

TERMS OF REFERENCE (ToR)

**Short Term Consultancy – Communication, Advocacy and Narrative
Influence Training**

***Supporting Civil Society Organizations and Media to foster
community resilience and social cohesion***

1. Context

Over the past three years, the situation in Israel and Palestine has significantly deteriorated, with a marked escalation in violence, displacement, and humanitarian needs. Large-scale hostilities resumed in October 2023, resulting in civilian harm and significant destruction.

Humanitarian access remains limited, and the space for civil society activity has narrowed in both contexts. Despite these challenges, Israeli and Palestinian organizations committed to peace and justice continue their work on the ground under growing political, administrative, and financial pressures.

In this context, the Empowering Palestinian and Israeli Civil Society and Media project led by Expertise France, in partnership with Canal France International (CFI) and with support from the European Union (EU), aims at strengthening the role of civil society and media. The project responds to the need for rapid response approaches that go beyond traditional models, which have often failed to address structural inequalities and entrenched power asymmetries. The overall objective of the project is to contribute to creating a more conducive environment for sustainable coexistence by strengthening Israeli and Palestinian civil societies and supporting independent media in advancing dialogue, mutual understanding and collaboration.

2. About Expertise France

Expertise France is the French international development cooperation agency, created in 2015. Expertise France is part of the Agence Française de Développement Group (France Agency for Development, AFD) since 2022. It designs and implements projects which aim to contribute to the balanced development of partner countries, in line with the Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda.

EF's Stabilization and Resilience Unit has been implementing programmes in crisis and conflict settings, positioning itself as a leading organization in supporting the recovery, stabilization, and resilience of vulnerable populations in fragile contexts.

3. The Project

Expertise France, with support from the European Union's Foreign Policy Instrument (FPI), is implementing an 18-month project aimed at empowering Civil Society and Media to foster community resilience and social cohesion.

The overall objective of the project is to contribute to creating a more conducive environment for sustainable peacebuilding by strengthening Israeli and Palestinian civil societies and supporting independent media in advancing dialogue, mutual understanding, and collaboration.

The project is structured around two specific objectives that focus on reducing immediate tensions and fostering gradual steps towards peaceful coexistence between communities in Israel and the oPT:

- **Specific-objective 1 (SO1):**
 - o To sustain and amplify the voices and actions of Israeli and Palestinian civil society organizations (CSOs) — including community leaders, youth, and women — through initiatives that promote dialogue, reduce tensions, and foster mutual understanding within their communities and amongst different communities.
- **Specific-objective 2 (SO2):**

- o To support independent media actors in fostering a more pluralistic and informed public debate, combating disinformation, and facilitating collaboration with civil society organizations to enhance peacebuilding efforts.

The project targets primarily the occupied Palestinian territories (oPt) and Israel, and may be expanded to Gaza depending on the context and feasibility.

4. Rationale for Communication, Advocacy and Narrative Influence Training

Civil society organizations operating in conflict-affected contexts face an acute challenge: the ability to communicate effectively, influence policy, and shape public narratives is as essential to their impact as their programmatic work. In the Israeli Palestinian context, where information environments are deeply contested, public trust is fragile, and digital spaces are often polarized, the capacity of CSOs to communicate strategically and ethically is critical to their credibility and reach.

Many partner organizations under this programme operate with limited strategic communication capacity, rely on ad hoc messaging approaches, and have insufficient tools for policy advocacy or digital engagement. This limits their ability to amplify peacebuilding narratives, influence decision-makers, and engage their communities in meaningful civic dialogue.

Targeted training in communication, advocacy, and narrative influence will equip CSO staff and leadership with the skills, frameworks, and practical tools they need to become more effective communicators and advocates. This consultancy directly supports Specific Objective 1 of the programme, strengthening the voice and visibility of civil society actors engaged in peacebuilding.

5. Objective of the Consultancy

Purpose and Scope

The Communication, Advocacy and Narrative Influence Consultant will design and deliver a targeted training and capacity building programme for partner CSOs supported under the project. The consultancy is focused exclusively on training delivery equipping both CSO staff and leadership with actionable skills across four thematic modules:

- Strategic communication
- Policy advocacy
- Ethical storytelling
- Civic and digital dialogue

Training will be tailored to the dual audience of CSO staff (communications and programme teams) and leadership (directors and board members), and will be adapted to the conflict-sensitive and politically complex operating environment in Israel and the oPt. Delivery format in-person, online, or hybrid will be determined in coordination with the Expertise France programme team based on context and participant needs.

