Consultant Terms of Reference

Ethical Communications and Impact Storytelling – Walking the Talk

1. Background and purpose

Act for Peace is the international humanitarian agency of the National Council of Churches in Australia. Through long-term partnerships with local organisations, it works with communities affected by conflict, displacement and disaster to strengthen safety, belonging and locally led solutions.

The global Walking the Talk project strengthens partner organisational capability, leadership, voice and influence, and promotes learning and advocacy across the partnership network. Partners already gather substantial program information; this pilot will help selected partners turn evidence and experiences of change into authentic, ethical and engaging short-form stories for their own digital and social media channels.

The consultancy will prioritise sustainable, partner-led storytelling capability, community voice and agency, and safe, meaningful inclusion of women, people with disabilities and other marginalised groups where appropriate. It will test an online training and mentoring model that could be adapted for wider use. With appropriate consent and approvals, selected partner-led stories may also be used by Act for Peace for supporter engagement, advocacy, mobilisation, Walking the Talk and ANCP reporting, or considered for submission to DFAT, ACFID and other networks.

The expected outcome is that each participating partner works towards at least one approved short-form video story relevant to its own work. Video is the primary format; practical still photography is a supporting skill. Editing responsibilities will be agreed at inception according to partner capacity and available tools.

2. Period and approach

Training and delivery period: January–June 2027. Preparatory planning, partner selection or contracting may commence in late 2026, subject to agreement. The assignment comprises inception, intensive online training, applied mentoring and story development, and final pilot learning. The precise schedule, number of sessions and mentoring frequency will be agreed in the inception plan.

3. Consultant scope and deliverables

Deliverable 1 — Inception and delivery plan (late 2026 or January 2027)

- Consult with relevant Act for Peace staff and selected partners; review program documents, communication priorities and applicable policies. Act for Peace selects and engages participating partners.
- Map participant equipment (smartphones, microphones, computers), software, connectivity, staff time, digital literacy and accessibility needs; identify minimum practical requirements, likely costs and adaptations.
- Provide a concise methodology, training and mentoring schedule, story identification criteria, partner-led planning tools, and secure arrangements for sharing and reviewing material. Include story themes only as options: partners retain final story selection.
- Document who undertakes editing (partner-led, consultant-supported or optional consultant-produced final edits), any separately costed editing, stages of narrative review and sign-off, and arrangements for access, storage, transfer, retention and deletion of source material. Incorporate consent, safeguarding, privacy and inclusion requirements.

Deliverable 2 — Intensive online practical training (January–February 2027, indicative)

Design and deliver interactive training, with reusable templates, field tools and practical exercises in interviewing, planning and content capture. Cover:

- How to distinguish activities and outputs from stories of meaningful change; story identification, storyboarding or equivalent planning, narrative structure, and documenting change over time (including before/during/after where appropriate).
- Ethical and dignified storytelling, power and representation, community agency, voices included or excluded, informed consent, safeguarding, privacy and inclusive representation.
- Interviews and first-person storytelling; smartphone filming, framing, lighting, sound, field production and B-roll; structuring short-form video.
- Accessible, free or low-cost editing and captioning options, basic hands-on editing where feasible, accessibility and social/digital formats, and secure storage and sharing.

Act for Peace may provide specialist safeguarding, consent, privacy or inclusion input or guest facilitation. The consultant remains responsible for incorporating the requirements into training and reviewing content against the agreed criteria; specialist escalation and organisational approvals remain with Act for Peace.

Deliverable 3 — Applied mentoring and story development (February–May 2027, indicative)

- Provide structured one-to-one mentoring for each participating partner, with more intensive support early on and reduced support as capability develops; group story clinics or peer learning may be added where useful.
- Review story concepts, plans, interview questions, filming plans, photographs/footage, narrative structure, gaps, rough cuts and captions; give constructive technical, editorial and inclusion feedback. Support partners to address ethics and consent concerns and refer significant issues to Act for Peace.
- Focus on transferable partner skills rather than producing material on partners' behalf. Where agreed and separately costed, provide final technical edits while partners retain control over narrative decisions and review.
- Maintain fortnightly meetings with the AfP Global Solidarity team leaders and Engagement team lead for feedback and trouble shooting.

Deliverable 4 — Completed stories and learning report (by June 2027)

- Support each participating partner to work towards one completed short-form video story suitable for its own channels. Confirm partner review of accuracy, representation and narrative; relevant informed consent; safeguarding review; and appropriate captions/accessibility before publication.
- Submit a brief pilot report covering partners and activities, stories completed, observed capability changes, partner feedback on the usefulness of skills for their own communications, challenges (including equipment, connectivity, software, accessibility, ethics and production), lessons, sustainability of editing arrangements and recommendations for refining or expanding the model. Distinguish stories produced from capability gained.

