4th June 2024	ISD to share responses to queries with interested service providers
12th June 2024	Bidders submit complete proposal package to verwaltung@isdglobal.org by 23:59, CET time
25th June 2024	Preferred bidder to be notified, start of due diligence checks. ISD reserves the right to conduct interviews with potential successful candidates dependent on need
July 2024	Start of contract

The delivery of the project is expected to last a total of 22 months, with contracting due to take place in July 2024.

7. Proposal submission requirements

All proposals must be submitted electronically in English language via email to <mailto:verwaltung@isdglobal.org> by 23:59, CET time on 12th June 2024 and include the following documents. Proposals not containing the following documents will not be considered.

1. Technical proposal

Service providers are required to write their response covering the following main points:

- Executive Summary.
- Response to points 1-4 of the Bid Evaluation Criteria given above.
- Financial Management Capacities (this is fine to be separate from the Financial Proposal): demonstrate your organisation's ability to manage budgets up to €85,000.00 or higher. Applicants should set out their policies for avoiding financial misconduct, fraud or corruption in relation to this potential award from ISD.
- Organisational Capacity: Organisational Processes, Policies and Guidelines.
- Strategic Approach and Workplan: Strategic Approach, Workplan, and Risks. The timelines provided within the service description are tentative, and service providers can propose alternative timelines as long as they fall within the 22-month project implementation limit.

2. Financial proposal:

The financial proposal should be signed and stamped by an authorised representative of the service provider. Both technical and financial proposals are to be submitted in one single PDF file.

3. Copy of latest company accounts:

Provide your latest bank statements and latest audited accounts to demonstrate your capability to manage projects of a minimum value of €85,000.00.

4. A copy of a valid business licence or entity registration certificate.

5. CVs of the proposed personnel: Each CV of max 2-page length, all CVs to be submitted in a single PDF file. CVs of Primary Managers and/ or experts should be submitted along with the proposal.

- 6. Evidence of experience, references, and qualifications:** Service providers should provide a summary of at least 3 relevant projects or contracts executed in the last 3 years, with contact details for client references.

Submitted proposals should be a maximum 20 pages in PDF Format in one file and/or 20 GB in one file.

Service providers are encouraged to be concise and to adhere to the maximum page limit set for proposals. Handwritten proposals and applications will not be accepted.

Please also ensure that:

- All pages are numbered, including annexes
- All documents are formatted to A4 paper
- All Microsoft Word Documents are single-spaced, Times New Roman, 12pt font
- All documents must be submitted in English
- All documents must be submitted as .pdf files
- Any further questions can be sent to: verwaltung@isdglobal.org .

8. Contact

All contact regarding this request for proposals should be directed via email to verwaltung@isdglobal.org

9. 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 service provider 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, in line with § 47 of the German Regulation on Sub-Threshold Procurement (Unterschwelkenvergabeordnung, UVgO), as required by the donor. Hence, §132 para. 2 of the German Act against Restraints of Competition (Gesetz gegen Wettbewerbsbeschränkungen, GWB) remains unaffected. The awarding of funding to the successful organisations by ISD is dependent upon ISD's receipt of funds from the donor. Furthermore, the selected bidder will undergo ISD's reference check and due diligence before the contract is awarded.

The invitation to tender is subject to compliance with relevant legal provisions and regulations in connection with the award of services under the law on grants. The

contracting authority reserves the right to reject bids or revoke the invitation to bid at any time.