

HPN Communications Strategy

Consultancy

Terms of Reference – October 26

1. Background

Since 1994, the Humanitarian Practice Network (HPN) has provided an independent forum for humanitarian practitioners to share knowledge, analysis and experience. Hosted by the Humanitarian Policy Group (HPG) at ODI Global, HPN is a partnership-led network centred on practitioner experience, multilingual knowledge products and exchanges across regions.

HPN shifted to a networked model in late 2024. During its network partner pilot phase, it has focused on onboarding networks from the Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA), while including global partners from other regions. Its aim to serve as a Global Majority platform rooted in local humanitarian action calls for a different approach to communicating, sharing and exchanging knowledge across languages and regional ecosystems.

HPN creates and shares knowledge through three main routes:



- **Practitioners' Knowledge Lab.** Network partners work together on priorities of shared interest and co-create products such as [Humanitarian Exchange](#) editions, [Network Papers](#), [articles](#) and audiovisual material.
- **Co-authorship and Mentorship Programme.** HPN provides editorial guidance and support to practitioners and their collaborators to develop their own knowledge products.
- **External submissions** through its website and referrals from practitioners, creating opportunities for voices beyond its formal partnerships to contribute.

As HPN publishes more content in different languages and formats, it needs to understand whom it currently reaches, which intended audiences it misses, how people discover and use its work, and how HPN and its network partners can promote products together, particularly as the network expands into additional regions. The consultancy should lead to practical choices that HPN can sustain with its available staff time and budget.

2. Purpose and Objectives

Develop an evidence-informed, practical communications and audience-development strategy for HPN's multilingual knowledge products and network.

The consultant will:

- Assess HPN's current communications, audience reach, discoverability and engagement across its website, email/newsletters and social media channels, subject to access to available data.
- Identify and prioritise audiences by language, geography, role, information needs and preferred channels, including local and national practitioners and networks, researchers, policymakers, donors and other knowledge users.
- Recommend how to position and present HPN's multilingual identity consistently while allowing language- and context-specific messaging, with

particular attention to English, Arabic and Swahili content; assess other languages present or planned.

- Design approaches to distribute and repurpose different publication formats, reach audiences beyond HPN's existing followers, and support partners and contributors in dissemination.
- Provide an actionable social media and website engagement roadmap, especially for LinkedIn, Facebook and the interactive website, with priorities, ownership, indicative costs and measures of success.

3. Scope of Work

A. Review and audience insight

- Review HPN pilot phase workplans, values & modus operandi, strategy and M&E Framework; in addition to editorial and product plans, communications assets, previous posts and channel performance for a mutually agreed period, ideally the previous 12 months.
- Analyse available websites, newsletters and social analytics by geography, language, source, device, engagement and conversion where technically possible. Record data gaps; do not infer audience characteristics from impressions alone.
- Conduct a light review of comparable practitioner networks or knowledge platforms (approximately three) and identify useful practices.
- Hold approximately 5-8 bilateral interviews or two small group discussions with HPN staff, network partners, contributors and representatives for intended audiences. HPN will assist with introductions and coordination. It is preferable if the consultant/team reaches out to people who consume content in relevant languages, rather than relying on translation counts as a measure of reach.
- Map priority audiences and their likely pathways from first contact to reading, sharing, contributing or joining an exchange. Identify barriers such as language presentation, platform access, accessibility, timing, and local

relevance. This will allow HPN's team to have more insight on when readers/audiences lose interest/access.

B. Multilingual positioning and promotion

- Assess HPN's name, descriptions, value proposition, visual consistency and language navigation across channels. Recommend an overarching identity and concise language-specific messaging principles, including when to translate, adapt or create original content for a given audience.
- Define a distribution approach for each of the three main routes of knowledge production: Practitioners' Knowledge Lab, Co-authorship and mentorship program and external submissions; including pre-launch, launch and sustained promotion and author/partner amplification in each format.
- Recommend discoverability improvements for the website, including language landing/navigation, metadata and search, cross-linking between language versions, accessibility and clear actions for readers. Specify changes as priorities for HPN's website (implementation of these changes are outside of this consultancy). *It should be noted that HPN's website is in redevelopment, and recommendations in this area will feed into it.*
- Recommend proportionate approaches to mailing lists, partner channels, events, direct outreach and selective paid promotion, with a view to reaching under-served audiences in HPN's target geographies.

