

Research, Strategy and Analysis

U.S. Department of State

Office of the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs

Global Engagement Center (GEC)

RELEASE IN FULL

1. Background

The Global Engagement Center (GEC) was established at the direction of the President and by Executive Order 13721. GEC coordinates, integrates, and synchronizes all U.S. government-wide communications activities directed at foreign audiences abroad to counter the messaging and diminish the influence of international terrorist organizations, such as, but not limited to, ISIL and al-Qa'ida.

GEC serves as the primary coordination entity among all U.S. federal agencies that work to counter violent extremist messaging and provide alternative narratives in the digital space.

2. GENERAL PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

The Global Engagement Center (GEC) has a need to collect and analyze information that would enable the GEC to understand the main methods that international terrorist organizations use to attract recruits and how to effectively discourage potential recruits from joining such organizations in various countries, as well as identifying which communication interventions would reduce the use and credibility of the Internet propaganda as well as recruitment efforts by international terrorist organizations. The Global Engagement Center (GEC) seeks contractor support which utilizes cutting-edge social science technologies, to design influence campaigns which will decrease the volume, credibility and effectiveness of ISIS recruitment propaganda as well as, decreasing the likelihood that potential recruits in the designated countries will join Da'esh.

The GEC has a strong commitment to data-driven analysis and we require the best available data and analysis upon which to base our communication campaigns.

The United States Department of State (DoS), GEC requires contractor services to collaborate with GEC staff in order to develop communications strategies that identify interventions which would reduce the use and credibility of the Internet propaganda as well as recruitment efforts by international terrorist organizations. The contractor shall also recommend ways to measure the effectiveness of the communication campaigns that are pursued.

Contractor support is required by individuals who possess knowledge and experience in the specific areas as described in this SOW.

3. Objective 1 - Audience Research and Analysis

The contractor shall conduct research and analysis using behavioral science to understand local target audiences; conduct background research and in-depth, exploratory, social-science-based interviews with people who are representative of potential recruits to international terrorist organizations in various countries, recruiters for such organizations, and other groups or audiences relevant to influencing them.

The contractor shall analyze the interviews and other relevant information to isolate those factors that have the ability to change the behavior of the target audiences in ways desired by the GEC, i.e., anything that will contribute to a decreased propensity on the part of potential recruits to join international terrorist organizations and/or a decreased propensity on the part of recruiters for such organizations to spread effective recruitment messages.

3.1. The contractor shall utilize its network of expert researchers to conduct in-depth, exploratory, social-science-based interviews with people who are representative of Da'esh Internet propaganda/recruitment in various countries, including, at a minimum, those countries in Europe, the former Soviet Union, and the Middle East/North Africa region that contribute the most recruits to Da'esh.

3.1.1. The contractor shall conduct not less than 25 and preferably up to 50 interviews of Da'esh Internet propaganda/recruitment operatives in the designated countries.

3.2. The contractor shall utilize its network of expert researchers to conduct in-depth, exploratory, social-science-based interviews with people who are representative of potential Da'esh recruits in various countries, including, at a minimum, those countries in Europe, the former Soviet Union, and the Middle East/North Africa region that contribute the most recruits to Da'esh.

3.2.1. The contractor shall conduct not less than 50 and preferably up to 75 interviews of people who are representative of potential Da'esh recruits in the designated countries.

3.3. The contractor shall analyze the interviews and other relevant information to isolate those factors that have the ability to change the behavior of the target audiences in ways desired by the GEC, i.e., spreading fewer and less persuasive propaganda/recruitment materials in the case of Da'esh recruiters and being less likely to respond to calls to recruitment on the part of potential Da'esh recruits.

4. Objective 2 - Communication/Messaging Strategy

Utilizing a scientific and verifiable approach, the contractor shall develop specific communication strategies that will resonate with the target audiences and lead to the desired behaviors. This includes determining which groups, messages, and messengers are capable of influencing the targeted audience(s.)

The United States Department of State (DoS), GEC requires contractor services to collaborate with GEC staff in order to develop communications strategies that identify targeted interventions which would reduce the use and credibility of the Internet propaganda and recruitment efforts by international terrorist organizations.

