

Annex 1: Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference (ToR) for Procurement of DIF podcast: “Why Should We Care About African Data Centers?”.

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1. PURPOSE OF THE DOCUMENT

The purpose of this document is to define the requirements for the second phase of the DIF podcast: “Why Should We Care About African Data Centers?”. This procurement seeks to engage a full-service production team capable of delivering 30–40 high-quality podcast episodes between Q4 2025 and Q2 2026. The selected provider must have demonstrable experience in podcast production in Africa and the capacity to manage scripting, recording, editing, and publication with a consistent team.

HAUS Finnish Institute of Public Management Ltd (“the Client”) reserves the right to amend this document and the information contained herein.

2. PROGRAM BACKGROUND (DIF)

The Digital Investment Facility (DIF) is a European Union–funded initiative implemented by HAUS and GIZ. Its goal is to enable sustainable digital infrastructure across Africa by enhancing investment readiness and de-risking digital infrastructure projects, such as data centers and IXPs.

The initiative, part of the **European Union-African Union (EU-AU) Data Governance (2022–2026)**, fosters an inclusive, data-driven economy in Africa by advancing:

1. **Data Policy:** Supporting harmonized, human-centric data governance frameworks.
2. **Data Use Cases:** Creating value in sectors like fintech, health, agriculture, and governance through cross-border data sharing. The “Think Like an Investor” program falls under this objective, as it supports startups and SMEs in creating scalable, investment-ready digital innovations.
3. **Digital Investment Facility:** Enhancing investment in green, secure data infrastructure.

More information about the initiative can be found [here](https://d4dhub.eu/initiatives/data-governance-in-africa): <https://d4dhub.eu/initiatives/data-governance-in-africa>

The DIF podcast, launched in 2025, supports DIF’s mission by raising awareness and sharing expert insights across the industry in Africa. First phase consisted of 18 episodes across three thematic areas: green data centers, investment, and secure infrastructure.

For 2025–2026, DIF is scaling up the podcast through a second phase to solidify its role as a thought leader and expand industry reach. The second phase of the podcast will focus on one-on-one interviews with industry leaders in African digital infrastructure.

3. PROCUREMENT OBJECTIVE

The objective of this procurement is to engage a podcast production house that can:

- **Plan, script, and produce** 30–40 high-quality podcast episodes.
- **Provide a dedicated team who will directly work with the production**, not a collection of freelance CVs.

- **Deliver both audio and video** formats for each episode.
- **Demonstrate previous podcast production experience in Africa.**

The total budget for the contract is **€100,000 (exclusive of VAT)**.

4. DETAILED SCOPE OF SERVICES

ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

The selected Service Provider will be responsible for the full execution of the DIF podcast's second phase, producing 30–40 professional-quality episodes between Q4 2025 and Q2 2026. The Service Provider must have prior experience producing podcasts in Africa and provide a consistent, in-house team for the entire production lifecycle.

1. Pre-Production and Editorial Development

Objective:

To establish a clear production workflow and editorial plan aligned with DIF's strategic communication goals.

Activities:

- Support developing episode outlines, interview structures, and talking points in consultation with the DIF podcast host.
- Assist with guest briefing and background research.
- Establish and manage the production calendar, including logistics for remote and on-site recordings.

Deliverables:

- Finalized production plan and editorial schedule.
- 30–40 approved episode concepts with guest/host details.
- Production calendar with key milestones.

2. Audio and Video Recording (Production)

Objective:

To record podcast interviews and segments in high-quality audio and video formats, suitable for public release on Spotify, Apple, YouTube, and other platforms.

Activities:

- Set up and operate multi-camera and multi-microphone systems.
- Coordinate and conduct in-person recordings, primarily in Nairobi and selected African locations.
- Provide lighting, sound capture, and professional direction during sessions.
- Manage travel logistics when on-site production is required (in line with HAUS travel guidelines).

- Shoot promotional still material for the podcast.

