



USAID | AFGHANISTAN

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SOLICITATION NUMBER: 72030624R00001
ISSUANCE DATE: October 11, 2023
CLOSING DATE/TIME: November 9, 2023 / 16:30 (ET)

SUBJECT: Solicitation for a **U.S Personal Service Contractor (USPSC) – Senior Development Outreach and Communication Specialist, GS-14**

Dear Prospective Offerors:

The United States Government, represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is seeking offers from qualified persons to provide personal services under contract as described in this solicitation.

Offers must be in accordance with **Attachment 1** of this solicitation. Incomplete or unsigned offers will not be considered. Offerors should retain copies of all offer materials for their records.

USAID will evaluate all offerors based on the stated evaluation criteria. USAID encourages all individuals, including those from disadvantaged and under-represented groups, to respond to the solicitation.

This solicitation in no way obligates USAID to award a PSC contract, nor does it commit USAID to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of the offers.

Any questions must be directed in writing to the Point of Contact specified in the Attached 1.

Sincerely,

Julie Lamadrid
Contracting Officer

I. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. **SOLICITATION NO.:** 72030624R00001
2. **ISSUANCE DATE:** October 11, 2023
3. **CLOSING DATE AND TIME FOR RECEIPT OF OFFERS:** November 9, 2023 no later than 16:30 (ET)
4. **POINT OF CONTACT:** Julie Lamadrid, e-mail at kblaidhr@usaid.gov
5. **POSITION TITLE:** Senior Development Outreach and Communication Specialist
6. **MARKET VALUE:** \$99,908 - \$129,878 equivalent to GS-14
Final compensation will be negotiated within the listed market value and will include Locality pay for domestic USPSCs based on the location of the Official USAID Worksite, or the approved alternative worksite if approved for remote work. USPSCs performing overseas are not entitled to Locality Pay.
7. **PLACE OF PERFORMANCE:** Astana, Kazakhstan.
8. **PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE:** 1 base year plus 4 option years estimated to start on July 30, 2023.

The **base** period will be 1 year, estimated to start on December 18, 2023. Based on Agency need, the Contracting Officer may exercise **option period** for 2 years for the date(s) estimated as follows:"

Base Period:	December 18, 2023, to December 17, 2024
Option Period 1:	December 18, 2024, to December 17, 2025
Option Period 2:	December 18, 2025, to December 17, 2026
Option Period 3:	December 18, 2026, to December 17, 2027
Option Period 4:	December 18, 2027, to December 17, 2028

9. **ELIGIBLE OFFERORS:** United States Citizens.
10. **SECURITY LEVEL REQUIRED:** Secret Security Clearance.
11. **STATEMENT OF DUTIES**

- 1) **General Statement of Purpose of Contract:**

In August 2021, staff from U.S. Embassy Kabul evacuated from Afghanistan and the USAID Mission closed. Prior to the evacuation, the Mission was one of the largest USAID Missions in

the world and managed a complex, politically driven development portfolio in a very demanding and dangerous environment. The Mission received Congressional approval to reconstitute in Almaty, Kazakhstan with a small footprint in Doha, Qatar.

USAID/Afghanistan shares its messages through many different ways and with various audiences, including Congress, the American public, and the people of Afghanistan. audiences. The Mission works on story placement with local and international television, radio, print, and social media (currently limited to Twitter, though this could change). Outreach programs and events are also a major component of sharing USAID/Afghanistan's story and accomplishments.

The Senior Development Outreach and Communications Specialist (Advisor) manages a wide range of public information and outreach activities in support of USAID/Afghanistan's programs and objectives, targeting information to specific audiences in both the United States and Afghanistan in accordance with the Mission's strategy. The incumbent will provide guidance on USAID's marking and branding policies and ensure USAID work is recognized.

This position is located in the Office of Program and Project Development (OPPD) and requires close collaboration and relationship building with the State Department's Afghanistan Affairs Unit (AAU) in Doha, the Mission Director, two Deputy Mission Directors, three Mission Technical Offices, the Asia Bureau, the Bureau for Legislative and Public Affairs (LPA), and numerous other contributors to USAID communications. The position serves as the senior advisor on public information, news media relations, communications unit staffing, and outreach matters.

