

TERMS OF REFERENCE CONSULTANT
Strategic Planning Communications Consultant
Office of the Secretary-General

1. CONTEXT

The Association of Caribbean States (ACS) is a regional intergovernmental organisation that was established by virtue of the Convention establishing the Association of Caribbean States done in Cartagena de Indias in July 1994. Article III of the Convention defines the organisation as one of “consultation, cooperation and concerted action” whose purpose is “to identify and promote the implementation of policies and programmes”. The organisation’s work is focussed on: cooperation, disaster risk reduction, sustainable tourism, trade, transport and external economic relations, and the protection of the Caribbean Sea. The ACS has 25 Member States, 10 Association Members, 6 Founding Observers and 29 Observer States.

Thirty years after its establishment convention, the ACS operates in a rapidly evolving geopolitical landscape. This dynamic environment presents unprecedented challenges and transformative opportunities, shaped by emerging global trends and regional phenomena. These factors have significant implications for development and collaboration across the Caribbean.

In response to these shifts, the ACS will initiate a Strategic Planning process. This effort aims to establish a robust framework for the Association's next 10 years, developing a forward-looking framework that redefines the organisation’s Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Objectives that aligns with the priorities of its members.

To contribute to this process, the ACS is seeking to hire a **Senior Consultant to lead the design and development** of a **Communications Strategy within the Strategic Planning Process**, in accordance with the functions referred to herein.

2. OBJECTIVE

To recruit a suitably qualified candidate to:

Design and implement a comprehensive, forward-looking Communications Strategy to enhance the ACS’ ability to effectively convey and position its redefined vision, mission, and strategic priorities, fostering stakeholder trust, engagement, and collaboration across Member States and regional partners.

Provide strategic media and communications support for planning, executing, and promoting high-level events, including the Summit of Heads of State, the Ministerial Council, and related parallel events, to reinforce the organisation's visibility and leadership.

3. SCOPE OF WORK

The Senior Communications Consultant will report directly to the Secretary-General or, in their absence, to a designated senior official as appointed by the Secretary-General. Working in close collaboration with the Strategic Plan Working Group and the ACS' staff, the consultant will be responsible for achieving the following objectives:

4. MAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

A) Develop a Comprehensive Communications Strategy

- Design a forward-looking communication and outreach plan to effectively convey the ACS' redefined vision, mission, and strategic priorities, while significantly enhancing its visibility and positioning as a leading organisation in regional integration, sustainable development, and collaboration across the Caribbean.
- Define key communications goals, target audiences, and tailored messaging to strengthen the ACS' brand identity, raise awareness of its initiatives, and build a strong, positive reputation among stakeholders.
- Develop a detailed Communications Action Plan ensuring consistent and impactful engagement across traditional and digital media platforms.
- Facilitate internal capacity-building through tailored training sessions on communications strategies, empowering the ACS team to effectively amplify the organisation's message and maintain its elevated profile.

B) Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation

- Ensure the participation of key stakeholders, including ACS member staff and the technical team involved in the strategic planning process, to ensure that the Communication Strategy reflects the diverse priorities and expectations of the ACS constituents.
- Facilitate and contribute to workshops, focus groups, or other participatory sessions aimed at consolidating the Strategic Vision of the ACS in order to gather insights and validate communication priorities.

C) Message Development and Branding

- Develop clear, impactful messaging that effectively communicates the ACS' renewed Vision, Mission, Core Values, and Strategic Objectives.
- Provide strategic recommendations for revising and enhancing the ACS' branding to ensure consistency and alignment with the new Strategic Vision and Framework.
- Ensure all communication materials feature compelling visuals and narratives that resonate across all platforms.

D) Media and Digital Strategy

- Provide strategic advice and support to enhance the ACS' public positioning and visibility in alignment with its revised Strategic Vision, through targeted media engagement and advocacy strategies.
- Develop and implement initiatives to position the ACS as a leading voice on regional integration, collaboration, and sustainable development across the Caribbean.
- Propose innovative approaches to leverage traditional, digital, and social media platforms to expand the ACS' reach, influence, and engagement.
- Recommend tools, platforms, and methodologies that align with the ACS' revised strategic objectives to improve communications effectiveness.

E) Strategic Communication Advice for High-Level Events

- Provide strategic communications support for the planning, execution, and promotion of high-level ACS events, with a primary focus on the Summit of Heads of State of the Association of Caribbean States (ACS) in May 2025, including related ministerial meetings, forums, colloquiums, and parallel events.
- Develop tailored media and communications plans for these events, including press releases, media kits, and talking points for key speakers, ensuring alignment with the ACS' strategic priorities.
- Oversee media engagement before, during, and after events to maximise visibility, secure positive coverage, and strengthen the ACS' regional and international presence.
- Prepare post-event reports and impact assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of communication efforts, capture lessons learnt and provide actionable recommendations for future improvements.

5. DELIVERABLES

1. Project Execution Plan

Develop a detailed Project Execution Plan outlining activities, timelines, resource requirements, identifying potential risks and issues that may arise during the closeout phase and develop mitigation strategies.

2. Strategic Media and Communications Plan for the Summit

Design and execute a Media and Communications Plan for the 2025 Summit of Heads of State, including related ministerial meetings, forums, colloquiums, and parallel events. The plan will include tailored messaging, press releases, media kits, talking points, and strategies for maximising event production efforts, visibility and positive coverage.

3. Mapping of Strategic Communications Spaces and Stakeholders

Identify and analyse regional and global communications initiatives and channels relevant to the ACS' nature, purposes, and functions. This deliverable will include recommendations for engagement with key stakeholders to strengthen the ACS' visibility, influence and collaboration efforts.

