UPU UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

Call for tenders

Provision of senior communication coordination and advisory services

16 October 2026

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1 Introduction

1.1 Profile of the UPU

The Universal Postal Union (UPU) was founded in 1874 in Berne, Switzerland, with the main goals of establishing a single postal territory for the reciprocal exchange of letter-post items and adopting common principles for the international postal service in a non-discriminatory manner. Currently comprising 192 member countries, the UPU became a specialized agency of the United Nations in 1948.

The main mission of the UPU is to stimulate the lasting development of efficient and accessible universal postal services of quality, in order to facilitate communication between the inhabitants of the world. It does this by guaranteeing the free circulation of items over a single postal territory composed of interconnected networks, encouraging the adoption of fair common standards and the use of technology, ensuring cooperation and interaction among stakeholders, promoting effective technical cooperation, and ensuring the satisfaction of customers' changing needs. The UPU is thus expected to play a major role in the continued revitalization of postal services.

Furthermore, the UPU facilitates the development of worldwide postal services by providing an information and communication technology framework that allows the designated operators[1] of UPU member countries to concentrate on the delivery of postal services to their customers. In this context, the UPU provides a global network with value-added services, as well as computerized applications for the management of international mail and international postal money orders.

2 Terms and conditions

Unless otherwise indicated in this call for tenders, the term "Bidder" shall refer to any person, company or legal entity submitting a proposal in response to this call for tenders. The term "Vendor" shall refer to any selected bidder.

2.1 Confidentiality

Bidders shall treat in strict confidence all information contained in this call for tenders and its attached documents that is not already publicly known or generally accessible, particularly any documentation marked as confidential and distributed by the UPU to Bidders as additional confidential tender documentation. Bidders shall prevent the disclosure or distribution of all such information to third parties and other entities and persons not expressly authorized herein. In case of doubt, these confidentiality provisions shall nevertheless be observed. All Bidders are obliged to observe these confidentiality provisions before, during and after the tender process. These provisions shall not affect the legal obligations of the UPU and Bidders to disclose information.

Bidders shall not use such information for any purposes other than those associated with this call for tenders. The call for tenders and all attached documents may be distributed or made available only to persons directly involved in the tender process on behalf of Bidders. If external agents or subcontractors are involved in the preparation of the tender documents, this must be indicated and their names provided in the participation notification (see section 2.14).

Bidders shall assume full responsibility for the compliance of their agents, consultants, employees and subcontractors, as well as any third parties involved on their behalf in this tender process, with these rules of confidentiality, and shall be liable for any damages resulting from misconduct or unauthorized disclosure.

If a Bidder violates the confidentiality provisions contained herein, it shall be liable to pay a penalty to the UPU unless it can prove that no fault is attributable to it. This penalty shall not exceed 50,000 CHF per infringement. Payment of any such penalties shall not release Bidders from their obligation to observe these confidentiality requirements.

[1] In accordance with article 2.1.6 of the UPU Constitution, a designated operator is any governmental or non-governmental entity officially designated by the member country to operate postal services and to fulfil the related obligations arising out of the Acts of the Union on its territory.

Bidders wishing to submit a proposal in response to this call for tenders must contact the person(s) specified in section 2.15 below and may, if necessary, request additional information from the UPU in relation to this call for tenders.

Without prejudice to the confidentiality provisions set out above, Bidders agree that the receipt of any such information may be subject to the prior signature of a non-disclosure agreement between the Bidder and the UPU, under conditions to be determined and communicated by the latter.

2.2 Legal status of the Vendor

The Vendor shall be regarded as having, in law, the legal status of independent contractor. The Vendor and its agents, consultants, employees and subcontractors (as authorized by the UPU) shall in no way be regarded as employees of the UPU. Such agents, consultants, employees and subcontractors of the Vendor shall not be entitled to any employment benefits from the UPU. The Vendor alone shall be responsible for due payment of all compensation owed to such agents, consultants, employees and subcontractors, including payment of any employment taxes, benefits, compensation and insurance. The Vendor shall represent and warrant that it will comply with all laws, rules and regulations required by the relevant authorities, including the appropriate withholding, reporting and payment of all necessary taxes.