In close coordination with the AAU's Public Diplomacy Section, the incumbent builds and maintains relationships with international and local media entities and public outreach staff of USAID implementing partners. The incumbent must be a creative, independent professional with excellent writing skills, editing skills, social media knowledge, and event planning skills. Additionally, the incumbent must be able to multi-task and have experience in mentoring and training junior professionals to take on greater responsibility. The incumbent must demonstrate their skills in managing staff/people and possess excellent interpersonal abilities. The incumbent coordinates information dissemination, outreach, and public events within the Mission, in collaboration with various entities. The incumbent is responsible for the drafting/updating of the Mission's Communications Strategy. S/he may also be assigned responsibility for USAID/Afghanistan strategic priorities within the communications realm.

The incumbent provides expert advice and guidance in accessing, validating, interpreting, and applying a wide range of information resources. The incumbent is responsible for continually reviewing Agency policies, guidelines, protocols, literature, trends, and developments affecting the dissemination of USAID/Afghanistan's information to foreign audiences and ensuring Mission staff understand their roles and responsibilities. The incumbent develops and maintains close working relationships with Public Diplomacy officers from the Afghanistan Affairs Unit and LPA, helping to facilitate messaging and responses to international media via these entities.

The incumbent reviews the accuracy of information and works to improve the quality of available information and resources while developing new resources in response to specific requests or emergent policy developments.

2) Statement of Duties to be Performed:

Creating Communications Materials

The incumbent serves as the resident expert on branding, marking, and style guidelines; ensuring USAID regulations, policies and procedures are applied as outlined in USAID ADS 320 and the Agency's Graphic Standards Manual within the Mission and for Implementing Partners/Contractors. S/he is responsible for:

- The production of high-quality print and electronic communications products that translate complex messages and technical information into understandable, meaningful messages to resonate with a variety of audiences, both Afghan and American.
- Serving as creative and editorial director of all website materials for the Mission's English language webpage (ensuring timeliness and accuracy of information), USAID Afghanistan's Twitter account, blogs, and other platforms as necessary and permissible.
- Managing the drafting, editing, and dissemination of high-quality products including, but not limited to, information brochures, factsheets, videos, success stories, reports, and newsletters relating to USAID/Afghanistan's activities and accomplishments.
- Preparing and overseeing the submissions to the Mission's Bi-Weekly Report to Asia Bureau and other potential information platforms.
- In coordination with Project Development Specialist and the technical teams, ensuring that the annual Performance Plan and Report (PPR) and Operational Plan (OP) effectively communicate USAID/Afghanistan's accomplishments, goals and past and planned contributions to key issues to USAID senior management, the Department of State, and Congress.
- Managing small public relations contractors as needed in producing graphic designs, written text, photographs, videos, and other outsourced products; and, ensures contractor tasks are completed in a cost effective, high-quality, and timely manner.
- Overseeing and developing regular and specialized information materials for Washington opinion leaders and audiences, in coordination with the Asia Bureau and LPA colleagues.

Strategic Communications Planning, Management (including supervision), Coordination, Guidance, and Implementation

The Senior Development Outreach Communications Specialist is responsible for aligning Afghanistan communication messages and adhering to policies and procedures for Mission communications and outreach that clarify roles and responsibilities within USAID, the Afghanistan Affairs Unit, and implementing partners. S/he will also maintain up to date knowledge of all USAID/Afghanistan activities and processes, as well as a keen awareness of political and policy issues.

The incumbent is responsible for:

- Ensuring standardization and clear guidance is provided for the creation of communication tools and templates, materials, and guidelines for planning and managing events.
- Leading the development/updating of the Mission communications strategy, identifying objectives, messages, audiences, products, and budgets.
- Developing plans in coordination with USAID managers and technical teams, consistent with the Mission development strategy and the State Department's Afghanistan communications strategy.
- Leading the design of public information products, ensuring that Mission communication products contain appropriate and consistent messages that support the approved Mission communications strategy; and provides quality control on all print and electronic public information materials such as the external website, organizational brochures and information packets, and briefing books produced by contractors and other USAID staff.
- Overseeing the translation and interpretation of USAID materials for use in media, events, or other official capacities.
- Liaising with the Afghanistan Affairs Unit and working closely with Public Diplomacy officers and the DOC team to generate press coverage of USAID activities in Afghanistan. Such work may include arranging and preparing for press interviews, press conferences, briefings, tours of programs/projects/activities, and interaction with host-country and American journalists.
- Tracking USAID/Afghanistan's program/project/activity milestones and events to ensure appropriate press coverage is provided through advising the Mission Front Office and staff on press outreach priorities, and works closely with local staff to ensure coverage is culturally and politically appropriate; oversees and produces media materials (including news releases, backgrounders, and fact sheets) designed to inform both internal and external audiences of technical programs/projects/activities and their achievements; coordinates with technical offices and with the Afghanistan Affairs Unit to produce and release timely, accurate, and useful written material for the host-country and American media; and, advises and works with relevant State Department Public Diplomacy officers to expand opportunities for coverage of USAID efforts.
- Leading the Mission's DOC team to ensure the execution of the unit's tasks, including adequate teamwork, individual performance of team members, and administrative and managerial tasks. The team currently consists of one USPSC DOC Advisor and one Translator based in Kabul. This structure may change over time to meet the needs of the Mission.
- Advising USAID staff and implementing partners on developing appropriate public information campaigns, media strategy, and relations.
- Training, mentoring, preparing, and supervising USAID's staff and partners in support of their public speaking and media outreach roles.
- Contributing to the integration of communications during the project design and implementation process.
- Coordinating with and seeking guidance from the Regional Legal Advisor and LPA on

potential disputes, waiver requests, web page creations.

- Providing recommendations to technical teams and Mission leadership on branding, marking, and style guidelines; ensuring USAID regulations, policies and procedures are applied as outlined in USAID ADS 320 and the Agency's Graphic Standards Manual within the Mission and for Implementing Partners/Contractors.

Public Events and Activities

The incumbent serves as the USAID/Afghanistan's primary point of contact for publicity events, participation by official visitors from the Afghanistan Affairs Unit, USAID/Washington, Congress, and other USG agencies or entities. In this role the incumbent is responsible for:

- Coordinating visits/events (including at the Ambassador, CDA, and DCM, levels) and leading the professional and timely preparation of briefing materials, scene setters, talking points/speeches, and other products and processes to support such activities. Such events could include ceremonies, ribbon cutting events, closing events, conferences, etc.
- Representing USAID/Afghanistan at the senior level in all matters pertaining to USAID public Affairs and outreach activities with other branches of the USG, including the Department of Defense, implementing partners, other donors and institutions.
- Supervising advance work for planning, including scheduling, coordination with technical teams (and the Afghanistan Affairs Unit as appropriate), and overseeing the production of briefing materials and troubleshooting during VIP visits.
- Coordinating and consulting with technical offices on program/project/activity signing ceremonies or other milestone events, including finalizing press releases and ensuring logistics are handled.

3) USAID Consultation or Orientation:

The selected applicant may be required to proceed to Washington, D.C. for mandatory training or consultation.

4) Supervisory Relationship:

The incumbent directly reports to the OPPD Director (or his/her designee) with general technical guidance from the Executive Secretariat and the Legislative and Public Affairs Office of USAID/Washington. The incumbent supervises one Translator/Interpreter and may supervise additional staff in the future, including Foreign Service Nationals, Third-Country Nationals, and/or Personal Service Contractors.

5) Supervisory Controls:

The incumbent may be responsible for overseeing a team composed of Foreign Service Nationals, Third-Country Nationals, and/or Personal Service Contractors. In this capacity, the incumbent would be responsible for mentoring, training and building the technical capacity of his/her staff in media communication and public relations.

12. PHYSICAL DEMANDS

The work requested does not involve undue physical demands.

II. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR THIS POSITION

To be considered for the position, a candidate must meet the Minimum Qualifications. Offers will be pre-screened and only those that meet the Minimum Qualifications will be considered. The minimum qualifications necessary to be considered for the position are as follows:

- a) **Education:** A bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in Journalism, Media and/or Communication, English Literature, Public Relations, Marketing, Business Administration, International Studies, International Relations or Writing is required.
- b) **Work Experience:** A minimum of eight (8) years, three (3) years of which in a supervisory capacity, of progressively responsible experience in strategic communications and outreach, diplomacy, and/or journalism work with an international donor, implementing partner, newspaper, magazine, or other communications entity. The incumbent must have successfully demonstrated experience in writing and editing. It is preferred that the incumbent also has demonstrated experience using social media; organizing and conducting events; and producing web content in a professional setting; planning and delivering training; and working productively with journalists and other key members of the community. The incumbent may be requested to provide written articles and/or materials for the selection process.

III. EVALUATION AND SELECTION FACTORS

The Government may award a contract without discussions with offerors in accordance with [FAR 52.215-1](#). The Contracting Officer (CO) reserves the right at any point in the evaluation process to establish a competitive range of offerors with whom negotiations will be conducted pursuant to [FAR 15.306\(c\)](#). In accordance with [FAR 52.215-1](#), if the CO determines that the number of offers that would otherwise be in the competitive range exceeds the number at which an efficient competition can be conducted, the CO may limit the number of offerors in the competitive range to the greatest number that will permit an efficient competition among the most highly rated offers. FAR provisions of this solicitation are available at: <https://www.acquisition.gov/browse/index/far>.

The technical evaluation committee may conduct reference checks, including references from individuals who have not been specifically identified by the offeror, and may do so before or after a candidate is interviewed. Reference checks will be made only for applicants considered as finalists. The applicant's references must be able to provide substantive information about his/her past performance and abilities.

After the closing date for receipt of applications, applications will be reviewed for basic eligibility (quality check, submitted all required documents, meeting the set requirements, education and experience). Successful Applications will be forwarded to the Technical Evaluation Committee (TEC) for review. The TEC will review and score the application. As part of the selection process, finalist candidates may be interviewed.

Applicants who meet the minimum education and experience qualifications will be evaluated based on the content of their application as well as on the applicant's writing, presentation, and communication skills. On a supplement document included with the application package, applicants should cite specific, illustrative examples to address each factor. Responses are limited to 500 words (paper size A4 or Letter) typed (font size 12) per factor. Applicants should describe specifically and accurately the experience, training, education and/or awards they have received that are relevant to the factor. Applicants should include their name and the announcement number at the top of each additional page. Failure to specifically address the Evaluation Factors may result in the applicant not receiving full credit for pertinent experience.

EVALUATION FACTORS

- **Factor #1: Professional Experience in Supervision and Teamwork (10 points):** Describe your experience working with or supervising a team in the areas of marketing, strategic communication work, or journalism in the international development field. Describe your experience working with diverse team members (various cultures, backgrounds, religions, gender, etc.) at different professional levels. Outline and describe how you planned and delivered training for professional development of individuals. Describe your experience and engagement with the media and journalists; conducting outreach for international donor organizations; preparing talking points and speeches for high level officials. Lastly, explain your experience in areas of influencing behavior change and working with senior leaders.
- **Factor #2: Development of Communication Strategy and Conducting Campaigns (10 points):** Outline and describe your demonstrated experience in the development and implementation of a communications strategy relevant to international affairs / development with a focus on national security, public policy, and messaging how countries must move towards self-reliance; describe your direct experience in the coordination of outreach events, creation of content and videos for such events, and conducting various types of communication campaigns. Provide examples as to what type of outreach events were conducted. Share concrete examples of your ability to express skills and experience in exhibiting tact, judgment, diplomacy, leadership, and teamwork which are critical skills to design and execute strategic communication campaigns and outreach.
- **Factor #3: Social media knowledge, experience, usage, and implementation (5 points):** Describe your knowledge and experience with the usage of various social media platforms with an emphasis on messaging/marketing/social marketing. Explain and provide specific examples of your ability and experience to create compelling messaging across a variety of media (press releases, responses to media inquiries); including print,

blogs, newsletters, social media, video, and speeches. Describe your ability to think creatively about other communication means to tell the USAID story and convey key messages through multi-faceted strategic communication campaigns. Describe your experience with engaging with the private sector and knowledge of a conflict environment or similar contexts.

