

## Terms of Reference

### Consultancy: Theory of Change and Advocacy Strategy for System-Wide Information Services in Humanitarian Contexts

#### 1. Background

DW Akademie is Deutsche Welle's center for international media development, journalism training and knowledge transfer. Its projects strengthen the human right to freedom of expression and unhindered access to information. DW Akademie empowers people worldwide to make independent decisions based on reliable facts and constructive dialogue.

DW Akademie is a strategic partner of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. We also receive funding from the Federal Foreign Office and the European Union and are active in 60 developing countries and emerging economies.

Access to trusted, timely, and actionable information is increasingly recognized as a critical component of effective humanitarian response. In recent years, humanitarian actors, media development organizations, and local information providers have experimented with system-wide information services that seek to provide affected populations with reliable information at scale, strengthen participation and accountability, and improve coordination across sectors.

Building on discussions within the humanitarian and media development communities, DW Akademie seeks to develop a Theory of Change and an accompanying advocacy strategy to promote wider recognition and adoption of system-wide information services in humanitarian contexts.

DW Akademie **intends to engage** a consultant (m/f/d) with experience in humanitarian information ecosystems, theories of change, and advocacy strategy development. The goal is to document lessons learned from existing system-wide information services, develop a Theory of Change, and design an advocacy strategy to promote wider adoption of this approach among humanitarian actors, donors, and policymakers.

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#### 2. Scope of Services

The consultant will undertake the following tasks:

##### Task 1: Key Informant Interviews

Conduct a series of semi-structured interviews with individuals involved in the design, management, coordination, or implementation of system-wide information services in humanitarian contexts.

The interviews should seek to identify:

- Objectives and operating models of system-wide information services
- Success factors and challenges
- Evidence of impact on humanitarian service delivery
- Contributions to accountability to affected populations
- Contributions to participation and community engagement
- Enabling factors for sustainability and scale
- Opportunities for wider adoption within the humanitarian system

### **Task 2: Theory of Change Development**

Develop a Theory of Change that demonstrates how system-wide information services contribute to:

- Improved access to trusted and actionable information
- More effective and inclusive humanitarian service delivery
- Increased accountability of humanitarian actors
- Greater participation of affected populations in decision-making processes
- Improved resilience of local information ecosystems

The Theory of Change should identify key assumptions, pathways of change, stakeholders, outcomes, and indicators.

### **Task 3: Advocacy Strategy**

Develop a concise advocacy strategy to support broader recognition and adoption of system-wide information services in humanitarian contexts. The strategy should include:

- Stakeholder mapping
- Identification of priority advocacy targets
- Core messages and narratives

- Engagement opportunities and processes
- Recommended partnerships and coalitions
- Advocacy activities and timeline
- Recommendations for future positioning and resource mobilization

#### **Task 4: Dissemination and Advocacy Support**

Support the presentation and dissemination of the Theory of Change and key advocacy messages through:

- One online advocacy event in November 2026
- One in-person advocacy event in Geneva in early December 2026

The consultant will prepare presentation materials and present key findings and recommendations.

**Bidders are obligated to specify: If at all and if yes which AI tools will be used in service delivery and in which project phases for which usage.**

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### **3. Qualifications**

- Advanced degree in a relevant field such as humanitarian action, media development, communications, international development, or social sciences
  - Demonstrated expertise in humanitarian information ecosystems, accountability to affected populations, community engagement, media development, or related fields
  - Experience conducting qualitative research and stakeholder interviews
  - Proven experience developing theories of change, policy frameworks, or advocacy strategies
  - Excellent writing, facilitation, and presentation skills in English
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### **4. Timeline, Availability, and Place of Assignment**

The consultancy will be conducted between **September and December 2026**.

| <b>Deliverable</b>                                                 | <b>Indicative Date</b> |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Inception note outlining methodology and interview plan            | September 2026         |
| Summary of interview findings                                      | October 2026           |
| Draft Theory of Change                                             | October 2026           |
| Draft Advocacy Strategy                                            | November 2026          |
| Final Theory of Change and Advocacy Strategy                       | November 2026          |
| Presentations at online and Geneva advocacy events                 | November–December 2026 |
| Final consultancy report incorporating feedback and event outcomes | December 2026          |

The consultant will report to DW Akademie's Project Manager for Displacement and Dialogue and work in close coordination with relevant DW Akademie staff and selected partners.

Place of assignment: Remote, with travel to Geneva in December 2026 for the in-person advocacy event.

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## 5. Compensation and Invoicing

The planned total volume (estimated quantity / maximum quantity) is **Euro 29,155 including 19% VAT**. These specifications are non-binding and there is no commitment to purchase beyond the minimum purchase requirement.

Compensation is based on:

- **Individual consultants:** an agreed daily rate. Please indicate your daily rate in your proposal.
- **Organisations:** a lump sum based on services provided. Please indicate your total fee in your proposal.

Reimbursement of proven travel expenses (e.g. flights, accommodation) is according to separate agreement and is not included in the above total volume.

The exact conditions will be regulated in the service contract.

**Note on transfer of rights and withholding tax:** This assignment involves the transfer of rights (Rechteübertragung). The deliverables – including the theory of change, advocacy strategy, reports, and presentation materials – constitute original works and are subject to withholding tax (Abzugsteuer) at a rate of **15.83%** in accordance with applicable German tax law, unless a reduced rate applies under a Double Taxation Agreement (DTA) and the contractor holds a valid exemption certificate (Freistellungsbescheinigung) from the Bundeszentralamt für Steuern (BZSt).

Bidders must note:

- The withholding tax applies to the rights-relevant portion of services (i.e. creation of deliverables). Separately invoiced, documented travel costs are exempt from withholding tax.
- The VAT rate applicable to withholding-tax-relevant services is **7%** (instead of the standard 19%).
- Bidders based outside Germany must include all locally applicable taxes (including any locally applicable withholding tax) in their offer. German withholding tax at a rate of **15.83%** will be deducted by DW Akademie and remitted to the BZSt, unless a valid exemption certificate is presented.
- If the contract value exceeds **EUR 10,000 gross per calendar year**, a Freistellungsbescheinigung from the BZSt must be submitted no later than at the time of the first invoice that exceeds this threshold.

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## 6. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Relevant professional experience and qualifications
- Quality and feasibility of the proposed methodology and approach
- Demonstrated knowledge of humanitarian information systems and advocacy
- Economic proposal (fee / budget)
- References and track record with similar assignments

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## 7. Deadline and Contact

Please send your proposal including CV, references, and a brief concept note by email to:

 [dw-akademie.displacement-and-dialogue@dw.com](mailto:dw-akademie.displacement-and-dialogue@dw.com)

**Submission deadline: August 17, 2026**