The Vendor shall be liable for all work performed, including any acts or omissions, by its agents, consultants, employees and subcontractors.

2.3 Scope of the call for tenders

This call for tenders concerns the provision of senior communication coordination and advisory services to the Communication and Outreach Programme to the UPU for a period of twelve (12) months, renewable subject to satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

2.4 Background

The Communication and Outreach Programme of the Directorate of Administration and Cabinet (DACAB) is responsible for the UPU's institutional internal and external communications, including editorial production, media relations, digital channels, outreach campaigns and events, and the UPU brand and visual identity.
Over the 2026–2029 period, the programme will focus on communicating the UPU's strategic priorities to member countries, partners and the wider public, in particular the modernization of the Union's governance and decision-making, the role of postal networks in cross-border e-commerce, support to the sector in a changing regulatory environment, and the contribution of posts to digital, financial and social inclusion. It will also modernize the UPU's digital channels, including the corporate website.
In this context, the UPU requires senior communication expertise to ensure the coherent planning, coordination and quality of the programme's communication outputs.

2.5 Objectives

The UPU seeks an individual consultant to provide senior communication coordination and advisory services to the Communication and Outreach Programme for a period of twelve (12) months, renewable subject to satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

The objectives of these services are to ensure the coherent planning, coordination and quality of the programme's communication outputs, to strengthen the consistent application of the UPU brand and visual identity, and to support the modernization of the programme's digital channels and production workflows.

2.6 Use of subcontractors

The Vendor shall not assign, sublicense, subcontract, pledge or otherwise transfer or dispose of its tender, or any of the rights and obligations contained therein or in an associated contract with the UPU, without the prior written consent of the UPU.

The approval by the UPU of the engagement of any subcontractor shall not relieve the Vendor of any of its obligations or responsibilities concerning the work performed by such subcontractors.

2.7 Use of the emblem, name and initials of the UPU

Bidders shall not advertise or otherwise make public the fact that they intend to provide, are providing or have provided services to the UPU, or use the emblem, name or initials of the UPU in connection with their business for purposes of commercial advantage or goodwill, without prior and explicit permission from the UPU. Bidders shall take all reasonable measures to ensure compliance with this provision by their agents, consultants, employees and subcontractors.

2.8 Collusive bidding, anti-competitive practices and any other similar conduct

Without prejudice to the provisions in sections 3 and 4 below, Bidders (including their agents, consultants, employees and subcontractors) shall not engage in any collusive bidding, anti-competitive practices or any other similar conduct in relation to:

– the preparation and submission of tenders;

– the clarification of tenders;

– the conduct and content of any negotiations, including final contract negotiations.

For the purposes of this call for tenders, collusive bidding, anti-competitive practices and any other similar conduct may include the disclosure to, or exchange or clarification with, any other Bidder of information (in any form), whether or not such information is confidential to the UPU or to any other Bidder, in order to alter the results of the call for tenders in such a way that would lead to an outcome other than that which would have been obtained through a competitive process. In addition to any other remedies available to it, the UPU may, at its sole discretion, immediately reject any tender submitted by a Bidder that, in the UPU's opinion, has engaged in any collusive bidding, anti-competitive practices or any other similar conduct with any other Bidder in relation to the preparation or submission of tenders, whether with respect to this call for tenders or other procurement processes conducted by the UPU.

2.9 Intellectual property

This call for tenders and all its attached documents, including any content, forms, statements, concepts, projects and procedures explicitly or implicitly forming part of the call for tenders, constitute the exclusive intellectual property of the UPU. This call for tenders is communicated to the various Bidders with the sole purpose of assisting them in the preparation of their respective tenders. Any hard copies of this call for tenders shall be destroyed or returned to the UPU by unsuccessful Bidders at the request of the UPU.

