

**“Modernizing Uzbekistan National Innovation System (MUNIS)” Project
Ministry of Higher Education, Science, and Innovations of the Republic of Uzbekistan**

Terms of Reference

**Title of Assignment: Upgrade the Institute’s website and make it more user-friendly
and attractive for research partners, funders and businesses**

BACKGROUND

In 2024, the Institute for Advanced International Studies at the University of World Economy and Diplomacy was awarded a Public Research Institutes Modernization Program (PRIM) grant by the Project Implementation Unit of the “Modernizing Uzbekistan National Innovation System (MUNIS)” project under the Agency for Innovative Development. The awarded grant amount is \$195,600 and its implementation period from December 2024 to December 2025. Within the given grant, the title of the IAIS institutional modernization plan is “Building Institutional Capacity for Sustainable Futures: A Pathway to Competitiveness in Central Asia and Beyond”.

MUNIS PRIM grant program is envisaged under the Subcomponent 1.3 - Public Research Institutes Modernization of the MUNIS Project. The MUNIS Project Development Objective (PDO) aims to enable the development of a market-oriented national innovation system in Uzbekistan. Long-term priorities of national science and innovation sector transformation are defined in the Concept of Uzbekistan Science Development until 2030 (Presidential Decree PF-6097, 29.10.2020).

This strategic concept defined goals and targets for transformation of public management of science, improving science funding mechanisms, diversification of sources for financing, modernization of research infrastructure, and developing data and information systems. In particular, the Concept indicates a comprehensive approach to the transformation of PRIs and envisages scientific infrastructure update, as well as cooperation of institutions with enterprises in the real sector of economy, creation of innovative enterprises, cooperation between various actors of the national innovation infrastructure (institutes, foundations, laboratories, scientific and technical parks, etc.), improving management, planning and forecasting of PRIs, better community outreach of PRIs to increase awareness of society on societal and economic benefits of scientific programs.

Through this grant, IAIS seeks to strengthen its institutional capacity to tackle the interconnected challenges of sustainable development, water and climate diplomacy, energy diplomacy, international trade, and related areas. This project is aligned with IAIS’s strategic vision to establish itself as a regional leader in research, policy dialogue, and practical solutions, enhancing its competitiveness while shaping global policy frameworks.

Central Asia faces pressing challenges at the nexus of environmental sustainability, international trade, and energy security. With Uzbekistan’s ongoing efforts to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the region’s struggles with climate change, water scarcity, and energy transition, there is a critical need for rigorous research and informed policy guidance. IAIS, leveraging its expanding centers and interdisciplinary expertise, is well-positioned to provide such leadership but requires further capacity building to achieve its full potential. This project aims to enhance IAIS’s ability to deliver high-impact research and policy solutions that support sustainable development and regional growth.

The project has three core objectives:

1. Upgrading Research Infrastructure and Data Exchange: Modernize IAIS’s digital platforms to support diverse research topics by developing an internal data management system and securing access to external databases.

2. Promoting Strategic Collaboration: Strengthen partnerships with industries, international organizations, and research institutions to foster joint research and knowledge exchange.

3. Building Institutional Capacity: Enhance IAIS's capabilities through staff training in research methods, resource mobilization, leadership development, and governance, ensuring long-term policy influence and research excellence.

ASSIGNMENT OBJECTIVE & BUDGET

This TOR is to hire a consultancy company to upgrade IAIS website, making it more user-friendly, visually appealing, and attractive to research partners, funders, and businesses. The consultancy firm will deliver a modern website with enhanced navigation, dedicated sections for key stakeholders, integration of research databases and the Document Management System (DMS), advanced multimedia features, and improved SEO and analytics capabilities. The work will be carried out by the Consultant company, with on-site collaboration and involvement of the Consultant's experts as needed.

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF SERVICES

The Institute of Advanced Information Studies (IAIS) is committed to advancing its organizational effectiveness and stakeholder engagement by strengthening its digital presence and online systems. To achieve this, IAIS seeks to engage a qualified consultancy firm to design, upgrade, and deliver a fully modernized, user-friendly, and visually appealing website. This initiative aims to better serve research partners, funders, and businesses, while showcasing the Institute's research excellence and collaboration opportunities.