The contractor shall develop evidence-based communication strategies that will make the Internet a less reliable medium for Da'esh to use both for recruiting and disseminating disinformation.

- 4.1. The contractor shall determine which groups, messages, and messengers are capable of influencing the behavior of recruiters for Da'esh and/or international terrorist organizations and ways in which they can be discouraged from spreading effective recruitment messages.
- 4.2. The contractor shall determine which groups, messages, and messengers are capable of influencing the decision of potential recruits against joining Da'esh or another international terrorist organization, and ways in which such groups, messages, and messengers can be mobilized.
- 4.3. The contractor shall produce a valid assessment framework for evaluating the effectiveness of interventions to reduce propaganda dissemination and recruitment; and can be applied to determine success from initial data collection to final behavior changes identified in the target audiences.

4.3.1. The framework shall include baseline data.

5. Objective 3 – Data Analytics

The contractor will provide data and analysis to assess the effectiveness of the communication campaigns that have been conducted. This will include the design and development of methods to measure the effectiveness of communication campaigns that are pursued; providing baseline data; and constructing a framework for assessing which interventions are successful.

6. Objective 4 - PROJECT MANAGEMENT

The United States Department of State (DoS), GEC, requires contractor services for project management to support this contract. The offeror shall provide a project management plan describing the approach, organizational resources and management controls to be employed to meet the cost and schedule requirements throughout execution of this contract.

The contractor shall provide an effective labor and skill mix to accomplish all tasks, address changes in work priorities and staffing to ensure proper staffing and skill set coverage at all times; and ensure deliverable quality and timeliness.

- 6.1. The contractor shall deliver a comprehensive implementation plan within 10 days of contract award, to include messaging campaign plan, schedule, and cost.
- 6.2. The contractor shall provide information, reports, and management briefings to the COR and to other staff according to the deliverables table and as requested by the COR on all aspects of the work being performed.
- 6.3. The contractor shall provide to GEC all inputs to deliverables, including raw data, research, and transcripts collected.

7. Deliverables

Required deliverables, formats, schedule and acceptance criteria will be specified in each TO.

8. Personnel Requirements:

The contractor shall provide uniquely qualified personnel who possess the special knowledge and skills required to accomplish these tasks, which include:

- 8.1. Expertise in a methodology that is unique in the depth of its understanding and expertise on how to collect data that is useful in designing communication campaigns that lead to the desired behavioral change(s).
- 8.2. A robust, diverse, and very well-trained network of researchers that is able to operate smoothly, efficiently, and effectively in a wide array of political and geographical environments worldwide.
- 8.3. Substantial experience and success in collecting and analyzing information that is useful in designing communication campaigns that lead to the desired behavioral change(s).

9. Period of Performance

The period of performance will be for a period of 5 months from date of-award.

10. Place of Performance

The contractor shall conduct its research and analysis wherever it deems best. Contractor may be asked to brief the GEC on its findings and recommendations at the offices of the U.S. Department of State, 2200 C St, NW, Washington, DC.

11. Security Requirements

There is no requirement for any SCL personnel or persons employed by SCL on the project to have a U.S. security clearance.

12. Travel Requirements

The briefing that will accompany delivery of the final report will be conducted in Washington, DC, as specified above. The contractor may be asked to present interim briefings as well.

All travel must be approved by the Contracting Officer's Representative (COR) in advance.
Required travel will be funded as needed and approved by the Government, and will follow
Federal Travel guidelines and allowances.

1. Project Management

2. Deliverables

3. The contractor shall provide the following deliverables to the Government:

Deliverable	Format	Schedule
Implementation Plan	MS Word	Within 10 days of award
Transcripts of Interviews	MS Word	Week 14
Analysis Framework	MS Word	Week 14
MOE Analysis	MS Word	Week 14
Draft Report & Presentation	MS Word	Week 17
Interim Reports	MS Word	Weekly
Final report	MS Word	Approximately 18 weeks from start of contract