2.10 Privileges and immunities

Nothing in or relating to this call for tenders, the activities described herein or any potential agreements related thereto shall be deemed as a waiver, expressed or implied, of any of the privileges, immunities and facilities that the UPU enjoys as a specialized agency of the United Nations system, pursuant to the Swiss Host State Act and the Agreement on Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations (on Swiss territory), the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies (outside Switzerland), and any other conventions and laws recognizing and/or granting such privileges, immunities and facilities to the UPU and its officials (such as the International Organizations Immunities Act in the case of the United States of America).

Accordingly, the Vendor shall expressly acknowledge and agree that the property and assets of the UPU, including any archives, data, documents and funds belonging to the UPU or held by it (including, without limitation, the data/hosting environments and servers pertaining to or associated with the provision of the services, as well as any data or documents in any form belonging to or held by the UPU on behalf of UPU member countries and their designated operators), are inviolable and shall be immune from search, requisition, confiscation, expropriation and any other form of interference, whether through executive, administrative, judicial or legislative action. The Vendor shall immediately contact the UPU in the event of any attempt to violate or any violation of the UPU's privileges and immunities, and shall take all reasonable measures to prevent such violations.

In the light of the UPU's status as a specialized agency of the United Nations (and without prejudice to the observance, by the UPU, of any sanctions established by the United Nations Security Council), Bidders shall expressly certify their legal and operational willingness and ability to provide the services on a non-discriminatory basis for the benefit of all eligible entities established and/or situated in the territory of any UPU

member country, irrespective of the existence of diplomatic relations between a Bidder's country of incorporation and/or operation and any UPU member country (including its designated operators).

2.11 Tax exemption

Pursuant to article III, section 9, of the Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the Specialized Agencies, the UPU is exempt from all direct taxes and from customs restrictions, duties and charges of a similar nature in respect of articles imported or exported for its official use.

Furthermore, as an intergovernmental organization and a specialized agency of the United Nations, the UPU is exempt from value-added tax (VAT) in Switzerland (OLTVA, article 22; *Instructions 2001 sur la TVA*, articles 574, 816 and others), as well as in other countries. Therefore, all prices shall be indicated in "net" form, without VAT or similar taxes.

2.12 Language

Bidders must submit all tender documents entirely in English or French.

2.13 Signature

Tender documents shall be signed by a representative (or representatives) duly designated and authorized to act on the Bidder's behalf and with the authority to legally bind the Bidder and accept the terms and conditions of this call for tenders.

2.14 Participation notification

Upon receipt of this call for tenders, Bidders shall send confirmation of participation to the contact person(s) listed in section 2.15 by the deadline indicated in section 2.20.

2.15 Contact persons

Secretary of the Tenders and Procurements Committee
Universal Postal Union
International Bureau
Weltpoststrasse 4
3015 BERNE
SWITZERLAND

E-mail: caa@upu.int

2.16 Further inquiries and questions

Bidders must send any questions regarding the content of this call for tenders or any requests for clarification in writing to the contact person(s) listed in section 2.15 by 30 October 2026.

Answers to questions submitted by Bidders, as well as any additional information and updates relevant to this call for tenders, shall be published on the UPU website at www.upu.int/en/Universal-Postal-Union/Procurement.

2.17 Delivery of tenders and deadline

All tenders must be submitted to the UPU by e-mail only at RFP-2026-016@upu.int with RFP-2026-016 – Provision of senior communication coordination and advisory services as the subject line.

The deadline for the submission of tenders is **6 November 2026 at 18:00 CET.**

The UPU shall not take into consideration any tenders received after this date and time. Furthermore, it shall not accept any tenders sent to any e-mail address other than that specified above or sent by any other means.

There shall be no charge to the UPU for the preparation and submission of tender documents by Bidders.

2.18 Evaluation procedure

The objective of the UPU's evaluation process is to ensure the selection of a qualified, reliable and experienced Vendor capable of providing the specialized services and fulfilling the objectives set out in this call for tenders.