Specific Objectives

The consultancy aims to:

- Provide and adapt a comprehensive, context-sensitive training programme across the four thematic modules of communication, advocacy, and narrative influence;
- Deliver training sessions to CSO staff, using participatory and learning methodologies;
- Build the skills and confidence of partner organizations to independently develop and implement strategic communication and advocacy initiatives;
- Provide Expertise France with a consolidated training completion report and recommendations for follow-up support.

6. Thematic Scope of the Training

Module 1 – Strategic Communication

This module will build the capacity of CSO staff and leadership to develop and implement coherent, audience-centred communication strategies. Key topics include:

- Developing a strategic communication plan: goals, audiences, messages, and channels
- Stakeholder and audience mapping: identifying, segmenting, and prioritizing target audiences
- Message development and framing: crafting clear, compelling, and consistent messages
- Choosing the right communication channels and formats for different audiences and contexts
- Monitoring and adapting communication strategies in rapidly changing environments

Module 2 – Policy Advocacy

This module will equip CSO leadership and senior staff with the frameworks and tools to engage effectively in policy advocacy processes. Key topics include:

- Understanding policy environments and decision-making processes in conflict-affected contexts
- Developing an advocacy strategy: goals, targets, tactics, and coalitions
- Evidence-based advocacy: using data, research, and community voices to support policy positions
- Engaging decision-makers and duty-bearers: techniques for dialogue, lobbying, and influencing
- Managing risks and sensitivities in advocacy within politically constrained environments

Module 3 – Ethical Storytelling

This module will build the capacity of CSO communications staff and programme teams to develop and share stories that are compelling, accurate, and ethically grounded. Key topics include:

- Principles of ethical storytelling: dignity, consent, accuracy, and do-no-harm
- Narrative development: identifying and structuring stories that reflect community voices and peacebuilding values

- Avoiding harmful narratives: recognizing and countering dehumanizing or divisive framing
- Working with communities to co-produce stories: participation, representation, and accountability
- Using visual and multimedia storytelling responsibly in conflict-affected contexts

Module 4 – Civic and Digital Dialogue

This module will equip CSO staff and leadership with the skills to engage constructively in civic and digital spaces, fostering dialogue and countering polarization. Key topics include:

- Understanding digital information ecosystems: social media dynamics, algorithms, and online public discourse
- Designing and facilitating effective civic dialogue: online and in-person formats
- Countering disinformation and hate speech: tools, techniques, and ethical considerations
- Digital safety and security for civil society actors operating in conflict-affected contexts
- Building and managing online communities for constructive civic engagement

7. Deliverables

Deliverable 1 – Inception Note and Training Design Framework

Objective: Establish a shared understanding of the assignment scope, training approach, and delivery plan.

Content:

- Consultant's interpretation of the assignment and proposed training methodology
- Consolidated overview of training priorities and audience differentiation (staff vs. leadership) across the four modules
- Proposed schedule of training sessions
- Proposed delivery format and facilitation approach (in-person, online, or hybrid)

Format: PDF/Word

Deliverable 2 – Training Curricula and Session Plans

Objective: Provide fully developed, ready-to-delivery training content for each of the four thematic modules.

Content:

- Training curricula for each module, including learning objectives, key content and concepts, facilitation guides and detailed session plans, participant exercises and group activities, and key messages and takeaways
- Participant handouts and supporting reading materials
- All materials adapted to the linguistic, literacy, and contextual needs of partner organizations

Format: Word/PDF (per thematic module)

Additional notes:

- The consultant shall propose a clear plan and timeline for the delivery of training sessions, indicating whether attending some sessions is required (or not) to join later sessions.

- As part of the training session plan, the consultant shall indicate whether participants are expected to prepare anything ahead of the training.
- Each training session shall be delivered at least twice, to ensure the number of participants remain manageable and account for their availability.

Deliverable 3 – Delivery of Training Sessions

Objective: Build the communication, advocacy, and narrative skills of CSO staff and leadership through participatory, applied training.

Content:

- Facilitation of all planned training sessions and workshops across the four thematic modules
- Delivery adapted to the dual audience of CSO staff and leadership, using differentiated formats where appropriate (e.g. leadership tracks for policy advocacy, staff workshops for storytelling and digital dialogue)
- Practical application exercises and case studies in each session to reinforce learning
- Peer-learning exchanges between partner organizations where common needs and interests exist
- Attendance records and sign-in sheets for all sessions

Format: In-person and/or online sessions (flexible); attendance records submitted to Expertise France

Deliverable 4 – Training Completion Report and Recommendations

Objective: Document training outcomes and provide actionable recommendations for follow-up capacity support.