The primary objective of this engagement is to develop and launch an upgraded website with an enhanced user experience, intuitive navigation, and a clear content structure. The updated website will feature dedicated sections for research partners, sponsors, and business collaborators—highlighting opportunities for engagement and past successful projects. The consultant will integrate accessible repositories for research publications, policy briefs, and reports, along with improved search functionality and secure access to the Institute's Document Management System (DMS) for authorized staff.

Additionally, the consultant will enrich the website with multimedia features such as videos, interactive content, and infographics to effectively communicate research outcomes and partnership stories. The consultancy will also implement robust SEO strategies and set up analytics tools to monitor website performance and user engagement. Comprehensive user manuals and training sessions will be provided to ensure staff can efficiently manage content and utilize analytics, thereby fostering a culture of digital best practices across the Institute.

As part of the provision of services, the consultant will be responsible for the following key actions:

1. Website Design and User Experience

- Develop a modern, responsive, and visually attractive website design aligned with the Institute's branding.
- Ensure the website is fully user-friendly across devices (desktop, tablet, mobile).
- Enhance accessibility standards to accommodate diverse users.

2. Navigation and Structure

- Simplify and reorganize the website navigation for intuitive user journeys.
- Categorize content logically, including research outputs, news, and events.
- Ensure easy and quick access to key information.

3. Dedicated Sections for Stakeholders

- Create distinct landing pages or sections for:

- Research partners
- Sponsors/funders
- Businesses and industry collaborators
- Highlight collaboration opportunities, benefits, and past projects in these sections.

4. Integration of Research Databases and DMS

- Integrate an accessible repository for research papers, policy briefs, and reports.
- Implement advanced search functionality for easy retrieval of documents.
- Provide secure access to the Institute's Document Management System (DMS) for authorized staff.

5. Multimedia Features

- Incorporate videos, interactive infographics, and other multimedia elements to showcase research and partnerships.
- Ensure multimedia content is optimized for fast loading and compatibility.

6. SEO Optimization and Analytics

- Conduct SEO optimization to improve search engine rankings and visibility.
- Set up Google Analytics or equivalent tools to track website traffic, user behavior, and other key metrics.
- Provide training or documentation for staff to utilize analytics tools.

DURATION OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The contract period is **4 months, tentatively scheduled from June 20, 2025, to October 20, 2025**. Extension of the contract may be considered based on project outcomes and evolving business requirements. Training is anticipated to be delivered as a 3-day, in-person workshop. The training schedule will be designed to include interactive sessions, regular breaks, and practical exercises to ensure maximum engagement and effective learning.

EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

The table below shows the key deliverables of the Consultant's work.

| # | Description | Timeline | Expected Results |
|---|--|-------------------|--|
| 1 | Inception Report, including detailed work plan and initial design concepts outlining approach and methodology. | Week 1 - Week 2 | Clear roadmap and design direction approved by the Institute to guide the project execution. |
| 2 | Visual representations of the upgraded website layout and user interface for review and feedback. | Week 3 - Week 4 | Approved wireframes and mockups that reflect the desired look, feel, and user experience. |
| 3 | Fully Functional Upgraded Website | Week 5 - Week 12 | A fully operational, user-friendly, and visually appealing website accessible to all target users. |
| 4 | Comprehensive documentation and training sessions for | Week 12 - Week 13 | Staff equipped with the knowledge and tools to manage website content and monitor performance. |

| | | | |
|---|--|-------------------|--|
| | Institute staff on website management and analytics tools. | | |
| 5 | Final Report - Summary of work completed, challenges encountered, and recommendations for future improvements. | Week 14 - Week 16 | A detailed project closure report providing insights and guidance for ongoing website maintenance. |

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

| Nº | Deliverable | Payment/% of the total contract amount |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | Upon signing the contract | 10% |
| 2 | Inception Report with detailed workplan and initial design | 10% |
| 3 | Visual representations of the upgraded website layout and user interface for review and feedback. | 20% |
| 4 | Fully updated website available | 30% |
| 5 | Organization of trainings for staff and Submission of final report with all final results | 30% |

REPORTING ARRANGEMENTS

The Consultant shall report to and coordinate activities with the IAIS Project Manager or a designated staff member appointed by the Project Manager. Upon completion of services, the Consultant will submit a comprehensive report and a duly executed Act of Work Performed to the Client.