- **Factor #4: Written Exercise (15 points):** Each qualified candidate will participate in a short written/practical exercise to demonstrate their technical skills in preparing strategic communication materials. This assessment will be conducted and scored prior to an invitation for an oral interview.

The Evaluation Factors listed will be the basis for evaluating and ranking applicants for the position. Only the highest-ranked applicants may be interviewed.

BASIS OF RATING

Applicants who clearly meet the Education/Experience requirements and basic eligibility requirements will be further evaluated based on scoring of their Evaluation Factors. Those applicants determined to be competitively ranked may also be evaluated on their interview performance and satisfactory professional reference checks. The Applicant Rating System is as follows:

Evaluation Factors: 40 points

Factor #1:	10 points
Factor #2:	10 points
Factor #3:	5 points
Factor #4:	15 points

Interview Performance: 60 points

Satisfactory Professional Reference Checks – Pass/Fail (no points assigned)

Total Possible Points: 100 points

IV. SUBMITTING AN OFFER

1. Eligible Offerors are required to complete and submit the offer form AID 309-2, “Offeror Information for Personal Services Contract with Individuals,” available at: <https://www.usaid.gov/forms/aid-309-2>
2. Offerors must be received by the closing date and time specified in Section I, item 3, and submitted to Afgpscjobs@usaid.gov

3. Offeror submissions must clearly reference the Solicitation number and position title in the subject line of the email as follows:

72030624R00001 – Senior Development Outreach and Communications Specialist

4. Eligible offerors are required to submit the following documents to be considered for this position:
 - a. Cover Letter
 - b. A current curriculum vitae (CV) or resume
 - c. Supplemental document containing responses to the evaluation factors
 - d. AID 309-2 "Offeror Information for Personal Services Contract with Individuals"

V. LIST OF REQUIRED FORMS PRIOR TO AWARD

The CO will provide instructions about how to complete and submit the following forms after an offeror is selected for the contract award:

1. Contractor Employee Biographical Data Sheet (AID 1420-17);
2. Declaration for Federal Employment (OF-306);
3. Questionnaire for Sensitive Positions for National Security (SF-86), or Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions (SF-85);
4. Fingerprint Card (FD-258);
5. Statement of Prior Service (SF-144A).

VI. BENEFITS AND ALLOWANCES

As a matter of policy, and as appropriate, a PSC is normally authorized the following benefits and allowances:

1. BENEFITS:
 - a) Employer's Federal Insurance Contribution Act (FICA) Contribution (for USPSC's only)
 - b) Contribution toward Health & life insurance
 - c) Pay Comparability Adjustment
 - d) Annual Increase (pending a satisfactory performance evaluation)
 - e) Eligibility for Worker's Compensation
 - f) Leave and holidays
2. ALLOWANCES:

Section numbers refer to rules from the [Department of State Standardized Regulations \(Government Civilians Foreign Areas\)](#), available at https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=282&menu_id=101

VII. TAXES

USPSC's are required to pay Federal income taxes, FICA, Medicare and applicable State income taxes.

VIII. USAID REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND CONTRACT CLAUSES PERTAINING TO PSCs

USAID regulations and policies governing **USPSC** awards are available at these sources:

1. **USAID Acquisition Regulation (AIDAR), Appendix D**, "Direct USAID Contracts With a U.S Citizen or a U.S. Resident Alien for Personal Services Abroad," including **contract clause "General Provisions,"** available at <https://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/aidar>
2. **PART 52—SOLICITATION PROVISIONS AND CONTRACT CLAUSES**

Subpart 52.2—Text of Provisions and Clauses

52.223-99 Ensuring Adequate COVID-19 Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors, Alternate 70.

ENSURING ADEQUATE COVID-19 SAFETY PROTOCOLS FOR FEDERAL CONTRACTORS (OCT 2021)-Alternate 70 (OCT 2021) (M/OAA-DEV-FAR22-01c)

(a) *Definition.* As used in this clause -

United States or its outlying areas means—

- (1) The fifty States;
- (2) The District of Columbia;
- (3) The commonwealths of Puerto Rico and the Northern Mariana Islands;
- (4) The territories of American Samoa, Guam, and the United States Virgin Islands; and
- (5) The minor outlying islands of Baker Island, Howland Island, Jarvis Island, Johnston Atoll, Kingman Reef, Midway Islands, Navassa Island, Palmyra Atoll, and Wake Atoll.

