



ANNEX II: TERMS OF REFERENCE

UfM Digital Web Tender - 01 - PRO613CPA-2025

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1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Partner country

N/A

1.2. Contracting authority

The Union for the Mediterranean was launched in 2008. The UfM Secretariat (UfM) Public Affairs and Communication activities are aligned with the UfM mission to strive for regional cooperation, and its three key priorities: regional stability, human development and integration, while placing youth at the heart of the Mediterranean agenda.

The overall communication objective of the UfM is to increase the visibility, awareness and understanding of the role of the UfM as a unique action-oriented intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation, and the progress made in promoting regional dialogue and cooperation.

The UfM Communication and Public Affairs Unit ensures that key audiences are fully informed of and engaged with the mission, challenges and achievements of the UfM, with the following specific objectives:

- Position the image of the UfM as an action-oriented intergovernmental Euro-Mediterranean organisation that enhances regional dialogue and cooperation, and addresses the three key interrelated priorities: regional stability, human development and integration;
- Regularly inform and engage the consolidated UfM network of UfM activities to highlight strong political support for the institution, taking advantage of Ministerial Conferences as opportunities to highlight the development of sectorial regional agendas;
- Raise awareness on the achievements of the UfM, increasing the visibility and overall understanding of UfM activities, projects and initiatives among key target audiences and the general public;
- Highlight success stories as tangible examples of strengthened regional cooperation, highlight actions towards human and sustainable development, and engage with key opinion leaders to amplify positive messages.

The key audiences of the UfM Secretariat are as follows:

- Governments, ministers, senior officials, parliamentarians, civil servants, etc.
- Other institutional bodies e.g. international organisations.
- Financial Institutions e.g. IFIs, sovereign funds, local banks, etc.
- Opinion leaders e.g. think tanks, researchers, experts, policy analysts.
- Non-governmental stakeholders and civil society organisations.
- Private sector organisations.
- Influential journalists and media actors.
- Young people – as a transversal priority across all UfM actions



DIGITAL COMMUNICATION

A strong digital strategy is critical in order to drive truly successful engagement with UfM priority audiences. The UfM website is key to disseminating UfM content, engaging with UfM target groups and driving relevant traffic to the UfM website.

WEBSITE

The UfM website (<https://ufmsecretariat.org>) is currently programmed in PHP/HTML, administrated with a WordPress Content Management System, and hosted in dedicated WordPress specialized infrastructure.

UfM WordPress specialized infrastructure:

- Containerized Virtual Machine (CVM): 24 Power Units + 64GB Mem Storage
- Double IP address on each Point Of Access (POA)
- Double Load Balancer per network route.
- Double WAF reverse proxies per network route.
- UfM WordPress CVMs run on a cluster of nodes. Manager nodes in charge of CVM orchestration: 4 per cluster. Manager nodes are responsible for maintaining the WordPress server. If the server fails, the manager moves it to an active node.

The UfM website has a multilingual platform (EN, FR, AR). Menu and structure translations are handled in WPML plugin.

In 2021, a separate website dedicated to the official Mediterranean Day was launched (<https://mediterraneanday.com> / <http://dayofthemediterranean.org>), also multilingual and developed under wordpress CMS with Elementor plugin. The translations are also managed by the plugin WMPL. It is hosted in a specialized Wordpress infrastructure.

In 2024, the UfM launched the website for the Mediterranean Capitals of Culture and Dialogue (<https://medculturecapital.com/>), developed to support visibility and engagement around this flagship initiative. The website is built on WordPress using Elementor Pro and WPML.

Additionally, the UfM created a dedicated mini-site for the Mediterranean Pavilion at the UN Climate Conference COP (<https://ufmsecretariat.org/mediterraneanpavilion>), accessible through a subdomain of the main UfM website. This mini-site showcases COP agenda items and live events. It is updated through the same CMS system and maintains consistency with the UfM's visual identity. This site is updated once a year towards and during the conference.

In 2025, the UfM also supported the launch of the Women Journalist Network, a website aimed at amplifying the voices of female media professionals across the Euro-Mediterranean region and promoting gender-sensitive reporting on regional issues.

