

Request for Proposals: Communications & Public Relations Agency

Agencies are invited to submit a proposal to support the communication and public relations activities of The African Academy of Sciences (The AAS) for an initial term of six months to one year.

1.0 About The AAS

The African Academy of Sciences (The AAS) is a non-aligned, non-political, not-for-profit pan-African organisation that represents all fields of science. The vision of The AAS is to transform lives in Africa through science.

Our tripartite mandate is **to recognise excellence** through highly prestigious fellowship and award schemes, provide **advisory and think tank functions** for shaping Africa's Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) strategies and policies and **implement key STI programmes** to advance the development of Africa.

2.0 Scope of Work

The agency will working in close collaboration with the communications department and will have regular meetings and frequent contact with the Head of Communications and PR to help deliver the following strategic goals:

a) Increase the brand visibility and positioning of The AAS as a driver of science, technology and innovation in Africa.

The agency must outline strategies and activities to:

- Maintain and build a strong AAS brand through world-class science communications templates and products that make science accessible to non-scientific audiences and provide a clear dissemination strategy
- Provide support in documenting successes and outcomes of The AAS
- Highlight, amplify and disseminate calls and opportunities to raise awareness and promote engagement with the African research community across the Continent
- Provide a top-notch digital strategy, including creative concepts, campaign strategies, monitoring and reporting of analytics and impact assessment

b) Increase media coverage of The AAS as a thought leader in African science.

The agency will be expected to outline strategies and activities to:

- Create strong relationships with the media to increase the quality and volume of coverage of The AAS and science in Africa in order to drive visibility, inform public opinion and contribute to evidence-based decision making
- Showcase the impact of The AAS funded researchers, research and activities through OpEds, high impact stories, feature stories, African magazine placements, videos, podcasts, indoor and outdoor advertising, digital outputs and social media

- Build the science communication capacity of researchers and key stakeholders to become effective spokespersons/champions for African science

3.0 Format of RFP response

Proposals from bidders should include a **technical proposal** and **financial proposal**:

Financial proposal (Score: 30/100): The financial proposal shall clearly indicate the total cost of offering the described communications and public relations services to The AAS, to be disaggregated to enable partial payments and/or scaling of services.

Technical proposal (Score 70/100): The technical proposal shall outline the following:

1. Operational capability
2. Brand and content management
3. Internal audiences and stakeholder management
4. Media engagement
5. Monitoring and evaluation

Task 1: Agency's operational capability (Score: 10/70)

The agency is required to demonstrate:

- Experience in developing and implementing communications strategies
- Ability to provide the range of activities required by The AAS
- Resource capacity to support The AAS
- Ability to work within budget and timelines

The agency is required to provide a profile, with particular focus on:

- Experience with working with pan-African organisations of a similar nature
- Current portfolio of key clients, detailing duration of relationships and features of success
- Three references from current or previous clients
- Half-page resumes of the personnel who will work with The AAS
- Qualities that differentiate the agency from its competitors
- Delineation of services that are provided from within the agency vs outsourced by the agency
- Description of agency management of personnel turnover
- Evidence of budget tracking and management
- Evidence in developing communication and PR workplans
- Statement of start-up approach that will allow the agency to familiarise itself with the engagement and start delivering on objectives quickly

Task 2: Brand and content management (Score: 15/70)

The agency is required to demonstrate:

- Experience in developing a brand platform, including positioning, personality, promise, differentiation and value proposition
- Excellent content development skills
- Superb social media management
- An understanding of the principles of ‘thought leadership’ and its role in influencing brand reputation
- An ability to leverage thought leadership strategies to contribute to profile raising and brand building
- Experience in managing or handling crisis that may damage the institutions reputation

The agency must provide a situation analysis to inform the current positioning of The AAS and propose recommendations, detailing:

- Tenants of a content development strategy that would be suitable for The AAS
- Tactics for the management of relationships among brands, naming conventions, and programme brand groupings
- Approach to tailoring content for different platforms, including social media
- Metrics for and methods of campaigns developed for past and/or present clients

Task 3: Internal audiences and stakeholder management (Score: 15/70)

The agency is required to demonstrate:

- Track record in stakeholder and reputation management
- The ability to align key stakeholders to The AAS brand and strategic objectives
- An understanding of the principles of ‘thought leadership’ and an ability to leverage it to raise the profile and strengthen the brand reputation of The AAS

The agency must provide:

- An outline of key The AAS stakeholders and engagement tactics, including messaging and platforms to reach stakeholders
- Positioning suggestions to reach internal The AAS audiences that include staff, Fellows, Affiliates, grantees and authors published on The AAS Open Research as experts and thought leaders, including an approach to developing them as sources of communications through speaking and writing
- A communications/ PR training programme outline for these internal audiences

Task 4: Media engagement (Score: 15/70)

The agency is required to demonstrate:

- The ability to leverage earned and paid media to build coverage of The AAS and its programmes
- Strong media relationships across the Continent
- The ability to craft key themes and messages
- The ability to track coverage, identify insights and make strategic recommendations

The agency must propose and provide:

- A portfolio of past work showcasing depth of content through Op-eds, high impact stories, feature stories, videos, podcasts, social media, indoor and outdoor advertising, etc.
- An analysis of media coverage of The AAS in 2017 and 2018, with highlights strengths and weaknesses
- Proposed media engagement activities for 2019
- Key media and influencer contacts across Africa

Task 5: Monitoring and Evaluation (Score: 15/70)

The agency is required to demonstrate an ability to track performance and adapt strategies through:

- Key performance indicators (KPIs)
- A strategy for tracking KPIs, how and at what frequency they will be presented to client

4.0 Evaluation of proposals

Successful agencies will be shortlisted and invited to interview at The AAS. Only successful finalists will be contacted.

5.0 Submission of proposals

- Any question regarding this RFP should be sent to procurement@aasciences.ac.ke
- Vendors are encouraged to include any additional information they believe demonstrates added value for The AAS within the scope of this project
- Proposals must be submitted to The AAS procurement office electronically (only) by **5:00 pm** on **20 February 2019** to procurement@aasciences.ac.ke

6.0 Ethics

The Consultant is required to observe The AAS procurement ethical code of conduct which includes but is not limited to observing the highest standard of ethics in regard to corruption, collusion, conflict of interest and fraud. In the event that the consultant does not observe confidentiality or unethical practices, the consultant shall be disqualified from any further work with The AAS.

7.0 Primary RFP Contact

Procurement Office

The African Academy of Sciences

Headquarters, 8 Miotoni Lane, Karen

Nairobi, Kenya

Telephone: +254 208 060 674 / 725 290 145 / 2405150

procurement@aasciences.ac.ke