

Questions and answers to RFT#IMS-05559

Instructions:

*Below the list of questions from the interested bidders received before the deadline specified in the RFT and answers to them prepared by IMS team is provided. IMS answers are provided in **bold** right after each question. Some of the questions were duplicated by the interested bidders and received by IMS several times. Those questions addressed only once in the respective Q&A.*

Disclaimer

Due technical issue, the previously published Questions & Answers document was not displayed correctly. The current edition shall prevail

1. Which countries are included in the term “Western Balkans” for this assignment? **Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, North Macedonia, Croatia, Montenegro, Serbia, Kosovo, Croatia.**
2. Does the required monitoring of “websites” include online news portals, blogs and discussion forums? **Yes**
3. Should English-language content originating from, or relating to, the target countries also be included in the monitoring scope? **No**
4. Are Reddit and LinkedIn expected to be included as monitoring sources, considered optional, or outside the required scope? **Outside the required scope**
5. Can bidders submit an offer covering selected countries or regions, or must the proposed solution cover Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine and the full Western Balkan region? **The offer should cover all the regions/countries mentioned**
6. Which languages are expected to be covered for each country and region? **For Ukraine: Ukrainian, Russian; For Armenia: Armenian, Russian, Azeri; for Moldova: Romanian, Russian; For Western Balkans: ABCMS, Albanian.**
7. Can the experience, references and personnel of disclosed subcontractors or delivery partners be used to satisfy the tender requirements? - **Yes**
8. What level of local-language or country-specific human analytical expertise is expected from the dedicated analytical team? **C1**
9. Could IMS clarify what level of methodology and evidence is expected for attribution of FIMI or other manipulative information activity? **IMS expects that the attribution is done based on the digital behavior. However, the applicants are welcome to come up with approaches based on narrative behavior or other solutions that prove reliable.**
10. How many framework suppliers does IMS expect to appoint, and how will individual assignments be allocated among them? **IMS may contract more than one service provider depending on the results of proposals evaluation. Individual assignments that are subject to funds availability and operational needs will be distributed depending on the number of potential contractors and IMS partners’ requests.**
11. What indicative quantities or pricing scenario will IMS use when evaluating the financial proposals? **Please submit the price per country/region.**
12. Could IMS provide an indicative estimate of the number of sources/channels expected to be monitored for each geography (Ukraine, Moldova, Armenia and the Western Balkans), or confirm whether bidders should make their own assumptions regarding source volumes for pricing

purposes? **Please provide the figures sufficient for your methodology to generate reliable insights.**

13. For the purpose of the “per 1,000 sources per month” pricing unit, could IMS clarify how a “source” should be defined across websites and social platforms, for example, whether an individual social media account/channel/page constitutes one source? **Each individual social media channel is to be counted as one source.**
14. Could IMS provide a budget template or do you have any preferred format? **Please feel free to use your format**
15. Could IMS provide the expected monitoring and analytical language coverage for each country/region, including whether Russian-language content should be included for Ukraine, Moldova and/or Armenia, and which languages should be covered across the Western Balkans? **For Ukraine: Ukrainian, Russian; For Armenia: Armenian, Russian, Azeri; for Moldova: Romanian, Russian; For Western Balkans: Albanian, BCMS.**
16. Could IMS clarify the expected level of coverage for each social platform, particularly Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Telegram, Threads and X, considering differences in API/data accessibility? Is the requirement to monitor all publicly accessible content, or an agreed universe of relevant accounts, pages, channels and keywords? **Agreed universe of relevant accounts, pages, channels and keywords will be ok.**
17. Should the early-warning service operate on a 24/7 basis, including weekends and public holidays, or within agreed operating hours? Could IMS also clarify the expected monitoring and alert frequency. **The alerts should arrive on an incident basis, preferably 24/7 basis, but we are ready to negotiate about Monday-Friday 09.00-19.00 approach with limited service over the weekend.**
18. Could IMS clarify whether the indicative volume of eight monitoring reports per month applies per country/country assignment or across the overall framework? **Applies per country/ country assignment.**
19. Does IMS have an indicative expected length, format or level of analytical depth for the weekly monitoring reports, incident reports and ad-hoc topical/assessment reports? **This depends on the type of incidents and requests, but in general brief and meaningful solutions are welcomed. The reports should include the list of narratives, and brief description of the behavior of the most meaningful groups. For the mapping reports, 10 pages is a desired maximum.**
20. Could IMS provide an indicative profile of the expected dashboard users, e.g. IMS staff, media partners, analysts and/or other stakeholders and whether access will be centrally administered by IMS? **The estimated number of users is 100 per country / region. The access may be technically administered by the contractor, but controlled by IMS.**
21. Is there a test report, simulation required to be sent as part of the bidding or just the technical and financial proposal? **Not required, but would be an advantage.**
22. What are the regular, weekly tasks and annual, special reports to be delivered in more detail? **The exact amount of reports / briefs / etc will be discussed at the negotiations stage once the contractors have been selected. For the sake of bidding, please calculate your services based on the further estimated monthly taskload:**
 - 4 weekly reports (narratives + behavior) on the priority topics;
 - 4 weekly reviews of the most important topics / trends, beyond the priority topics;
 - 2 ad-hoc reports on specific incidents or assessment performance report for IMS partners (3 pages max) – upon request from the IMS team.
23. May bidders tender for one or more country/regional assignments, or must a compliant bid cover Armenia, Moldova, Ukraine and the entire Western Balkans? If several framework agreements are awarded, how will call-off assignments be allocated among providers? **We expect that the bidders**