C. Social media and measurement

- Define the distinct role of LinkedIn and Facebook for priority audiences and partners use, plus the role of the website as a destination and participation space. Recommend any other channel only if there is a convincing audience and resourcing case.
- Provide content pillars, example post formats, language choices, posting cadence, community engagement and moderation principles, partner tagging/co-publication guidance and a practical approval workflow.

- Supply a sample four-week multilingual editorial calendar around a representative HPN publication or event, with at least six illustrative posts/copy outlines distributed across channels and languages as appropriate. Illustrative copy may use English with clear adaptation briefs where specialist language production is needed.
- Establish a simple measurement framework: baseline where available, a small set of output, engagement and meaningful-use indicators, reporting cadence, accessible data sources and a method for learning from results. Avoid treating follower counts as the principal outcome.

4. Deliverables and Indicative Schedule

Deliverable	Content of deliverable	Timing from start	Indicative days
1. Inception Report	Definition of methodology, interview sample, data requests, detailed workplan and agreed audience/language scope	End of week 1	2
2. Communications and audience diagnostic	Review of HPN's existing communications and available analytics Assessment of audience reach and gaps Light comparison with approximately three relevant networks or platforms Findings from 5–8 interviews or two group discussions	Weeks 2-5	8

	Map of priority audiences, how they encounter HPN, and barriers to engagement. Present findings to HPN for discussion		
3. Draft multilingual communications strategy	Recommended positioning and messaging principles; audience priorities & promotion and distribution approaches for the Practitioners' Knowledge Lab, Co-authorship and Mentorship Programme, and external submissions Partner and contributor amplification strategy and prioritised recommendations for the website redevelopment.	Weeks 6–8	7
5. Draft social media and measurement roadmap	Defined roles for LinkedIn, Facebook and the interactive website: content pillars, formats, language choices, posting cadence, engagement and approval guidance Sample four-week editorial calendar with illustrative posts or copy outlines; and a proportionate measurement framework.	Weeks 8–9	4
6. Final Strategy	Revised strategy incorporating HPN's consolidated feedback	Weeks 10–12	4

	6 months action plan for the implementation of communication strategy Facilitated handover session with HPN's team		
Total			25

5. Required Experience

Applications are welcome from **individual consultants or teams of consultants**. Where a team applies, the proposal should identify the lead consultant, each member's role and the days allocated to them. Together, the consultant or team should demonstrate:

- At least seven years of relevant experience in strategic communications and audience development, preferably in humanitarian action, international development, research communications or practitioner networks.
- Experience developing practical communications strategies for multilingual audiences across different regions, including the Southwest Asia and North Africa (SWANA) and/or East Africa.
- Strong knowledge of content distribution, social media strategy, and website engagement, particularly through LinkedIn and Facebook.
- Ability to analyse audience and channel data, consult partners and intended audiences, and turn findings into recommendations that a small team can implement.
- Experience promoting practitioner-led knowledge products and working collaboratively with contributors or partner networks.

Language requirements: Excellent written English is required. The individual consultant, or at least one member of the proposed team, must have professional working proficiency in **Arabic and/or Swahili**. Applicants should state each team



member's language proficiency and explain how they will assess content and consult audiences in the relevant languages.

6. Application

Applicants should submit a **CV or team profiles**, a **short technical proposal (up to 4 pages)** describing approach and timeline, **two relevant examples of similar experiences**, availability, and a **financial proposal** showing days and rates by person, taxes and any separate expenses.

The number of days allocated to this consultancy are 25 days within a timeframe of 10-12 weeks of implementation.

All applications must be sent to s.abikhalil@odi.org while CCing hpn@odi.org and s.moore@odi.org before the **30th of October 2026**.