4. Strategic Plan Workshop Support and Facilitation

Contribute to the planning, preparation, and facilitation of a four-day Strategic Plan Workshop with the ACS staff. This workshop will focus on aligning internal teams with the Strategic Vision and fostering cross-functional collaboration.

5. Strategic Message Development and Branding

A review the ACS' branding elements to align with its updated Strategic Vision and objectives. Provide recommendations to enhance visual identity and deliver a messaging and branding toolkit with templates, guidelines, and key messages for consistent and professional communication.

6. Periodic Progress Reports

Submit regular progress reports to the Secretary-General. These reports will outline ongoing developments, highlight key achievements, and provide recommendations for addressing challenges.

7. Draft Comprehensive Communications Strategy

First Submission of a Strategic Communications Framework to position the ACS' Strategic Vision Document 2025-2035 effectively. This document should articulate the ACS' vision, mission, and priorities, while fostering stakeholder trust and engagement.

8. Comprehensive Communication Strategy

Submission of a Strategic Communication Strategy, with the framework to position the ACS' Strategic Vision Document 2025-2035 effectively. This document should articulate the ACS' vision, mission, and priorities, while fostering stakeholder trust and engagement.

9. Finalised Communications Strategy (Post Summit Amendments)

To include any amendments to be made following the 10th Summit of the ACS, May 2025.

6. DURATION

Period: The Consultant would be contracted for approximately five (5) months.

Modality: Remote work, with availability for travel. All expenditures relating to travel, which the ACS deems necessary will be paid for by the Secretariat.

7. REMUNERATION

As full compensation for all services provided, you shall be paid the sum of Thirty Thousand Dollars United States Currency (US\$30,000.00) in keeping with the payment schedule below and subject to the review and acceptance of each deliverable by the ACS and submission of invoices in relation thereto from the Consultant.

The results/deliverables are outlined and enumerated in **clause 5** of this Agreement.

Actions / Milestones	Deliverable Reference numbers	Targeted Delivery Date	Payment (%)
Contract signing.	n/a	February 17 th , 2025	5%
Submission and approval of Project Execution Plan.	1	February 28 th , 2025	5%
Strategic Media and Communication Plan for the Summit.	2	March 17 th , 2025	10%
Mapping of Strategic Communication Spaces and Stakeholders.	3	March 28 th , 2025	10%
Strategic Plan Workshop Support and Facilitation.	4	April 22 nd 2025	20%
Strategic Message Development and Branding.	5	April 22 nd 2025	
Draft Comprehensive Communication Strategy & Draft Reports.	7	April 30 th , 2025	15%
Comprehensive Communication Strategy Document - For presentation at the 10th Summit.	8	May 12 th , 2025	15%
Post Summit Amendments - Finalised Comprehensive Communication Strategy Document.	9	June 30 th , 2025	20%
TOTAL			100%

8. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- A Bachelor’s degree or postgraduate degree in Communications, Journalism, Public Relations, International Business, or a related field is required.
- A minimum of 20 years of experience in strategic communications, public relations, or media engagement, preferably within international or multilateral organisations.
- Strong communication skills in writing and editing content and designing communication and outreach materials for an international organisation.
- Demonstrated ability to craft impactful messages and narratives for diverse audiences, with a proven track record of securing prominent earned media placements.

- Advanced proficiency in digital media strategy, content creation and platform optimization. Multimedia production skills are a valuable asset.
- Exceptional written and verbal communication abilities, complemented by strong networking and negotiation skills.
- Deep understanding of global and regional sustainable development priorities, including climate justice, regional cooperation, and social inclusion.
- In-depth familiarity with the political, economic, and social context of the Greater Caribbean and the Latin America region, paired with a strong commitment to fostering regional collaboration.
- Demonstrated ability to deliver high-quality outcomes, build relationships with stakeholders, and adapt strategies to evolving communication and media landscapes.

9. COMPETENCIES

- Excellent oral and written communication skills in in two (2) of the official languages of the ACS.
- Ability to design and implement communications strategies that align with organisational goals and objectives.
- Proficiency in identifying opportunities and challenges to maximise impact through communications.
- Proven ability to manage media relations and secure high-profile earned media coverage.
- Strong understanding of traditional, digital, and social media landscapes, with the ability to tailor strategies for diverse platforms.
- Skilled at fostering collaboration within multicultural and multidisciplinary teams.
- Proficient in building and maintaining relationships with key internal and external stakeholders
- Adept at mobilising support and fostering partnerships for shared goals.
- Strong awareness of cultural nuances and the ability to adapt communication approaches to resonate with diverse audiences.
- Demonstrated ability to develop compelling narratives and messaging that inspire action.
- Skilled at leveraging technology and innovative communication tools to expand reach and influence.

10. SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS

Eligible consultants are required to submit the following documents electronically to hrcontact@acs-aec.org :

1. A cover letter detailing experience relevant to the vacancy.
2. Curriculum Vitae along with relevant supporting documents.

Deadline for Applications: February 10th, 2025

Documents must be addressed to:

H.E. Noemi Espinoza Madrid
Secretary-General

Association of Caribbean States
5-7 Sweet Briar Road, St. Clair
PO Box 660, PORT OF SPAIN
Tel: 868-622-9575
Fax: 868-622-1653

Due to the volume of applications received, receipt of applications cannot be acknowledged individually. Candidates who do not receive any feedback within three months of the deadline should consider their application as unsuccessful.