will be capable of working in each of the targeted countries / region. The scope of work and the geography of performance of each selected company (if more than one) will be defined on the negotiation basis.

24. Please confirm the mandatory platform list. X appears in the objectives and financial proposal but is omitted from Section 3's monitoring list. Does "Meta" mean Facebook and Instagram only, or additional services — if so, which? **Websites, Facebook, Instagram, X, Threads, Youtube, TikTok, Telegram**
25. Would IMS value optional, separately priced coverage of platforms such as Reddit, Discord, VKontakte or MAX? Would this affect technical evaluation, or should the core proposal be limited to mandatory platforms? **We do not require that the bidders demonstrate capacity to cover platforms that are not included into the list.**
26. What collection depth is required per platform — posts only, or also comments, replies, ads, video transcripts and engagement statistics? **The objective of the procurement is to provide sufficient awareness of the meaningful trends, actors behavior, and FIMI/DIMI incidents to IMS and its partners. We seek to ensure the balance between narrative and digital approaches to monitor and attribute. Analysis of post and engagement is therefore the most expected element, but the applicants may suggest including other dimensions as part of their methodology.**
27. Is ongoing re-collection of previously downloaded content required, or only collection of new content? **Collection of new content, no retrospective analysis is expected.**
28. Will IMS provide an initial source/channel list per country? **We expect that the contracted party will develop the list, but IMS may contribute.**
29. What source-to-dashboard and source-to-alert latency qualifies as "near real time"? **We understand that obtaining the data from the platforms may cause delays. Yet we expect that the dashboard is updated at least every 12 hours. With regard to alerts, the delay should not exceed 3 hours.**
30. Reports must be in English — is an English-only dashboard interface acceptable across all countries? **The English-only service is the minimal requirement. Providing service in local languages will be an advantage.**
31. What evidentiary standard is expected for attributing F(D)IMI activity to a specific actor? Where a report names an actor, including a state actor, how should liability or reputational risk be handled if the attribution is disputed? **Attribution to be done based on digital behavior. The risk mitigation is not relevant to the procurement and will be discussed afterwards.**
32. Does "50 active users" mean named accounts, monthly actives, or concurrent users — and is it per country/call-off or framework-wide? **Active users mean people who have their individual access to the monitoring services per country. The intensity of their use may vary.**
33. What user types and technical levels should bidders plan for — administrators, advanced analysts, casual dashboard users, report-only recipients? **Casual dashboard users and report-only recipients.**
34. May bidders offer separately priced optional modules alongside the compliant core offer? Would these be considered in the technical or price evaluation? **Yes, they can.**
35. Would IMS welcome a tiered access model — full platform access for a smaller advanced-user group, simplified dashboard/alert/report access for a broader partner group? If so, are report-only recipients counted as licensed users, and is there an indicative number? **If you would like to differentiate, you may consider 10 users with full access, and 40 simplified.**
36. Could IMS provide a list of partner organizations per country? **The list will be provided to selected service providers at the stage of ToR negotiations.**
37. What data handover, retention and deletion is expected at the end of a call-off or the framework? **We expect that the data is stored and kept available upon the request for at least 2 years after it's generated, regardless the timeframe of the contract.**