Deliverables:

- High-quality raw audio and video files for each episode.
- Photo stills or b-roll footage (as available) for promotional use.
- On-location capture from relevant DIF events (if agreed separately).

3. Post-Production and Editing**Objective:**

To deliver fully edited, professional-grade podcast episodes and related promotional materials.

Activities:

- Audio mastering (sound levelling, background noise reduction, mixing).
- Video editing (cuts, transitions, graphics, subtitling).
- Visual branding overlays (intro/outro, logos).
- Creation of promotional assets (shorts, teaser clips, thumbnails, audiograms).

Deliverables:

- 30–40 podcast episodes (audio + video), platform-ready.
- 1-2 teaser or promotional clip per episode.
- Consistent visual identity across episodes (in line with DIF guidelines).
- Subtitled YouTube versions.

4. Content Delivery and Platform Coordination**Objective:**

To ensure smooth publication and syndication of podcast content across platforms.

Activities:

- Export and format episodes for podcast platforms (MP3, MP4, YouTube, etc.).
- Coordinate with DIF team on release schedule and publication logistics.
- Prepare episode metadata (titles, summaries, guest bios, hashtags).

Deliverables:

- Final episode files in required formats.
- Upload-ready packages including metadata, subtitles, and visuals.
- Delivery logs confirming transfer of files to the DIF team.

5. Project Management and Quality Control**Objective:**

To maintain high production standards and ensure smooth project execution within scope, budget, and timeline.

Activities:

- Provide a stable, assigned team with named roles throughout the project.
- Conduct regular check-ins with the DIF team.
- Manage timelines, approvals, and feedback loops efficiently.
- Maintain an archive of all production assets.

Deliverables:

- Monthly production reports and progress updates.
- Final asset archive (including all raw and edited files).
- Handover summary at project close.

5. IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

5.1. Geography

Podcast episodes will be recorded **on-site across the African continent**, specifically during **2–3 key industry events** where DIF and relevant stakeholders are present. Confirmed and potential locations include:

- **Africa Tech Festival (AfricaCom)** in Cape Town, South Africa

One or more regional digital infrastructure events hosted or attended by DIF in East, West, or Southern Africa

The Service Provider must be able to operate **in diverse African event environments**, including handling sound, video, and coordination within venue limitations.

5.2. Duration

The project will run from **October 2025 to June 2026**, with indicative phases as follows:

- **Pre-production & planning:** October–November 2025
- **On-site recording windows:** November 2025 – April 2026 (aligned with events)
- **Post-production & delivery:** Rolling basis, final delivery by June 2026

The schedule will be finalized jointly with the DIF team and aligned with confirmed event dates.

5.3. Expectations from service providers

Service Providers must:

- Be a registered company
- Provide a **compact, experienced, and reliable in-house production team** (no CV-shopping or open freelancer pools).
- Handle **end-to-end production**: scripting, recording (on-site and remote), editing, subtitling, and formatting for Spotify, YouTube, etc.
- Be skilled in **on-location work across Africa**, including live-event settings, with equipment that fits both high-quality expectations and travel feasibility.
- Demonstrate **prior experience producing podcasts or similar media in Africa**, ideally in digital development, tech, or infrastructure sectors.

- Coordinate **smoothly with event organizers and DIF** to integrate production into existing event agendas.

5.4. Risk Mitigation

The Service Provider must prepare a clear risk mitigation strategy that includes:

- **Location-specific contingencies**, such as backup plans for recording at alternate times or locations if event access is restricted.
- **Remote recording workflows** as fallback for missed in-person interviews.
- **Content delivery tracking** to avoid post-event bottlenecks.
- **Equipment redundancy and technical troubleshooting** protocols.
- Clear **internal planning to accommodate travel, visa issues, or team health/safety concerns**.
- The Provider is expected to manage all operational risks professionally and proactively, with minimal disruption to the DIF team.
- Financially stable. Previous income statements and balance sheets from the last full fiscal year must be provided

6. BUDGET AND PAYMENT TERMS

The maximum budget for this procurement is **€100,000 (exclusive of VAT)**.

