

Terms of Reference (ToR)

Resource Person for Developing Key Policies, Guidelines, and 5-Year Strategic Plan for Free Media Network (FMN)

1. About the project

For the past 12 years, International Alert, in partnership with FNJ and various stakeholders, has been actively implementing a media project. The project's primary focus has been on strengthening media professionalism, enhancing freedom of expression, promoting media accountability, ensuring safe media practices, and advocating for the right to information. This ongoing effort aims to create a media landscape that is more responsible, professional, independent, and diverse.

Currently, International Alert is engaged in a 36-month action funded by the EU. The overarching goal of this action is to foster an environment conducive to independent, professional, and pluralistic media to promote a democratic, transparent, and accountable governance system. Specific objectives include promoting media independence, professionalism, and diversity within a secure environment for journalists and media entities. The action seeks to empower Nepali journalists in evidence-based and investigative journalism at local, provincial, and national levels, while also enhancing media houses' capacities in areas like GESI, journalist safety, combatting misinformation/disinformation, addressing hate speech, and facilitating constructive dialogue. Additionally, the action aims to create a more favourable environment for CSOs to increase and contribute effectively to democratic processes.

2. About the Free Media Network

Free media network (FMN) is an innovative initiative originally developed by the action that has successfully contributed to the advancement of media freedom, advocacy, and independent journalism in Nepal. The initiative has been recognized and appreciated by stakeholders and has become an integral part of FNJ's operational framework. Despite the establishment of

the FMN Secretariat, it is not yet fully functional. To make the Secretariat fully operational and to facilitate further FMN expansion, the action will provide critical support to develop key policies and guidelines, strengthen organizational structures, and roll out a 5-year strategy.

The goal is to create a robust and sustainable FMN, first by solidifying the FMN Secretariat with foundational policies, and then by establishing FMN at the provincial level in coordination with FNJ District Chapters and provincial governments. The objective is to scale FMN, ensuring its long-term viability with a self-sustaining model that is less dependent on external support.

3. Objective of the Assignment

FNJ seeks a resource person to provide expert support in the following key areas:

- Develop policies, guidelines, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the FMN Secretariat to ensure its effective functioning.
- Assist in developing a 5-year strategic plan for FMN, focusing on institutional development, scale-up, sustainability, and alignment with FNJ's broader strategy.
- Support the FMN Secretariat in engaging provincial FNJ chapters and relevant stakeholders for the establishment of provincial FMNs.

4. Scopes and key roles

The resource person will be responsible for the following tasks:

- **Policy Development for FMN Secretariat**

The resource person will begin by conducting a thorough review and assessment of the current structure and functioning of the FMN Secretariat to identify strengths, gaps, and areas for improvement. Based on the findings, they will develop a set of key policies necessary for

strengthening the Secretariat's institutional foundation. These will include a clearly defined organizational structure of FMN, a comprehensive code of conduct for members and staff, operational guidelines to enhance efficiency, and detailed Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to guide day-to-day activities. All developed policies will be carefully aligned with the broader objectives and institutional framework of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ) to ensure coherence, accountability, and long-term sustainability of FMN's operations.

- **Provincial FMN Establishment and Expansion**

The resource person will review and assess the current structure and functioning of the FMN Secretariat to identify existing gaps and opportunities for improvement. Based on this assessment, they will develop key policy documents essential for the effective operation of the Secretariat, including a well-defined organizational structure of FMN, a code of conduct for its members and staff, operational guidelines to enhance day-to-day efficiency, and comprehensive Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). These policies will be designed to align closely with the broader objectives and institutional framework of the Federation of Nepalese Journalists (FNJ), ensuring consistency, coherence, and long-term sustainability of FMN's operations.

- **Development of a 5-Year Strategic Plan for FMN**

The resource person will facilitate the development of a comprehensive 5-year strategic plan for the Free Media Network (FMN), ensuring an inclusive process that incorporates feedback from key FNJ leadership and relevant stakeholders. The strategy will define clear targets, priority activities, and realistic timelines aimed at achieving FMN's core objectives. It will serve as a roadmap for FMN's institutional growth, guiding its structured expansion across provincial and local levels in alignment with Nepal's federal system. Additionally, the strategy will identify potential sources of funding and outline sustainability mechanisms beyond the current project support, enabling FMN to operate more independently and resiliently in the long term.

