

Request for Proposals: Communications & Public Relations Agency

Agencies are invited to submit a proposal to support the communication and public relations activities of The African Academy of Sciences (The AAS) for an initial term of six months to one year.

1.0 About The AAS

The African Academy of Sciences (The AAS) is a non-aligned, non-political, not-for-profit pan-African organisation that represents all fields of science. The vision of The AAS is transformed lives in Africa through science.

Our tripartite mandate is **to recognise excellence** through highly prestigious fellowship and award schemes, provide **advisory and think tank functions** for shaping Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) strategies and policies and **implement key STI programmes** to advance the development of Africa.

2.0 Scope of Work

The agency will working in close collaboration with the communications department and will have regular meetings and frequent contact with the Head of Communications and PR to help deliver the following strategic goals:

a) Increase the brand visibility and positioning of The AAS as a driver of science, technology and innovation in Africa.

The agency must outline strategies and activities to:

- Maintain and build a strong AAS brand through world-class science communications templates and products that make science accessible to non-scientific audiences and provide a clear dissemination strategy
- Provide support in documenting successes and outcomes of The AAS
- Highlight, amplify and disseminate calls and opportunities to raise awareness and promote engagement with the African research community across the Continent
- Provide a top-notch digital strategy, including creative concepts, campaign strategies, monitoring and reporting of analytics and impact assessment

b) Increase media coverage of The AAS as a thought leader in African science.

The agency will be expected to outline strategies and activities to:

- Create strong relationships with the media to increase the quality and volume of coverage of The AAS and science in Africa in order to drive visibility, inform public opinion and contribute to evidence-based decision making

- Showcase the impact of The AAS funded researchers, research and activities through OpEds, high impact stories, feature stories, African magazine placements, videos, podcasts, indoor and outdoor advertising, digital outputs and social media
- Build the science communication capacity of researchers and key stakeholders to become effective spokespersons/champions for African science

c) Spokesperson Training

Provision of high quality media and interview training for select AAS participants to equip them in the art of storytelling for the purpose of improving public speaking, media engagement readiness, ultimately having skill to demonstrate impact of the AAS, manage crisis, answer difficult questions and respond to topical issues across the continent.

Training objectives would include:

- Prepare and articulate key messages specific to the AAS and reinforce them with credible and memorable examples tailored for different audiences;
- Develop an elevator pitch
- Prepare a news hook and story structure that can be developed into an op-ed
- Be aware of one's voice, body language, clothing, and presentation style to suit the circumstances of the media/external encounter
- Understand the media including opportunities to raise awareness and mistakes to avoid
- Set and direct the interview agenda proactively
- Dealing with/handling sensitive topics and crisis interviews

d) Mapping of high-level stakeholder events

- Identify key high-level events for the AAS spokespeople to attend and present to potential stakeholders, spread across the year.

3.0 Deliverables/ Outputs

- Key messages and promotional materials
- Social media plan and implementation
- A list of relevant high-level meetings across the continent and world
- Indoor and outdoor advertisement
- Op-eds/feature articles published across key regional publications
- On Air interviews, on leading TV/Radio stations

- A social media and media report to be shared quarterly

Training needs assessment, programme implemented, training material for participants and post training report and recommendations on how to improve future trainings.

4.0 Format of RFP response

Proposals from bidders should include a **technical proposal** and **financial proposal**:

Financial proposal (Score: 30/100): The financial proposal shall clearly indicate the total cost of offering the described communications and public relations services to The AAS, to be disaggregated to enable partial payments and/or scaling of services.

Technical proposal (Score 70/100): The technical proposal shall outline the following:

1. Operational capability
2. Brand and content management
3. Internal audiences and stakeholder management
4. Media engagement
5. Monitoring and evaluation

Task 1: Agency's operational capability (Score: 10/70)

The agency is required to demonstrate:

- Experience in developing and implementing communications strategies
- Ability to provide the range of activities required by The AAS
- Resource capacity to support The AAS
- Ability to work within budget and timelines

The agency is required to provide a profile, with particular focus on:

- Experience with working with pan-African organisations of a similar nature
- Current portfolio of key clients, detailing duration of relationships and features of success
- Three references from current or previous clients
- Half-page resumes of the personnel who will work with The AAS
- Qualities that differentiate the agency from its competitors
- Delineation of services that are provided from within the agency vs outsourced by the agency
- Description of agency management of personnel turnover
- Evidence of budget tracking and management
- Evidence in developing communication and PR workplans
- Statement of start-up approach that will allow the agency to familiarise itself with the engagement and start delivering on objectives quickly

Task 2: Brand and content management (Score: 15/70)

The agency is required to demonstrate:

- Experience in developing a brand platform, including positioning, personality, promise, differentiation and value proposition
- Excellent content development skills
- Superb social media management
- An understanding of the principles of ‘thought leadership’ and its role in influencing brand reputation
- An ability to leverage thought leadership strategies to contribute to profile raising and brand building
- Experience in managing or handling crisis that may damage the institutions reputation