(b) *Authority.* This clause implements Executive Order 14042, Ensuring Adequate COVID Safety Protocols for Federal Contractors, dated September 9, 2021 (published in the Federal Register on September 14, 2021, 86 FR 50985).

(c) *Personal Services Contracts with individuals.* As a matter of policy, the contractor must comply with the USAID's guidance applicable to direct-hire federal employees.

(End of clause)

Notice Regarding Any Court Order Affecting the Implementation of E.O. 14042

USAID will take no action to enforce the clause (FAR 52.223-99) implementing the requirements of Executive Order 14042, absent further written notice from USAID, where the place of performance identified in the contract is in a U.S. state or outlying area subject to a court order prohibiting the application of requirements pursuant to the Executive Order (hereinafter, "Excluded State or Outlying Area"). In all other circumstances, USAID will enforce the clause, except for contractor employees who perform substantial work on or in connection with a covered contract in an Excluded State or Outlying Area, or in a covered contractor workplace located in an Excluded State or Outlying Area. A current list of such Excluded States and Outlying Areas is maintained at <https://www.saferfederalworkforce.gov/contractors/>.

3. **Contract Cover Page form AID 309-1** available at <https://www.usaid.gov/forms>. Pricing by line item is to be determined upon contract award as described below:

LINE ITEMS

ITEM NO (A)	SUPPLIES/SERVICES (DESCRIPTION) (B)	QUANTITY (C)	UNIT (D)	UNIT PRICE (E)	AMOUNT (F)
0001	Base Period - Compensation, Fringe Benefits and Other Direct Costs (ODCs) - Award Type: Cost - Product Service Code: R497 - Accounting Info: Appropriation: 7213/141037 Fund Code: es-oco-1/2015/2016	1	LOT	\$ TBD	\$ TBD at award after negotiations with contractor
1001	Option Period 1 - Compensation, Fringe Benefits and Other Direct Costs (ODCs) - Award Type: Cost - Product Service Code: R497 - Accounting Info: To be incrementally funded	1	LOT	\$ TBD	\$ TBD at award after negotiations with contractor
2001	Option Period 2 - Compensation, Fringe Benefits and Other Direct Costs (ODCs) - Award Type: Cost - Product Service Code: R497 - Accounting Info: To be incrementally funded	1	LOT	\$ TBD	\$ TBD at award after negotiations with contractor
3001	Option Period 3 - Compensation, Fringe Benefits and Other Direct Costs (ODCs)	1	LOT	\$ TBD	\$ TBD at award after negotiations

	- Award Type: Cost - Product Service Code: R497 - Accounting Info: To be incrementally funded				with contractor
4001	Option Period 4 – Compensation, Fringe Benefits and Other Direct Costs (ODCs) - Award Type: Cost - Product Service Code: R497 - Accounting Info: To be incrementally funded	1	LOT	\$ TBD	\$ TBD at award after negotiations with contractor

4. Acquisition & Assistance Policy Directives/Contract Information Bulletins (**AAPDs/CIBs**) for Personal Services Contracts with Individuals available at <http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/aapds-cibs>
 - [AAPD 21-05](#)
 - [AAPD 21-04](#)
 - [AAPD 18-02](#)
 - [AAPD 10-01](#)
 - [AAPD 06-10](#)

5. **Ethical Conduct.** By the acceptance of a USAID personal services contract as an individual, the contractor will be acknowledging receipt of the “**Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch,**” available from the U.S. Office of Government Ethics, in accordance with **General Provision 2** and **5 CFR 2635**. See <https://www.oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/OGES%20Regulations>.

6. **PSC Ombudsman**
The PSC Ombudsman serves as a resource for any Personal Services Contractor who has entered into a contract with the United States Agency for International Development and is available to provide clarity on their specific contract with the Agency. Please visit our page for additional information: <https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/personal-service-contracts-ombudsman>.

The PSC Ombudsman may be contacted via: PSCOmbudsman@usaid.gov.