This budget must cover the full production and delivery of 30–40 podcast episodes, including team costs, travel, equipment, editing, and content delivery. The Service Provider is expected to deliver high-quality, professional podcast content in both audio and video formats.

Detailed Budget Breakdown

Service Providers must include a **detailed budget breakdown** across the following components:

1. **Pre-Production and Editorial Development**
 - Planning, scripting, research, coordination
2. **Audio and Video Recording (Production)**
 - In-studio and on-location recordings across African events
3. **Post-Production and Editing**
 - Audio mastering, video editing, graphics, subtitles, teaser creation
4. **Content Delivery and Platform Coordination**
 - Formatting for Spotify, YouTube, etc., metadata, thumbnails
5. **Project Management and Quality Control**
 - Team oversight, reporting, client check-ins, file handover

Cost Alignment

- The proposed cost structure must **align with the above categories**, and Service Providers should include **all expected costs** within the €100,000 ceiling.
- Budgets must be clearly itemized to allow transparent comparison and assessment.

- **No additional fees** will be paid beyond the contract amount, unless pre-agreed in writing by the Client.

Travel Costs

- Travel to key African events is expected as part of the assignment.
- **All travel costs must be included in the proposed budget** and calculated according to the **Finnish Government's travel expense reimbursement guidelines**.

Payment Terms Proposal

Service Providers are required to propose payment terms in their submission and indicate whether they accept the following proposed structure:

Proposed Milestone-Based Payment Terms:

- **Prepayment:** 30% of the contract value upon contract signing
- **Midpoint Payment:** 30% after delivery of 15 of the episodes
- **Final Payment:** 40% upon approval of all final deliverables and media asset handover

All payments will be made in euros to the designated bank account of the Service Provider

7. INDICATIVE TIMELINE

Activity	Timeline
Contract Award	September 2025
Kick-Off Meeting	October 2025
Production Period	November 2025 – May 2026
Final Delivery	June 2026

8. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

1. Team Structure and requirements

- Proposals must present a **small, agile, and hands-on team** with clearly defined roles and responsibilities.
- Team members have 5 years of proven experience in their role
- **CV-shopping is strictly prohibited**. All team members proposed must be confirmed, available, and committed to the assignment.
- Subcontracting is only permitted with prior written approval and does not release the lead Service Provider from full responsibility.

2. Legal and Administrative Requirements

- Must be a legally registered entity eligible to enter into a contract with HAUS Finnish Institute of Public Management Ltd.
- Must be able to invoice in euros and comply with Finnish and EU public procurement regulations.
- Must comply with data protection legislation, including the **EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)**.

3. Financial requirements

- The financial status of the service provider must be provided by:
 - HAUS can confirm financial status from open sources, or
 - Submitting the financial details from the latest full fiscal year as a readable attachment to the proposal
- Service provider must show at least three times revenue of the current proposal total budget

4. Ethical Conduct

- Service Providers must adhere to HAUS's and project's principles of business ethics, transparency, and fair competition.
- Any conflict of interest must be declared at the time of submission.
- Bidders must not offer or provide any benefit to HAUS staff or affiliates in relation to this procurement.

9. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Offers will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Technical proposal (work plan)

1. Understanding of Project Objectives (25%)

- Demonstrates a clear understanding of DIF's goals, the context of digital infrastructure in Africa, and the strategic role of the podcast.
- Shows appreciation for the challenges and opportunities of event-based, multi-country production in the African context.