The UPU shall conduct its evaluation procedure with a view to determining as objectively as possible the tender that best meets its specific requirements. All tenders submitted shall be subject to an in-depth assessment, at the UPU's sole discretion, in order to enable the UPU to engage the most appropriate service provider. Due consideration will be given to Bidders' specific backgrounds, qualifications and experience in relation to the required services.

The prescribed structure of tenders, as set out in section 3, is mandatory for all Bidders. The UPU shall not take into consideration any tenders that do not fulfil the mandatory criteria.

Tenders received by the UPU must address all aspects of this call for tenders, and Bidders should identify any aspects where they envisage modifications being necessary or consider elements to be missing.

Tenders shall be evaluated on the basis of the following criteria, in descending order of importance:

– Quality of the tender (according to the specifications herein);

– Knowledge and experience of the Bidder and its team and/or consultant(s), as applicable to the subject matter;

– Price.

The winning tender will be selected based on a non-exhaustive list of criteria as set out in section 4. Bidders should therefore consider how their tender corresponds with the criteria listed and clearly indicate this in their response document.

The deliberations of the UPU Tenders and Procurements Committee (TPC) are strictly confidential. The TPC shall submit a report on its evaluation of the tenders received to the Director General of the UPU International Bureau, together with its final recommendation, for his assessment and authorization.

The UPU is not bound to accept the lowest tender and reserves the right to accept all or part of a tender. In awarding the contract, account will be taken of both the overall costs of the work and of the nature and quality of the services to be provided. The UPU reserves the right to negotiate prices and terms and conditions of contract after receipt of tenders.

Bidders will be informed of the outcome of their tender as soon as possible after the UPU has made its final selection.

2.19 Modification, suspension or cancellation of the call for tenders

The UPU reserves the right, at its sole discretion and at any time before the conclusion of the tender process (i.e. at any time prior to the signature of the relevant contract with the Vendor), to modify, suspend or cancel all or part of this call for tenders.

2.20 Tentative schedule

Publication of call for tenders	16 Octobre 2026
Deadline for submission of queries	30 October 2026
Deadline for provision of responses to queries	6 November 2026
Deadline for submission of tenders to the UPU	**16 November 2026 at 18:00 CET**
Estimated start of engagement	January 2027

3 Tender structure – Response format

All information provided by Bidders must be fully compliant with the terms and conditions set out in section 2 above, as well as the provisions of this section and the service requirements listed in section 4 below.

Moreover, the requirements stipulated in this call for tenders must be met in their entirety, according to the structure defined below and following the sequence and numbering provided in this section. The UPU shall evaluate all Bidder responses in accordance with the structure defined herein and shall have the right to reject any tenders that do not fulfil the requirements of this call for tenders.

For each of the requirements listed in this call for tenders, Bidders shall answer with one of the following statements:

– Covered;

– Covered with limitations (explaining relevant limitations);

– Not covered.

Where the answer is “covered” or “covered with limitations”, Bidders shall provide further details and/or examples of existing implementations of their solution in the field (existing use cases).

3.1 Cover letter

Bidders shall submit a cover letter including:

– A statement that the Bidder has read, understands and accepts all provisions of this call for tenders;

– The Bidder’s name, telephone number, postal address and e-mail address, and the name(s) of its representative(s);

– A statement that the Bidder’s tender documents are valid for a minimum period of 120 days.

The cover letter shall be signed by a representative (or representatives) duly designated and authorized to act on the Bidder’s behalf and with the authority to legally bind the Bidder and accept the terms and conditions of this call for tenders, and shall also include a confirmation of such authorization by the Bidder.

3.2 Executive summary

Bidders shall provide an executive summary highlighting the most important aspects of their tender.

3.3 Bidder information

Bidders, who shall be individual consultants, must provide the following information:

– Full name and contact details;

– Detailed CV, with copies of diplomas and certifications;

– Letter of motivation;

– At least two professional references, preferably from international organizations or public institutions;

– Portfolio of relevant work (see section 3.5).

3.4 Subcontractor information

Subcontracting is not envisaged for these services. The services shall be performed personally by the selected consultant.