The agency must provide a situation analysis to inform the current positioning of The AAS and propose recommendations, detailing:

- Tenants of a content development strategy that would be suitable for The AAS
- Tactics for the management of relationships among brands, naming conventions, and programme brand groupings
- Approach to tailoring content for different platforms, including social media
- Metrics for and methods of campaigns developed for past and/or present clients

Task 3: Internal audiences and stakeholder management (Score: 15/70)

The agency is required to demonstrate:

- Track record in stakeholder and reputation management
- The ability to align key stakeholders to The AAS brand and strategic objectives
- An understanding of the principles of ‘thought leadership’ and an ability to leverage it to raise the profile and strengthen the brand reputation of The AAS

The agency must provide:

- An outline of key The AAS stakeholders and engagement tactics, including messaging and platforms to reach stakeholders
- Positioning suggestions to reach internal The AAS audiences that include staff, Fellows, Affiliates, grantees and authors published on The AAS Open Research as experts and thought leaders, including an approach to developing them as sources of communications through speaking and writing
- A communications/ PR training programme outline for these internal audiences

Task 4: Media engagement (Score: 15/70)

The agency is required to demonstrate:

- The ability to leverage earned and paid media to build coverage of The AAS and its programmes
- Strong media relationships across the Continent
- The ability to craft key themes and messages

- The ability to track coverage, identify insights and make strategic recommendations

The agency must propose and provide:

- A portfolio of past work showcasing depth of content through Op-eds, high impact stories, feature stories, videos, podcasts, social media, indoor and outdoor advertising, etc.
- An analysis of media coverage of The AAS in 2017 and 2018, with highlights strengths and weaknesses
- Proposed media engagement activities for 2019
- Key media and influencer contacts across Africa

Task 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (Score: 15/70)

The agency is required to demonstrate an ability to track performance and adapt strategies through:

- Key performance indicators (KPIs)
- A strategy for tracking KPIs, how and at what frequency they will be presented to client

5.0 Proposal Submission Guidelines

Proposals from bidders should include a **technical proposal** and **financial proposal** and must include the following elements:

- A covering letter introducing the submission
- An executive summary not exceeding three (3) A4 pages providing an overview of your response to the scope of work citing previous experience and expertise
- A proposal that outlines how it will deliver communications and Pr services to the AAS
- Reports will be expected after the training. The service provider must indicate what the media training report will cover and provide examples of a media training report they have compiled previously.
- Detailed CVs of applicant (s) outlining the relevant skills and experience
- Details of at least 5 relevant references where similar assignments have been undertaken
- Current business licenses where applicable
- Valid VAT and PIN Certificate where applicable
- Current valid Tax Compliance Certificate from Kenya Revenue Authority where applicable
- Financial Proposal for the provision of the services. The financial proposal shall clearly indicate daily, hourly or monthly rate. The Prices quoted should be **inclusive** of all taxes and delivery costs, must be in KES and Equivalent USD
- Vendors are encouraged to include any additional information they believe demonstrates added value for the AAS within the scope of this project

6.0 Evaluation of proposals

Successful agencies will be shortlisted and invited to interview. Only successful finalists will be included in the list of the prequalified suppliers.

Ethics

The Agency is required to observe the AAS procurement ethical code of conduct which includes but is not limited to observing the highest standard of ethics regarding corruption, collusion, conflict of interest and fraud. If the agency does not observe confidentiality or ethical practices, they shall be disqualified from any further work with the AAS.

Travel and Subsistence

Where appropriate, any costs for travel and subsistence must be clearly shown in the proposal.

Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality

Consultants should be aware that inappropriate publicity could have a serious effect upon the AAS's business. The information contained within this document or subsequently made available to the consultant is deemed confidential and must not be disclosed without the prior written consent of the AAS unless required by law.

Independent Proposal

By submission of a proposal, the consultant warrants that the prices in the proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communication, agreement or understanding for the purpose of restricting competition, as to any matter relating to such prices, with any other potential consultant or with any competitor.

Costs Incurred by Prospective Consultant

It should be noted that this document relates to a Request for Proposal only and not a firm commitment from the AAS to enter into a contractual agreement. In addition, the AAS will not be held responsible for any costs associated with the production of a response to this Request for Proposal.

Instructions on the Proposal Submission Process

1. Request for clarifications to be sent to procurement@aasciences.africa by **COB 17th July 2020**.
2. Deadline for submission of proposals is **31st July 2020 at 1700hrs (East African Time)**
3. Response to this request for proposal should be strictly sent by email to: procurement@aasciences.africa and marked with Category name and code
4. Please encrypt your proposal with a password and share your password to procurement through procurement@aasciences.africa on 3rd August 2020.

5. **N/B. ANY PROPOSAL THAT IS NOT PASSWORD ENCRYPTED WILL BE AUTOMATICALLY DISQUALIFIED**

Primary RFP Contact

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