2. Approach and Methodology (35%)

- Demonstrate the team will realistically operate across African event locations, with contingency planning built in.
- Demonstrates hands-on involvement from the proposed team in the aspects of:
 - **Pre-Production and Editorial Development**
 - Planning, scripting, research, coordination
 - **Audio and Video Recording (Production)**
 - In-studio and on-location recordings across African events
 - **Post-Production and Editing**
 - Audio mastering, video editing, graphics, subtitles, teaser creation

- **Content Delivery and Platform Coordination**
 - Formatting for Spotify, YouTube, etc., metadata, thumbnails

Project Management and Quality Control

3. Relevant Experience and African Context (20%)

- Proven sample of a **podcast production** (English language) in a European Union funded project
 - Demonstrates understanding of EU visibility guidelines
 - Documentation that demonstrates the production has been carried out by the service provider
 - Published on a commercial platform (Spotify, YouTube, Apple podcasts, Amazon music, Audible etc.)
- Additional consideration will be given for experience in relevant topics such as infrastructure, tech, or development communication in emerging markets

Budget

4. Cost-Effectiveness and Budget Clarity (20%)

- Provides a clear, itemized budget that aligns with the work plan and travel requirements.
- Offers value for money without compromising quality.
- Efficiency evaluated on daily rate of the implementation

10. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION DETAILS

All proposals and the required documentation must be submitted electronically by 12th September 2025, 12:00 EET (Helsinki time), through Hilma Public procurement portal.

The technical proposal must not exceed 10 pages, including any cover page and table of contents. Expert CVs may be provided separately and are limited to 2 pages each. The minimum font size is 11 points. All annexes must be clearly labelled and properly referenced within the proposal.

The following documents are required as a part of the proposal, as separate readable files:

1. Technical proposal of the podcast production
2. All CVs of the experts that will be working in the production team
3. **Client References:** Sample podcast production (provide the link to the sample), with documentation that clearly shows that the work can be attributed to the company presenting its proposal.
4. Budget of the proposal
5. In case corporation status cannot be confirmed via open source by HAUS:
 - a. Latest fiscal year income statement
 - b. Tax compliance documentation
 - c. Certificate of incorporation

Only attached documents will be evaluated as a part of the proposal, excluding the client reference that can be added as a working [link to a relevant podcast production](#).

Proposals exceeding the maximum page limit, late submissions, or incomplete proposals will not be considered.

11. QUESTIONS DURING PROCUREMENT PROCESS

During the procurement procedure, the tenderer's may request additional information by submitting queries and clarifications concerning the procedure using the Supplier Portal. You will also find the answers provided to your questions in the same place. **The question period will remain open until 27th August 2025. All questions received will be addressed by 29th August 2025.** Please ensure that all inquiries are submitted within the specified timeframe to allow for a timely response.

Only communication and contacts made through the Supplier Portal will be considered. The Contracting Authority is unable to respond to queries made otherwise, for example by telephone, mail or e-mail.

12. ATTACHMENT FROM THE SERVICE PROVIDER

If the Service Provider is selected based on the tendering process, they are required to provide the following documents before signing the service contract:

- **Certificate of Incorporation:** Proof of the Service Provider's legal status.
- **Tax Compliance Status:** Documentation demonstrating the Service Provider's compliance with tax regulations.
- **Financial Statements:** Recent financial statements to assess the Service Provider's financial stability.

13. PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT CLAUSE

Service Provider seeking to work with the Client (HAUS) shall adhere to the following principles:

- **Business Ethics:** Service Provider are expected to uphold the highest standards of business ethics when collaborating with the Client.
- **Transparency of Information Provision:** Service Provider must refrain from engaging in any fraudulent activities or misrepresenting information to influence the selection and contract awarding process in their favour.
- **Fair Competition:** Service Provider should abstain from participating in corrupt, collusive, or coercive practices.
- **Officials Not to Benefit:** The Service Provider guarantees that no official associated with the Client has received or will receive any direct or indirect benefit from the Bidder, the Service Contract or its award. Any violation of this provision will be deemed a breach of a fundamental term of the Service Contract.
- **Data Protection:** Service Provider must comply with all relevant data protection laws and regulations, ensuring the confidentiality and security of any personal or sensitive data provided during the collaboration.