3.5 Technical proposal

Bidders shall submit a technical proposal addressing all of the requirements set out in section 4 (Service requirements). This proposal should outline the methodology, processes and timelines, as appropriate, that Bidders intend to implement in order to fulfil the objectives of this call for tenders.

The technical proposal shall include a portfolio of up to ten samples of relevant work (e.g. communication plans, articles or publications, press material, campaign or brand materials).

3.6 Pricing structure

Bidders shall provide a monthly rate in CHF for the services proposed. **Offers not provided in CHF will be excluded.**

Bidders shall not include VAT in their pricing structure (see section 2.11 above). All pricing information shall be set out exclusively in Swiss francs (CHF).

3.7 Delivery and payment schedule

The target dates for provision of the services are as follows:

Start date: 1 January 2027
End date: 31 December 2027

The delivery and payment schedules should be proposed by Bidders in their pricing structures, and must be agreed with the UPU.

The services provided by the Vendor shall be invoiced in arrears on a monthly basis. The UPU will make payment within 30 business days of receipt of invoice, subject to its acceptance of the services provided and the Vendor's transmission to the UPU of any and all documentation clearly detailing the services to which the invoice pertains (in a format to be established by the UPU).

3.8 UPU General Terms and Conditions

Bidders shall include in their tender a statement of acceptance of the UPU General Terms and Conditions for the Provision of Services, attached hereto for reference.

The final terms of any contract arising from this call for tenders shall be defined by the UPU and accepted by the Vendor. Contract negotiations shall commence only after the final selection of a Vendor by the UPU.

4 Service requirements

4.1 Description of the services

The Vendor will be expected to provide the following services, under the supervision of the Coordinator for External Relations and Partnerships and in close collaboration with the members of the Communication and Outreach team:

1. Communication planning, content and media relations (approximately 50% of the time)

– **Planning and coordination:** manage the programme's annual work plan and the integrated editorial and production calendar; facilitate team planning meetings; follow up on deliverables, deadlines and priorities with contributors;

– **Strategy and advice:** contribute to the UPU communication strategy and develop integrated communication plans for UPU initiatives and campaigns; develop key messages and messaging guidelines; advise internal clients on the communication of their projects;

– **Editorial content:** support the editor expert in the editorial planning and execution of the Union Postale magazine and other corporate publications; draft and edit content, including web articles, feature stories, case studies, briefs and social media content, translating technical postal topics into accessible content for different audiences;

– **Media relations:** draft press releases, coordinate media outreach and responses to media requests, and prepare briefing material and talking points for executive management;

– **Monitoring and reporting:** define and track performance indicators for communication activities and prepare periodic reports.

2. Brand, production and events (approximately 25% of the time)

– **Brand and visual identity:** maintain the consistent application of the UPU brand and visual identity; propose updates to the brand guidelines, templates and brand toolkit if necessary; review visual products for consistency before validation by the programme;

– **Design, print and multimedia production:** manage design, layout and print production requests with the in-house design and print production team, in line with agreed priorities; brief and follow up external suppliers (photographers, videographers, designers, printers);

– **Campaigns and events:** manage the planning and execution of the communication of World Post Day, the International Letter-Writing Competition for Young People and other major UPU events, including concept notes, run-of-show documents, talking points and briefings.

3. Website and digital channels (approximately 25% of the time)

– **Website project:** support the ongoing project to revamp the UPU corporate website and migrate it to a new content management system, in coordination with the website project manager and external providers; follow up on timelines and deliverables; coordinate the collection, simplification and validation of content with contributing directorates; ensure editorial quality control during the testing and launch phases;

– **Digital content:** keep the website and other digital channels up to date and consistent with the UPU editorial standards, tone of voice and brand, and contribute to the governance of web content after launch;

– **Innovation:** support the introduction of AI-assisted and automated workflows (e.g. templates, multilingual layout, subtitling), in line with UPU rules on the use of AI.