38. Is multi-tenant SaaS deployment acceptable, or does IMS have specific technical or data-security requirements for the platform? **Yes.**
39. What outcomes or indicators does IMS consider relevant for demonstrating partners' "success in shaping public discourse"? **Audience reach of the fact-based reporting on the topics, compared with audience reach of the manipulative messaging; the IMS partners contribution in the fact-based audience reach.**
40. Could IMS share an example ecosystem mapping report, or similar, to clarify expected scope, structure and detail? **No, we can't.**
41. Please describe the ecosystem-mapping deliverable in more detail, specifically:
What should be treated as an actor, source, narrative and connection?
How should behavioural connections and their confidence be represented?
Is the expected output an interactive network, a static report/map, a dataset, or a combination?
What constitutes acceptance, and what updates are expected between annual baselines?
We don't have pre-defined expectations on the suggested points.
42. Roughly how many alert streams/topics per country should bidders assume when pricing the early-warning subscription line item? **4 topics per country / region in a time. The figure is indicative for the sake of the bidders' calculation of the price. More specifically, the number of streams / topics will be discussed further.**
43. When will IMS provide priority topics, partner lists and any existing actor/narrative taxonomies? What indicative volumes should bidders price against? **This will all be provided as ToR is discussed. Number of topics, the topics themselves, number and structure of the reports will be different per country, and will be changing in time due to the partners' requests.**
44. Is partner onboarding/training expected to be delivered online, or is on-site training required? If on-site, what logistics are envisaged — a separate session in each country, or one consolidated training event organized by IMS? **The partner onboarding/training is expected to be delivered online.**
45. What support hours (days and time zone) does IMS expect the helpdesk and technical support to cover, given that partner organizations are spread across multiple time zones? **For tech support, working days and working hours in Brussels or Kyiv time zones are acceptable.**
46. For the 20-point reputation and experience criterion: Must the two references collectively cover all priority countries, or is experience in one or more sufficient? **Sufficient but the more countries - the more advantageous proposal is.** May bidders submit more than two references? **Yes.** Are ongoing framework assignments eligible as references? **Yes.** May confidential references be submitted with redacted details and a verification contact? **Yes.** How are the 20 points allocated between reputation, geographic experience and resilience/strategic-communications relevance? **As indicated in the procurement notice, the bidder should submit at least 2 references of completed assignments of the types described in this RFT, meeting the following minimum criteria: · evidence of operating in the abovementioned IMS priority countries; · evidence of contributing to resilience-building efforts, or strategic communications done by media, democratic governments, international organizations.**
The selection committee will score the applicants according to the abovementioned criteria.
47. Does Section 6's "operating in the priority countries" require a local legal entity or in-country presence, or does remote OSINT-based coverage qualify? **No physical in-country presence is required.** May bidders engage consortium partners or local subcontractors for country-specific or local-language work? **Yes.** If so, should their CVs and references be included in the original submission? **Yes, if possible**
48. As the financial proposal consists of several unit prices and daily rates rather than one total price, how will IMS evaluate and compare bids to calculate the 25-point price score? **Requesting one total price is not feasible given the nature of requirement with uncertain number of upcoming assignments. The fairness and reasonability of unit prices and daily rates will be assessed.**

Based on the pricing submitted the model assignment will be developed and lump price for assignment calculated accordingly. The lowest price proposal will get the highest score of 25 points.

49. Could IMS clarify the payment mechanism for call-off assignments? The cover letter refers to lump-sum pricing “using the agreed rates,” while Annex I’s fee clause is headed “Output Based” but presents a “daily fee” table. Will assignments be invoiced as time-and-materials against day rates, as fixed lump sums per deliverable, or a hybrid of the two **Draft framework agreement shared together with the RFT is a standard template that will be adjusted according to the particular contract set up. As specified in the RFT - Country-specific assignments under the framework agreement may subsequently be commissioned on a lump-sum basis using the agreed rates and scope of work for each call-off assignment.** The lump-sum agreed for a specific assignment would be a fixed price.