▪ **Enhancing Ownership and Stakeholder Engagement**

In close collaboration with FNJ leadership, the resource person will work to strengthen the sense of ownership of the Free Media Network (FMN) within the broader FNJ structure. This will involve ensuring that the development process is inclusive and participatory, actively engaging provincial FNJ chairpersons and other key stakeholders. Their input will be sought throughout the process to foster broad-based support, build consensus, and secure long-term commitment to FMN's institutional growth and strategic direction.

5. Deliverables

The resource person is expected to deliver the following outputs:

- **FMN Policy Documents:**A set of policies covering FMN's organizational structure, code of conduct, guidelines, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- **5-Year Strategic Plan for FMN:**A comprehensive 5-year strategy document, including a vision for FMN's growth, detailed action plans, target activities, and timelines.
- **Provincial FMN Framework:**A strategy and implementation framework for establishing and strengthening FMN at the provincial level, including coordination mechanisms with FNJ District Chapters and provincial governments.

6. Duration of the assignment

The assignment is expected to be completed over a period of 30 days, starting from 15 June 2025 to 15 July 2025. The completion of deliverables should have occurred within 30 July 2025.

7. Required Qualifications and Background

- Proven experience in strategic planning, organizational development, and policy formulation, preferably within media or civil society sectors.
- In-depth understanding of Nepal's media landscape, governance structures, and the role of organizations like FNJ and FMN.

- Experience in working with multi-stakeholder processes, particularly in developing strategies for decentralized or provincial structures.
- Strong facilitation, communication, and writing skills.
- At least 10 years of relevant experience in the development of strategic plans, operational guidelines, and policy frameworks.

8. Eligibility criteria

The following criteria outline the basic eligibility requirements.

- A master's degree in media studies, Journalism, Public Policy, Development Studies, Political Science, or a related field.
- Minimum of 10 years of proven experience in strategic planning, organizational development, and policy formulation, preferably within the media, civil society, or governance sectors.
- Demonstrated experience in working with multi-stakeholder processes, including coordination with decentralized or provincial-level institutions.
- Experience in developing operational guidelines, SOPs, and institutional frameworks for organizations operating in complex or federal structures.
- Strong understanding of Nepal's media landscape, federal governance structure, and the roles of institutions like FNJ and FMN.
- Excellent facilitation, communication, and writing skills, with the ability to engage diverse stakeholders and synthesize inputs into coherent policy and strategic documents.
- Ability to lead inclusive and participatory planning processes that promote ownership and sustainability.
- Fluency in Nepali and English, both written and spoken.
- Strong analytical and organizational skills.
- Proven ability to work independently and meet deadlines.
- Familiarity with gender, inclusion, and media freedom principles will be considered an asset.

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9. Required documents:

Applicants must submit the following documents as part of their application package:

- A brief letter outlining the applicant's interest in the assignment, relevant experience, and suitability for the role.
- A detailed CV highlighting educational qualifications, professional experience, and specific roles related to strategic planning, policy development, and media or civil society engagement.
- A short concept note or proposal (maximum 3 pages) outlining the applicant's proposed approach and methodology for completing the assignment, including a tentative work plan and timeline.
- A separate document outlining the proposed consultancy fee (lump sum or daily rate), including any applicable taxes. If applicable, travel and other costs should be itemized.
- At least one example of a previously developed strategic plan, policy document, or similar work (can be anonymized or redacted if confidential).
- Contact details of at least two professional references who can speak to the applicant's qualifications and previous relevant work.

10. Selection and Award

- Federation of Nepali Journalists (FNJ) will first check the eligibility criteria for the second-round evaluation, only applications that meet all the eligibility criteria will be further evaluated.
- A score of 70% (technical proposal) will be eligible for the next round.
- FNJ can select one or multiple organizations from one province to deliver the third-party grant.
- A planning meeting will be organized to tailor and streamline activities and methodology of delivery with the awarded party.
- The selected proponent is expected to commence by the date and time stipulated in this CFP.

11. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Key Areas for Proposal Evaluation	Weightage
Technical Proposal	70

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Financial Proposal	30
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Please submit the technical proposal (maximum 5 pages) and financial proposal separately to the following address no later than 14th June 2025

fjnepalcentral@gmail.com