Request for proposals for consulting services

The ISC is seeking an agency to provide consulting services on digital transformation for a range of scientific organizations.

The International Science Council (ISC) is a non-governmental organization with a unique global membership that works at the global level to catalyse change by convening scientific expertise, advice and influence on issues of major importance to both science and society.

1. Background and objectives

The project aims to understand how Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) organizations in the Global South can achieve digital maturity. This will be done by providing strategic and technical assistance to selected organizations and learning from this experience.

The goal is for more STI organizations in the Global South to benefit from digital technologies. By widely sharing what is learned, it is hoped that other organizations will replicate and expand these interventions.

Additionally, the project aims to create a reflexive community of practice among science organizations in the Global South. 'Reflexive' refers to a community where members continuously test, pilot, exchange ideas, engage in peer learning, and formalize their knowledge.

The project builds on the exploratory work done in 2023, summarized in this publication *Science organizations in the digital age*.

2. Services and indicative budget

The ISC is looking for a consulting firm or a group of consultants who can provide **strategic and technical assistance** to up to ten selected organizations from the ISC Membership ('Participants') and produce a **report** synthesizing learning and recommendations occurring from this experience.

- **Technical assistance:** Conducting individual sessions with Participants over the course of 3-6 months (depending on the frequency of sessions), resulting in the development of a strategy document for each organization to put them on a path towards their digital transformation project. Indicative budget: up to 45,000 EUR (excl. VAT).
- **Knowledge gathering and reporting:** Collecting and recording knowledge and experience over the course of these consultations, with a view to turning them into a comprehensive report, which should serve as a blueprint for action for other STI organizations in the Global South. Indicative budget: up to 9,000 EUR (excl. VAT).

- **Training, workshops, supporting tools** (e.g. benchmarking, diagnostics, various templates): Additionally, we are interested in supplementing the experience with various training and useful tools, the contents of which will be agreed by the ISC and the Consultants. Indicative budget: up to 10,000 EUR (excl. VAT).

Total indicative budget: 64,000 EUR (excl. VAT).

Optional additional services:

- **Report editing and design**: Consultants are invited to also include services for proofreading, editing, and design of the report in their proposals. Indicative budget: up to 7,000 EUR (excl. VAT).
- **Report distribution and promotion:** Consultants with access to relevant communication channels and audiences are invited to include this information in their proposals. Indicative budget: up to 10,000 EUR (excl. VAT).

Total indicative budget: 17,000 EUR (excl. VAT).

3. Requirements

Experience and expertise

- Proven track record in digital transformation projects, ideally but not necessarily within the context of STI organizations.
- Demonstrated experience working with organizations in the Global South.
- Expertise in strategic consulting.
- Strong knowledge of digital technologies relevant to STI organizations.
- Experience in developing training programmes and educational tools.

Research and knowledge management

- Experience in knowledge gathering, recording, and synthesizing information into comprehensive reports.
- Proven ability to create actionable blueprints based on collected data.

Project management

- Demonstrated ability to manage complex projects with multiple stakeholders.
- Excellent organizational skills to handle consultations, knowledge gathering, and report preparation.

Communication skills

- Strong written and verbal communication skills.
- Ability to communicate complex technical concepts to non-technical stakeholders.
- Experience in preparing clear, concise, and impactful reports and documentation.

Global South presence

- Ideally, the firm and its team should be based in the Global South or at least have a large footprint in the Global South (significant presence or substantial operations).

4. Criteria for evaluation

The ISC will assess offers on the following criteria:

- Technical expertise
- Methodology and work plan
- Cost effectiveness
- Relevant experience
- Knowledge management and reporting
- Project management capabilities
- Communication skills

5. Duration of engagement

The project must commence, be carried out and completed between 2024 and 2026. The **tentative** timeline is as follows:

- September – November 2024: A call to ISC Members to find interested partners-beneficiaries.
- December 2024: Onboarding of selected participating organizations.
- January – July 2025: Technical assistance to participating organizations through individual consulting sessions.
- August – December 2025: Synthesizing learnings into a report.
- January 2026 – onwards: Dissemination and promotion of the report.

A detailed timeline of action will be co-developed between the consulting firm and the ISC.

6. How to apply

Please apply by uploading your offer, in English, in one document, through the online form on the ISC website. Your submission should contain the following:

- **Introduction**: a brief description of your company, highlighting your understanding of the project and summarizing your relevant experience and qualifications.
- **Executive summary**: A concise overview of your proposed approach, including key deliverables, methods, processes and a tentative timeline of action.
- **Detailed proposal:**
  - *Methodology*: A detailed explanation of the approach and methodologies you will use to achieve the project objectives.
  - *Work plan*: A timeline of activities, including milestones and deliverables.
  - *Team composition*: Information about the team members who will be involved in the project, including their roles, expertise, and relevant experience.

        o *Previous experience*: Case studies or descriptions of similar projects completed, especially those related to digital transformation and work with STI organizations in the Global South.

- **Budget proposal**: A breakdown of costs in accordance with section 2 of this document (*Services and indicative budget*).
- **Supporting documents** (optional): Any additional materials that support your proposal, such as certifications, awards, or additional examples of your past work.

7. Timeline of the evaluation process

- Publication of the call: 2 August 2024
- Review period: the applications will be assessed as soon as they are received
- Commencement of services: September-October 2024

8. Contact

If you would like to have an introductory call and discuss the project in more detail before making the official submission, contact Zhenya Tsoy, Senior Communications Officer at zhenya.tsoy@council.science.

We look forward to receiving your proposals.