Furthermore, the UfM is developing in 2025 a restricted-access intranet platform for document sharing and agenda coordination with the UfM Senior Officials of Member States. This platform will be secured with access permissions to ensure confidentiality.



REGULAR EMAILINGS & NEWSLETTERS

The UfM will also aim to increase the visibility, awareness and overall understanding of the UfM initiatives through a targeted emailing strategy, thus ensuring that all the key stakeholders are regularly informed of the major UfM activities, events and announcements of interest.

The UfM website has an integrated newsletter subscription and emailing service system. It uses Mailchimp as a tool to gather the subscribers list and the send emails. Up until June 2025 the number of contacts increased to 38.000 approx.

2. Description of the assignment

2.1. Global objectives

- To provide hosting services, technical maintenance and support for UfM websites. Restructuring the website to make it more attractive for different UfM audiences.
- Mailing systems management and regular support in sending emails and newsletters.

2.2. Specific objectives

- Provide hosting service for the UfM website, Mediterranean Day, etc monthly.
- Upon request by the UfM, provide technical assistance and support for the management and developments of the UfM website(s).
- Upon request by the UfM, create layout pages, mini-sites and/or ad-hoc pages, such as reports pages, etc.
- Regular support on emailing, newsletters and contacts management.
- Upon request by the UfM, apply layout to regular mail-outs (invitations, info mails, etc.), design UfM e-Newsletters, and manage the different mailing lists and the dispatching system. The UfM has a list in Mailchimp of approx. 38,200 contacts as of June 2025.

2.3. Monitoring results and recommendation of improvements

Provide monthly status reports on the performance of the different activities within the Digital Communication strategy, including update KPIs documents, relevant documentation, and potential data to be presented at coordination meetings.

3. ASSUMPTIONS & RISKS

N/A

4. SCOPE OF THE WORK

4.1. Requested services, including suggested methodology

The assignment and deliverables are structured in the following activities:

- A. DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT: WEBSITE AND REGULAR EMAILINGS AND NEWSLETTERS**
- B. MONITORING OF RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATION OF IMPROVEMENTS**



DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT

ACTIVITY A1. HOSTING SERVICE

The contractor must provide the hosting for all UfM digital contents online 4 years from the signature of the contract, including all the pages of the website. The hosting solution foreseen for the website <https://ufmsecretariat.org> should maintain technical structure or be improved at similar cost. The Mediterranean Day website is hosted in a hosting that has the following structure:

- 1 Virtual Cores CPU

- Min. 750 MB Memory
- A provisioned storage disk image of 40GB with 2.5 GB of storage usage
- 2 provisioned storage disk images of 40GB each with 2.5 GB of storage usage used in staging servers.
- OS: Ubuntu LT 24.04
- PHP: 8.3

The contractor must also provide the hosting for The Knowledge Management and Communication Framework (KMCF), website to be developed with the European Commission to gather key papers and documentation on Research and Innovation.

The contractor shall ensure the UfM websites and all other UfM contents hosted remain online 24 hours, 7 days a week, and that technical support is provided to the UfM within less than 1 hour during office hours or within 10 hours outside office hours. The servers' hardware and software shall be scalable and shall be upgraded in order to maintain the websites' performance.

Physical security: the servers shall be hosted inside the European Union. The hosting location shall have the necessary security and safety equipment (limited access security control points, climate and humidity control, Fire Suppression System, power supply).

Data Backup: backups shall be performed on a four-week cycle. A minimum of half of the backups shall be kept offsite. At a very minimum, differential backup shall be performed on a daily basis and full backups shall be performed once a week.

The contractor must define a policy of security in case of failure of the server as well as for the configuration of the firewall.

DELIVERABLE:

- Monthly Hosting services, maintenance and backups.

ACTIVITY A2. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FOR WEBSITE AND NEWSLETTERS

The contractor will provide, upon request by the UfM, technical assistance for required maintenance, developments, analysis and error resolution, which comprises:

- Integration of basic new features on the website (new plugins or extensions) or updating of WordPress version
- SEO strategies, including general improvement tasks and improved positioning of the UfM in Google.