4. Act for Peace and participating partner contributions

Act for Peace

- Select and engage participating partners, facilitate introductions, provide relevant project documents and staff access, and supply organisational communications priorities and policies covering consent, privacy, safeguarding and ethical storytelling.
- Review the consultant's methodology, resources, deliverables and pilot recommendations; coordinate specialist guidance or guest input where needed (safeguarding, monitoring and evaluation of pilot initiative) and address significant consent, safeguarding or communications concerns.
- Through the Engagement Team, offer an initial conversation with each partner and consultant on existing content, audiences and possible themes, and one 30-minute story feedback session per partner during development. These are advisory inputs; story selection remains partner-led.
- Coordinate internal review and any Act for Peace approval for its own proposed use of stories; provide feedback on final outputs.

Participating partners

- Nominate staff, identify available time, equipment, connectivity and accessibility needs, and participate in training and mentoring.
- Identify suitable communities and participants, manage relationships and local permissions, obtain and document informed consent, and lead story planning, gathering and narrative decisions.
- Review accuracy, dignity, inclusion, representation and intended uses; ensure the collection of relevant consent documentation, commit to attending schedule trainings and meetings and work towards the successful completion of at least one video story along with participation of relevant monitoring and evaluation of the approach.

5. Indicative implementation timetable

Period	Key activities / outputs
Late 2026	Consultant engagement, partner identification and preparatory coordination.
January 2027	Inception, partner needs assessment, agreed workplan, engagement planning conversations; training may begin
January–February 2027	Intensive online training and practical exercises; story plans initiated
February–May 2027	Partner-led story gathering, one-to-one mentoring, review of footage and rough cuts, peer clinics if useful; Engagement Team feedback
June 2027	Final story review and approvals, mentoring completion, pilot learning report and recommendations

6. Payment milestones and contractual conditions

- 20% on signing of the contract and approval of the inception and delivery plan.
- 30% on completion of intensive training.
- 30% following agreed mid-point mentoring activities and satisfactory partner progress.
- 20% on completion of mentoring and submission of final deliverables, including the pilot learning and recommendations report.

Payment is subject to satisfactory completion of the relevant deliverables and submission of a valid invoice. Optional consultant final editing, equipment, software or other additional expenses must be identified and agreed in advance.

7. Consultant skills and experience

We're looking for someone who knows how to create engaging stories for social media and can help partners with limited experience develop these skills themselves, using simple equipment and affordable tools they already have. The priority is someone who can make storytelling practical, accessible and achievable for partners working remotely with limited technology and connectivity, helping them capture and document the work they are doing, demonstrate the difference it is making in their communities, and share this through their own communications and social media platforms.

Required:

- Experience in digital storytelling and creating engaging content for social media platforms, particularly short-form video.
- Experience delivering practical online training or mentoring to people with limited storytelling or digital communications skills.
- Ability to teach simple story gathering, interviewing, filming and basic editing using smartphones and accessible, low-cost or free tools.
- Understanding of ethical storytelling, informed consent and respectful representation of people and communities.
- Ability to work effectively across different cultures and adapt training to varying levels of technology, internet connectivity and experience.
- Strong communication, facilitation and interpersonal skills.

Desirable:

- Experience working with community organisations, NGOs or international development partners.
- Understanding of safeguarding, disability inclusion and gender-sensitive communications.

8. Expressions of Interest

Interested individuals/organisations are invited to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI), providing information on the following areas:

- relevant experience and CV of the consultant(s) to be engaged;
- examples or portfolio of relevant storytelling/video work;
- a short proposal outlining the proposed methodology for intensive training and ongoing mentoring, including:
    - proposed approach to online delivery across multiple countries and time zones;
    - proposed approach to securely reviewing and sharing footage and other story materials, including ownership, access and retention arrangements;
    - indicative workplan and timeline;
- budget/quotation, showing estimated consultancy days by phase, mentoring allowance, any optional consultant editing, software or equipment costs, and other anticipated expenses; and
- details of at least two relevant referees.

Enquiries regarding this consultancy should be directed to: Tracey: TRobinson@actforpeace.org.au

9. Safeguarding and compliance

Act for Peace takes the prevention of fraud, sexual misconduct, harassment and child abuse seriously. Consultant engagement is conditional on relevant background checks. Strict adherence to Act for Peace's Codes of Conduct,

Child Safeguarding and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment policies, and Privacy Policy is mandatory.

For our full Policies set please see: http://www.actforpeace.org.au/our-policies