Expected outputs

The services are expected to result in the following outputs:

– An annual communication work plan and an integrated editorial and production calendar, updated regularly;

– Communication plans, key messages and supporting material for priority initiatives, campaigns and events;

– Editorial, media and digital content delivered in line with UPU standards and agreed deadlines;

– Content of the revamped corporate website delivered and validated in line with the project timeline;

– Periodic reports on communication activities against agreed performance indicators.

4.2 Bidder requirements

Bidders shall be individual consultants with proven senior-level experience in institutional communication. Offers submitted by companies will not be considered.

Bidders are expected to be available on a full-time basis. Bidders do not need to be based in Berne to apply; however, the services shall be provided on site in Berne (see section 4.6).

Bidders shall demonstrate a record of satisfactory performance in similar activities (i.e. reference letters and/or work completion certificates). The business transactions and activities carried out by the Bidder must be compliant with the mandates and principles of the UPU.

4.3 Consultant requirements

Bidders shall meet the following minimum requirements:

– University degree in communication, journalism, public relations or a related field;

– Minimum of eight (8) years of professional experience in communication, public relations or journalism, including experience coordinating communication projects and contributors;

– Fluency in English or French, with a good working knowledge of the other.

The following would be considered assets:

– Experience in an international organization, the UN system or the postal sector;

– Experience in brand management and in overseeing design, print and multimedia production;

– Experience with AI-assisted tools for content production and workflow automation;

– Experience with complex website projects and content management systems;

4.4 Assessment criteria

Bidders will be assessed based on a scoring system of up to 100 points, focusing exclusively on qualifications, experience and suitability for the role.

A short list shall be established on the basis of the following criteria:

Criteria	*Points obtainable*
Relevant professional experience (as demonstrated in the CV): proven track record in institutional communication at senior level, including media relations and editorial production, preferably in an international organization, the UN system or a multi-stakeholder setting	30
Coordination and project management: demonstrated ability to coordinate multidisciplinary communication work, production calendars, contributors across departments and external suppliers	20
Quality of the portfolio: communication strategies and plans, editorial content, press material, campaign and event communication	15
Brand, visual and digital expertise: brand management, oversight of design, print and multimedia production, digital channels and use of AI-assisted tools, as well as experience with complex website projects and content management systems	15
Language proficiency: English and French;	10
Education: relevant academic background in communication, journalism, public relations or related fields	10
Total	**100**

Bidders shall provide evidence of their ability to meet these requirements by means of a list of references. Shortlisted bidders might be contacted for an interview, as part of the evaluation procedure.

4.5 Duration of services

The services are scheduled to commence in [January 2027] for a total contract term of twelve (12) months, renewable subject to satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

4.6 Location of the services

The consultant shall work on site from the headquarters of the UPU in Berne, Switzerland, for the duration of the contract. Bidders are not required to be based in Berne at the time of application, but the selected consultant shall be available to work from Berne as of the start of the services.

4.7 Reporting

The Vendor shall provide the UPU with monthly reports setting out the services performed and progress

against the agreed work plan, together with time sheets. Such reports shall be prepared in accordance with a structure and format defined by the UPU (i.e. time sheets).

The UPU may contest the Vendor's time sheets within 10 business days of receipt thereof. If the time sheets are not contested by the UPU within the said time frame, the services detailed therein may be deemed as duly provided by the Vendor and accepted by the UPU.

4.8 Other requirements

Bidders shall describe any relevant procedures for ensuring the continuity of the services provided and for appropriate backup and retraining, as well as any relevant procedures pertaining to project management and communication.

Bidders shall also confirm that their tender covers all costs associated with the provision of the services referred to herein. Any other costs to be incurred by the Vendor, including any travel and subsistence costs incurred in the provision of the services at locations other than its own premises and specifically designated by the UPU, shall be subject to the prior written consent of the UPU. No other fees shall be paid, with the exception of reimbursement of other unavoidable costs incurred for successful delivery of the services, which shall also be subject to the prior written consent of the UPU.

4.9 Additional information

Bidders may include any additional information that they deem necessary or relevant in order for the UPU to gain a clear and detailed understanding of the services being offered.