- Designing of web banners, graphics for web, new pages, new emailing templates, etc.
- Bug resolution
- Answers to any technical questions from UfM staff by email or phone

The contractor will be responsible for accompanying the UfM in creating new and special sections, including landing pages, sections, subscriptions and contact forms, etc.

The contractor shall provide contact details (email + mobile phone number) for the contact person (no generic address) and his/her back-up. The contractor shall answer any request of the UfM in the same or the next working day. In the case of bugs, priority should be given to the resolution of the problem (e.g. issue with the design, display of the contents, etc.). The bug should be solved within a reasonable time frame and a maximum of 5 working hours.

The UfM shall be notified in advance of scheduled routine maintenance as well as any emergency situations that may arise. Upon request, the contractor shall prepare and train UfM staff on digital developments, such as update of website content, improvements, new tools, etc. These trainings might be by phone or at the UfM offices.

The contractor will coordinate the production of and provide the necessary technical tools and services to allow the UfM to send unlimited emails to the database ('mailing list') of users in MailChimp or similar platforms. The contractor will handle the appropriate licensing, as well as the technical integration with the UfM website. The provider will add the figures of these emails in quarterly reports as well as enter them in the UfM KPI document.

All the tasks will be carried out in close liaison with the UfM.

DELIVERABLES:

- Approx. 2900 hours of technical support including web maintenance; bug resolution; development integration of new features and pages; design and mock-ups of newsletters (institutional and sectorial newsletters, press releases, VIP communications, "save the dates, invitations, etc.); and training session on web management, upon request.
- Approx. 624 hours of general management.

Subscription for unlimited emailing service for approx. 40,000 contacts.

ACTIVITY A3. Subscription and acquisition of new digital tools

Purchase a yearly subscription for graphic and visual resources, videos, graphics, photos and music (e.g. Envato, Canva, Flickr, etc.).

Upon request, purchase digital subscriptions or online tools/software such as: new software, cloud space, cloud software, automation tools, marketing tools, AI tools, publishing tools (Buzzer, Hootsuite or others), website analytics tools, templates, plugins, form builders, etc.



B. MONITORING RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATION OF IMPROVEMENTS

Reports

A monthly report on web analytics will be delivered, including general metrics, objectives and targets, month-by-month analysis, and recommendations on design, usability, and emailing. The reports will clearly show the results achieved across all activities, benchmarking them against the actions of other organisations such as international agencies, NGOs, public administrations, and private sector actors. Activities with limited impact will be identified, with specific recommendations for improvement.

The report will include both website and email statistics, as well as key figures, with a particular focus on recommendations for improvement in the following areas: general SEO, homepage and menus, languages, visiting countries, traffic from social media, bounce rates, user experience, design, usability, structure, health check, and referring pages. The contractor will also monitor the UfM's online brand presence, notably visibility on Google. Access to the UfM's Google Analytics and Mailchimp data will be granted.

These reports may be presented during a trimestral 1–2 hour session with the UfM, upon request. Upon request, the contractor will also prepare shorter reports or key figures on newsletters and/or website highlights. Coordination with the contractor responsible for social media will be ensured.

Monthly KPI spreadsheet

Key performance indicators will be defined in close liaison with the UfM and shall be entered by the contractor in the shared UfM KPI excel sheet. This spreadsheet will serve as a general dashboard for digital activity and is to be updated monthly.

DELIVERABLES

- Monthly updates of KPI spreadsheet with key indicators.
- Quarterly report on results achieved and, most importantly, recommendations to follow on SEO and other aspects. The December report will include a more comprehensive revision of the whole year and a set of recommended strategic and tactical actions for the UfM digital communication for the following year.
- Monthly 1-2h sessions at the UfM, upon request.

4.2. Working language(s)

English and/or Spanish

4.3. Project management

4.3.1. Responsible body

The project will be managed by Communication & Public Affairs Department.

All issues related to the technical elements in relation to this contract, mainly the specific activities as outlined in section 4.1. of these Terms of Reference, shall be taken by the project manager nominated by the contracting authority pursuant to special conditions of contract Article 2.1. The project manager will ensure these tasks in accordance with UfM internal rules and procedures.