50. Intellectual Property

Could IMS please confirm that the intellectual property provisions apply to deliverables specifically created for IMS under the contract, while the supplier retains ownership of its pre-existing intellectual property, including its platform, software and source code, models, algorithms, data structures, databases, and infrastructure? Where such pre-existing intellectual property is incorporated into the deliverables, is our understanding correct that IMS would receive the necessary rights to use those deliverables without ownership of the underlying pre-existing technology being transferred to IMS? **IMS' intention is that intellectual property provisions apply to deliverables, reports and other results specifically produced for IMS under the contract. IMS does not seek ownership of the supplier's pre-existing intellectual property, including proprietary platforms, software, source code, models, algorithms, databases, data structures, methodologies and infrastructure.**

51. Selection of Monitoring Sources

Who will determine the specific sources to be monitored: IMS, or the supplier based on the agreed countries and monitoring objectives? If IMS provides a list of sources, may the supplier recommend additional relevant sources? Could IMS also clarify what constitutes one “source” for the purpose of pricing per 1,000 sources per month (e.g. a website, account, channel, or feed)? **We expect that the contractor will develop the list of the sources, but IMS will have access to it and recommend adding or deleting entries. The "source" means: a website or channel / account on social media.**

52. Rates upon Extension of the Framework Agreement

Are the proposed rates expected to remain fixed for the initial one-year term of the Framework Agreement? In the event of an extension, may the rates be revised or indexed to reflect inflation and changes in the cost of providing the services? **Prices and rates proposed in the tender and incorporated into the framework agreement remain fixed for the duration of the agreement. Extension is subject to funds availability and operational need. In the event of extension, the rates might be negotiated.**

53. Currency

In which currency should the Financial Proposal be submitted, and in which currency will payments under the Framework Agreement be made? **EUR**

54. Payment Terms

Does IMS envisage advance or milestone payments, or will payments be made only upon completion of the relevant assignment or deliverable? What is IMS’s standard payment term following receipt of an invoice? **For larger assignments, IMS normally pays in instalments, with later payments linked to receipt of agreed deliverables. IMS does not apply a single standard payment period across all service contracts. Payment arrangements are defined in the specific conditions of each contract and are normally linked to agreed milestones, deliverables, invoices, and/or expense documentation, as applicable**

55. Legal and Tax Status of the Bidder

May a European non-profit organisation that, due to its applicable tax status, does not have a VAT number participate in the tender and enter into the Framework Agreement? Does IMS have any restrictions or preferences regarding the commercial or non-profit status of bidders?

56. Yes. A European non-profit organisation may participate in the tender and, if successful, enter into the Framework Agreement, provided it is legally established and able to enter into contractual relations under the laws applicable to it. IMS does not have any preference for, or restriction against, either commercial or non-profit entities.

57. Bidder Documentation

58. Are bidders required to submit any corporate registration, tax, or other legal documents in addition to those explicitly listed in the RFT? If so, could IMS please specify which documents are required at the tender submission stage? No, nothing more than it is specified in the RFT

59. Ongoing Projects as References

In addition to the required completed projects, may ongoing long-term projects or client engagements also be presented as evidence of relevant experience, indicating the period as “start year–present” and describing the work already completed and results achieved to date? **Yes**

60. Application Format

Is our understanding correct that there is no mandatory application template and that bidders may structure their Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal independently, provided that all requirements set out in the RFT are addressed? **Yes, correct**

61. Please provide more information on dashboard requirements. The document states dashboard should cover 1000 sources per month. Does source mean any web source (publication) or social media account? We don't limit the dashboard to 1000 sources. The size of the database will be subject to further discussions, and will be country-specific. The source means one website or channel / account on social media.

62. Should "ecosystem mapping" translate to 4 one-off baseline studies (including strategic mapping)? This may be so.

63. What would be the total number of streams/topics, requiring early warning alert subscriptions? This will depend on the country and will be changing with the time. Normally the number is 3 or 4.

64. Regarding 8 monitoring reports per month, should these be calculated in addition to the weekly meaningful FIMI trends and weekly trends regarding priority topics reporting? Ideally both. These may be weekly updates on the priority topics, and weekly updates on broader trends, and/or different.

65. Should the weekly cadence reports cover a) all the markets together, b) translate into 2 weekly deliveries for each of the 4 core markets (Ukraine, Armenia, Moldova, combined Western Balkans), c) be delivered for each market, including breaking down of Western Balkans per country as well? For the Eastern Europe, all the services should be market (country) specific to be used by country teams. For the Western Balkans, the service should cover the whole region.

66. In terms of incident or topic driven ad hoc reporting, what would be the ceiling of overall number of reports required per annum? 2 per month is an indicative figure.

67. VII. Should customized dashboard transfer to one all-regions covering dashboard, 4 key markets dashboards or a separate dashboard per market? Separate dashboards for each of the East European countries, and a dashboard for the Western Balkan region.

IMS express gratitude to all interested bidders and looks forward to your submissions.

Respectfully,
IMS team