TERMS OF REFERENCE
Public tender for a multi-channel OTT Application
RSF reference: AO Svoboda application

About RSF

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) - known internationally as Reporters sans Frontières (RSF) - is an **international non-profit organisation** that **promotes press freedom, pluralism and independence**. By fighting censorship and supporting journalists and media outlets persecuted for their activities, RSF defends an essential pillar of democracy.

With consultative status with the United Nations, UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), RSF is an **independent organisation based in Paris**. Strong with **6 sections** (Germany, Austria, Spain, Finland, Sweden, Switzerland), **7 regional offices** (London, Brussels, Tunis, Washington DC, Rio de Janeiro, Dakar, Taipei), **4 representatives abroad** and network of correspondents in 150 countries, RSF is able to mobilise and alert on issues related to the freedom of the press and the protection of journalists and media professionals.

For more information on RSF's mandate and activities, please visit our website : https://rsf.org/fr/qui-sommes-nous .

Intervention context

Named after the Russian word for "freedom," the Svoboda Satellite Package is a comprehensive broadcasting solution designed to bring reliable news sources to regions and populations fed by disinformation and propaganda. This idea originated from the Denis Diderot Committee, a collective founded by media experts to promote the free flow of information without war propaganda and disinformation, which has partnered with RSF since 2022 on exposing propaganda related to the war in Ukraine.

On March 5, 2024, RSF officially launched the satellite package to provide independent journalism to Russian-speaking populations, particularly in Russia, Belarus, and occupied Ukrainian territories. This package includes around ten independent television and radio channels broadcasting in Russian from Europe, aiming to counter Russian propaganda and offer reliable sources of information. Since satellite television is the primary source of news for approximately 45% of Russian-speaking households, this initiative helps bypass Kremlin-controlled media. The official launch took place at the European Parliament in Brussels, attended by political figures and RSF representatives.

In this context, RSF is now seeking to expand the reach of the channel offering beyond satellite. Implementing an OTT platform with the same channels as satellite would help to achieve this goal. In this context, RSF seeks to contract with a service provider who can deliver a turnkey solution.

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Consultancy objectives

The general objective of this tender is to select the best fitted solution to develop a multi-channel OTT platform to strengthen the impact of the Svoboda package, and enhance reachability to the Russian-speaking populations. More specifically, RSF is looking for a service provider capable of 1) developing the application, both on Android and iOS, 2) launching the application, 3) ensuring its operation and maintenance.

Scope of work

Requirements for the application

The application designed will be compliant with the following technical criteria to meet RSF's expectations :

- A fully integrated OTT solution,
- A frontend solution, app for iOS and Android - with uploads to the respective app stores of Apple and Google,
- OTT player development for web browsers as an option,
- Support for legacy and the latest versions of Android and Apple iOS,
- Ability to adjust the apps to RSF requirements for importing the RSF TV and radio channels, the RSF logo, Cyrillic EPG support, English and Russian GUI,
- No viewer registration and DRM protection at the start, but DRM and payments as an option per channel,
- Backend solution with content transcoding to hLS standard, EPG adding, adaptive bitrate streaming (ABR) support…,
- Use of TV and radio channels sources, the RSF DVB transport stream from Hotbird 13.0E satellite and SRT transport stream via ethernet. Automatic backup switching is required. Transport streams have EPG streams inside,
- Required support : video format - sd h.264, Audio format, Mpeg1,
- Provision of real-time monitoring of HLS streams with alarm notification,
- HLS content delivery via CDNs (main target: Russia),
- Provision of optional catch-up TV, timeshifting, viewing and recording of content library,
- A system demonstrating significant security measures to prevent DDoS and other such attacks,
- Provision of the option for payment and registration for additional features like catch-up, timeshifting etc,
- System allowing for advertising integration,
- SLA with 99.95% delivery guaranteed,
- Provision of channel viewing analytics

Expected deliverables

- Kick-off meeting to validate the methodology, timeline and delivery of the application,

- A restitution meeting with test report of the prototype to validate the application,
- Launch of the application on Google and Apple app stores,
- Quarterly business reviews on the operation, maintenance, legacy and troubleshooting once the application is launched

Budget

RSF expects a financial proposal matching what is expected in the technical criteria listed previously and clearly outlining :
- The upfront and operating costs,
- CDN and other operating costs defined on an average per user basis, with an explanation of how the average is calculated,
- An option to scale to 25 radio and video channels,
- The optional services mentioned in the technical criteria should all be priced separately,
- The proposed terms of payment.

Application

Applications may be submitted in **English** or **French**. They must include :
- a **technical proposal** including: the candidate's experience, the solutions envisaged to support RSF, the material and human resources mobilized for the service, the methodologies proposed for the service and a timetable indicating the major stages envisaged by the service provider to support RSF for the above-mentioned services, as well as the procedures for the term of the project with the relevant necessary notice,
- a **financial proposal,** including detailed budget headings and a global amount including all taxes; with the optional services separated,
- The attached Excel document filled out,
- A signed statement of integrity (example provided in the attachment),
- A list of the individuals in the management of the company to insure none are on any sanction lists to which RSF must comply. The individuals should include the board of directors, the general director and the financial director.

Submission

Applications should be sent to Jim Phillipoff, technical project manager, **jphillipoff_ext@rsf.org** and **lalluinbichet@rsf.org,** RSF director of projects, and **mention the tender reference** (*AO Svoboda application*) in the email title.

Schedule

- Applications will be evaluated as they are received, with a **deadline of midnight April 25th, 2025 (UTC+1).**

- **Applicants may send RSF any questions they may have** up until April 3rd, 2025. An answer to the compiled questions will be shared with all candidates who have previously expressed an interest in the tender.
- The **decision will be announced to all candidates on May 9th, 2025**. The contract will be launched upon confirmation of the successful candidate.

Selection criteria

ITEMS	MAX POINTS
	100
Understanding of the terms of reference and conformity of the proposal with the requirements described	5
Conformity of the proposal with the requirements for each service offered	10
Experience in providing turnkey OTT configurable platforms, with capacity to operate, maintain and troubleshoot technical issues once application is operational	15
Experience in working with small FTA multichannel broadcasters	10
Demonstration of significant security measures to prevent DDoS and other such attacks	20
Financial proposal	40