Content:

- Summary of all training sessions delivered, including dates, formats, topics, and participation data (disaggregated by role and gender where possible)
- Key learning outcomes and observations per thematic module
- Synthesis of participant feedback and satisfaction data
- Observations on partner organizations' engagement, skill development, and readiness to apply communication and advocacy practices
- Recommendations for Expertise France on: follow-up coaching or peer-learning needs, adaptation of tools for specific partner contexts, and linkages between communication and advocacy capacity and programme outcomes

Format: Word (with annexes including attendance records and feedback summaries)

8. Timeline

Deliverable	Description	Format	Due Date (Indicative)
1. Inception Note and Training Design Framework	Outlines the Consultant's interpretation of the assignment, proposed training methodology, facilitation approach, and overall delivery plan. Includes a consolidated	Word	Week 1

Deliverable	Description	Format	Due Date (Indicative)
2. Review Training Curricula and Session Plans 3. Delivery of Training Sessions and Workshops 4. Training Completion Report and Recommendations	overview of training priorities across the four thematic modules, proposed session schedule, and considerations for adapting content to both CSO staff and leadership audiences.		
	Review of existing training curricula developed previously by the consultant for each of the four thematic modules (Strategic Communication, Policy Advocacy, Ethical Storytelling, and Civic/Digital Dialogue), including detailed session plans, learning objectives, facilitation guides, and participant handouts.	Word/PDF	Week 1-2
	Facilitation of all planned training sessions and workshops with CSO staff and leadership, covering the four thematic modules. May include plenary sessions, thematic workshops, peer-learning exchanges, and practical application exercises. Delivered in-person and/or online based on context, security conditions, and participant needs.	In-person/online sessions + attendance records	Week 2-3
	Final report summarizing all training sessions delivered, participation data (disaggregated by role and gender where possible), key learning outcomes per module, participant feedback, and observations on CSO readiness to apply communication and advocacy practices. Includes recommendations for Expertise France on follow-up support and integration into programme activities.	Word	Week 4

9. Required Profile

The consultancy requires an experienced communication and advocacy specialist with a demonstrated track record in designing and delivering training programmes for civil society organizations in complex or politically sensitive environments. The consultant must be equally comfortable working with frontline communications staff and senior organizational leadership.

Required Qualifications and Experience

- Minimum 5–8 years of experience in strategic communication, policy advocacy, or public narrative work in international development, peacebuilding, or civil society strengthening programmes
- Proven experience designing and delivering training curricula and workshops on communication, advocacy, and storytelling for CSO audiences
- Strong expertise in at least two of the four thematic modules (strategic communication, policy advocacy, ethical storytelling, civic/digital dialogue)
- Experience developing practical communication and advocacy tools and templates for non-profit actors
- Demonstrated experience working in fragile, politically sensitive, or conflict-affected contexts
- Familiarity with EU-funded programmes and civil society support mechanisms is a strong asset
- Experience working with Israeli and/or Palestinian civil society organizations is highly desirable

Technical Competencies

- Strong expertise in adult learning principles and participatory, applied training methodologies
- Ability to design and deliver differentiated training content for diverse audiences (staff and leadership levels)
- Deep understanding of strategic communication, narrative framing, and public advocacy in conflict contexts
- Knowledge of digital communication, online civic engagement, and digital safety for civil society actors
- Strong facilitation and communication skills for working with multi-cultural, multi-stakeholder groups
- Ability to produce high-quality, accessible training materials and practical toolkits

Contextual and Ethical Competencies

- Strong understanding of conflict sensitivity, do-no-harm principles, and ethical communication in fragile contexts
- Ability to navigate politically sensitive environments engaging with both Israeli and Palestinian organizations
- Commitment to ethical storytelling and community-centred narrative practices
- Sensitivity to power dynamics, gender equity, and the inclusion of marginalized voices in communication and advocacy

Languages

- Fluency in English required
- Arabic and/or Hebrew strongly desirable

10. Practical Arrangements

Training sessions will be delivered in-person, online, or in hybrid format depending on the context, security conditions, and participant needs, in coordination with and subject to approval

by Expertise France. The format will be confirmed with the consultant during the inception phase.

The consultant will report directly to the Project Director and work in close coordination with the Grants and MEAL teams throughout the assignment. Regular check-in meetings will be scheduled to ensure quality, coherence, and alignment with programme objectives.

The total estimated duration of the consultancy is 20 working days, spread over approximately 4 weeks.

11. Application Requirements

Interested candidates are invited to submit the following:

- A technical offer including a proposed training approach and work plan (maximum 4 pages)
- A financial offer detailing the daily rate and total cost
- An up-to-date curriculum vitae
- Two examples of similar assignments (training curricula, communication toolkits, or facilitation reports)
- Two professional references

Applications should be submitted by September 10 via the Expertise France portal