QUALIFICATIONS CRITERIA

To be selected Consultant Company shall meet the following qualification requirements:

| Category | Requirements |
|---------------------------|---|
| Consultant Company | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website Design and User Experience: At least 3 years of proven experience designing and developing modern, responsive, and visually attractive websites aligned with organizational branding. • Navigation and Structure: Experience simplifying and reorganizing website navigation for intuitive user journeys; Ability to logically categorize content such as research outputs, news, and events for easy access. • Integration of Research Databases and DMS: Minimum 3 years' experience in the design, development, and deployment of document management systems (DMS) or enterprise content management solutions. • Multimedia Features: Experience incorporating videos, interactive infographics, and other multimedia elements to enhance web content. |

| Category | Requirements |
|----------|---|
| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SEO Optimization and Analytics: Demonstrated success in conducting search engine optimization to improve web visibility and ranking: Experience integrating analytics tools (e.g., Google Analytics) to monitor website traffic, user behavior, and engagement. • Training and Support: Experience in conducting staff training and capacity building on DMS and website management, including the development of user manuals, FAQs, and video tutorials. |

Key personnel of the company shall meet the following minimum requirements:

| Nº | Position | General qualifications (relevant education, training, and experience) | General experience (overall work experience in the sector) | Specific experience (experience in the sector/similar assignments) |
|----|------------------------|--|--|--|
| 1 | Web Developer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree in Computer Science, Web Development, Software Engineering, or related field (preferred but not mandatory); alternatively, relevant certifications or coding bootcamp completion. • Certifications in web development (e.g., Certified Web Developer, W3Schools, Udacity, Codecademy) are beneficial. • Proficiency in HTML, CSS, JavaScript, and familiarity with front-end/back-end frameworks (React, Angular, Vue.js, Node.js, Django, Laravel). | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2–4 years of experience in web development or related IT fields. • Experience with content management systems (CMS) and responsive web design | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Building modern, accessible, and responsive websites. • Integrating websites with document management systems (DMS) or research repositories. • Implementing user experience (UX) and accessibility standards (WCAG, ADA). |
| 2 | Project Manager | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree in Business, Project Management, Information Technology, or related field. • PMP, PRINCE2, or | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5+ years of project management experience, preferably in IT or digital transformation projects. • Experience managing | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience with stakeholder management, resource allocation, and budget control. |

| | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|---|---|---|
| | | equivalent project management certification. • Leadership, communication, risk management, and organizational skills. | multidisciplinary teams and client relationships. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track record of delivering projects on time and within scope. • Overseeing digital transformation initiatives and change management. |
| 3 | UI/UX Designer | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bachelor's degree in Graphic Design, Interaction Design, or related field; or relevant certifications. • Certifications in UX/UI design or related tools (Figma, Sketch, Adobe XD) are beneficial. • Visual design, user research, wireframing, prototyping, and understanding of accessibility standards | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2–3 years of experience in UI/UX design for web and digital products. • Experience collaborating with developers and content creators. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing intuitive navigation and user journeys for complex websites. • Creating accessible interfaces and stakeholder-specific landing pages. • Incorporating multimedia elements and optimizing for user engagement. |

APPLICATION PROCESS

Interested candidates should submit:

- Company profile (without details about staff)
- Relevant work samples or references
- Proposed methodology and workplan
- Financial proposal

Applications should be submitted via email for the attention of Mr Shakhboz Akhmedov via the following address: info@iais.uz by 23:59 (Tashkent time) June 9, 2025.