5. LOCATION AND DURATION

5.1. Location(s) of assignment

The services will be carried out in the Provider's premises. Coordination meetings will take place at the headquarters of the UfM Secretariat located in Barcelona.

5.2. Commencement date & Period of implementation of tasks

The starting period will commence after signature of the contract by both parties.

The estimated implementation period shall be 4 years from the signature of the contract.

The Provider will deliver electronically to the UfM Contract Manager all the requested services within the time frames specified in the section *Submission and comments delivery timing*.

6. REQUIREMENTS

6.1. Personnel

Note that civil servants and other staff of the public administration of the partner country, or of international/regional organisations based in the country, shall only be able to provide input as experts if well justified. The justification should be submitted with the tender and shall include information on the added value the expert will bring as well on any potential interference or conflict of interest of the proposed expert in his/her function as expert and his/her present or previous functions working as civil servant. Moreover proof should be submitted that the expert is seconded or on personal leave.

The selection procedures used by the contractor to select the experts who provide input to the contract must be transparent, must guarantee the absence of professional conflicting interests and the absence of any discrimination based on former or current nationality, gender, place of residence, or any other ground. The findings of the selection panel must be recorded.

All experts must be independent and free from conflicts of interest in the responsibilities they take on.

6.1.1. Experts

The minimum requirements covered by the team of experts as a whole are detailed below:

Qualifications and skills

- Bachelor's Degree or relevant certification in Digital development, Multimedia development, or similar, or an equivalent professional experience in the same field for at least 4 years which must be above the general professional experience duration fixed below
- Bachelor's Degree or relevant certification in Multimedia development, Web Design and Programming or similar, or an equivalent professional experience in the same field for at least 2 years which must be above the general professional experience duration fixed below
- Excellent knowledge of the overall digital environment
- Very good knowledge of web server management and web hosting services



Work Experience

- At least 6 years of professional experience in the fields of Web design, programming and providing hosting solutions
- Work experience in programming and analysing the performance of websites for institutional and international organisations would be an asset

Languages:

- Excellent command of English
- Good level of French is desirable
- Arabic (reading comprehension) would be an asset

The Organisation and Methodology should demonstrate how the contract will comply with these requirements to accomplish the desired output(s). The Organisation and Methodology may include the name of an expert and his profile. Compliance (yes/no answer) of the team (as a whole) with the requirements will be checked, but there will be no marks given to the experts.]

It is the responsibility of the Provider to compose and propose a team and formula that has an appropriate mix of qualifications, skills and experience required for this engagement.

6.1.2. Support facilities & backstopping

The costs for support facilities, including backstopping, are included in the tenderer's financial offer.

6.2. Office accommodation

Office accommodation for each expert providing input to the contract is to be provided by the contractor.

6.3. Facilities to be provided by the contractor

The contractor shall ensure that experts are adequately supported and equipped. In particular it must ensure that there is sufficient administrative, secretarial and interpreting provision to enable experts to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. It must also transfer funds as necessary to support their work under the contract and to ensure that its employees are paid regularly and in a timely fashion

6.4. Equipment

No equipment is to be purchased on behalf of the contracting authority / partner country as part of this service contract or transferred to the contracting authority / partner country at the end of this contract. Any equipment related to this contract which is to be acquired by the partner country must be purchased by means of a separate supply tender procedure.

7. REPORTING

7.1. Content

The provider will submit a digital monitoring reports that will detail the actions performed and the results achieved by measuring the defined KPIs. It will also include possible corrective actions to gain more impact. No other dashboard or media tracking system will be required.



All invoices must be sent in one envoy (zip file) and must include: invoice, spreadsheet with hours of technical development and task, direct costs invoices and, if applicable, reports or deliverables (such as the quarterly report).

7.2. Language

The provider will submit the reports in English

7.3. Submission and comments delivery timing

The provider will perform all the activities and deliver the expected output. The costs related to the reimbursable items will be previously agreed and validated by the UfM project manager.