

Request For Quote (RFQ)

ActionAid Communications in Humanitarian Emergencies Review

Date of issue: 12 December 2026

RFQ reference number: [AAUK COMMS001]

Closing date for submissions: 23rd January 2026

1. Background

ActionAid's Red and Orange Alert protocols are designed to guide communications in humanitarian emergencies, ensuring timely, accurate, and coordinated outputs across the global federation. These protocols play a critical role in mobilising public attention, fundraising, and shaping narratives. However, questions have emerged around efficiency, resourcing, wellbeing, integration with wider organisational work, and alignment with ActionAid UK's 2025–2028 strategy and ActionAid's international strategic framework (SIF 3).

This review will assess the current Red and Orange Alert communications protocols, identify strengths, challenges and key successes, and recommend revisions to strengthen their effectiveness, sustainability, and alignment with organisational priorities.

2. Objectives

1. **Review the existing Red and Orange Alert communications protocols** to assess their relevance, effectiveness, and unintended consequences.
2. **Make recommendations for a revised protocol**, including clearer structures for delegated authority, risk/crisis communications, staff wellbeing, and integration with wider organisational priorities.

3. Scope of work

ActionAid is looking for a qualified consultant or company to undertake a review of ActionAid's communications work in humanitarian emergencies

The review will:

- Use our existing **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)** as a starting point.
- Examine how ActionAid's existing "Red and Orange" Alert protocols function in practice across ActionAid UK and the Global Secretariat.
- Assess the resources required to activate alerts, including **staff time, budget, and outputs**, and analyse the value generated for the organisation particularly against ActionAid UK's new strategy and SIF 3.
- Explore the **unintended consequences** of the protocols, including:
 - Impact on staff wellbeing and risk of burnout.

- The extent to which Red Alerts are siloed or disconnected from other organisational priorities.
- Investigate gaps in managing reputational **risk during highly volatile and politicised humanitarian crises**
 - Who is responsible for risk and how is authority currently delegated
 - What processes currently exist.
 - What risks does AAUK face, internally and externally
 - Recommendations for a clear and sustainable **reputational risk framework**

4. Methodology

The review team will:

- Gain an understanding of AA's wider organisational work, to ensure the reviews alignment with ActionAid UK's 2025–2028 strategy and ActionAid's international strategic framework (SIF 3).
- Conduct **document analysis** of the existing MOU, alert protocols, and sample case studies of recent alerts.
- Carry out **interviews or focus groups** with key stakeholders, including:
 - ActionAid UK Red Alert staff.
 - Global Secretariat Orange Alert staff.
 - Fundraising colleagues.
 - Other relevant ActionAid staff who engage in emergency communications.
- Collect and analyse data on **staff time, budget allocations, outputs, and outcomes** linked to past alerts.
- Synthesize findings into a **diagnostic report** with recommendations.

5. Deliverables

Deliverables	Tasks	Due date (from start)	Payment
1. Inception Note	Outlining scope, methodology, and timeline.	By week 2	20%
2. Desk research and interviews	Analyse documents Conduct interviews or focus groups with key colleagues	By week 6	20%
3. Draft review report	Recommendations report including: Revised Red/Orange Alert protocol. Guidance on risk/crisis communications. Measures to safeguard staff wellbeing and prevent burnout. Recommendations for integrating alerts with wider organisational strategy.	By week 12	20%

4. Presentation of findings	To key stakeholders in ActionAid UK and GS.	By week 14	20%
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6. Governance & Management

- The review will be commissioned by ActionAid UK and coordinated with the Global Secretariat.
- Oversight will be provided by the Co-CEOs office.
- The review team will report regularly to the commissioning manager at ActionAid UK.

7. Timeline

The review is expected to run over a period of 14 weeks starting on as soon as possible, although there is some flexibility on the timetable. A detailed timeline will be agreed during inception.

5. Required skills and experience

The applicants should demonstrate the following:

Essential

- Track record in communications for humanitarian and emergency contexts within international NGOs
- Experience in designing and conducting evaluations, reviews, with a focus on communications, advocacy, and fundraising impact.
- Analytical and synthesis skills – able to combine qualitative and quantitative data into clear, evidence-based findings and actionable recommendations
- Demonstrated ability to apply decolonial, feminist, intersectional, and anti-racist approaches in research and evaluation.
- Project management skills, political and cultural sensitivity, with experience working on communications in sensitive or high-risk contexts (e.g. conflict zones).
- Facilitation and interviewing skills, with diverse range of stakeholders across geographies and functions, and to handle sensitive feedback (e.g. on leadership, team well-being).
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, able to produce high-quality, concise reports,
- Independent, objective, and credible

Desirable

- Knowledge of ActionAid's work, organisational structure, and values.

6. Proposal requirements

Interested parties should submit:

Technical Proposal (max 10 pages), demonstrating:

- Understanding of the assignment
- Proposed delivery plan.
- Relevant experience / team composition

Financial Proposal, including:

- Daily rates and total consultancy cost (inclusive of all taxes and expenses).
- Breakdown by deliverable and cost

Annexes, including:

- CVs of key personnel.
- Examples of previous work (Organisational humanitarian communications frameworks).
- At least 2 references

7. Submission Process

Proposals should be submitted via email to: frances.leach@actionaid.org

Subject Line: RFP – AAUK Organisational Humanitarian Communications Consultancy – [Your Organisation Name]

Deadline for submission: **23rd January 2026**

8. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be assessed based on the following:

Criteria	Weight (%)
Technical understanding & methodology	30%
Relevant experience & qualifications	30%
Cost-effectiveness	20%
Quality of previous work	10%
References	10%

9. Terms and Conditions

- All intellectual property and reports developed during this consultancy will remain the property of AAUK

- Shortlisted candidates may be invited for an interview or presentation.