

Provision of Online Psychosocial Support Services for hbs Staff

1. Terms of Reference

1.1 Background & Context

The Heinrich Böll Foundation (hbs) operates in over 30 countries worldwide, often in politically volatile, post-conflict, or authoritarian contexts where democratic spaces are shrinking. Our international offices work closely with local partners to advance human rights, ecological justice, and gender democracy—frequently under high-pressure conditions, including security risks, legal restrictions, or societal polarization.

To support the **mental health and wellbeing** of our staff, hbs seeks to **contract a specialized provider** with a good understanding of the unique demands of civil society work in fragile contexts to deliver **confidential, anonymous, culturally sensitive and trauma-informed psycho social support services** online. This tender aims to **identify a provider** that can address the **unique challenges** faced by our staff, including:

- **Trauma, including vicarious trauma** (e.g., from living through violent conflict or working with survivors of human rights abuses).
- **Stress**, including discrimination-induced stress and cross-cultural stress (e.g., frequent relocations, cultural adjustment).
- **Secondary stress and compassion fatigue** (e.g., from working with colleagues and partners in conflict settings).
- **Burnout and emotional exhaustion** (e.g., from high workloads in under-resourced settings and closing civic spaces; anxiety and feeling of powerlessness in the light of large structural issues; grief caused by, e.g., the loss of people, land, homes, rights).

1.2 Objectives

The **primary objectives** of this tender are to:

1. **Provide accessible, high-quality psychosocial support** (*online* or offline where possible) to hbs staff globally (seconded and national staff) on work-related psychosocial challenges.
2. **Support staff in dealing with workplace-related psycho-social challenges**, including workload pressures, socio-political change, conflict, and exposure to distressing or sensitive programme content; challenges caused by **deployment and living abroad**, as well as **challenges originating in the public environment** that the office staff operates in, such as political or economic developments, violent conflict, etc.
3. **Ensure confidentiality and anonymity** for staff seeking support, with no individual usage data shared with hbs.
4. **Provide culturally and linguistically appropriate gender-sensitive services** that align with the diverse backgrounds and needs of hbs staff.
5. **Deliver services within a capped framework: 5 sessions per person** per case, up to two cases per year.

6. **Provide aggregated, anonymous reporting** to hbs on usage trends.
7. **Contribute to the prevention and early identification of psycho-social risks**, including prolonged stress and burnout.
8. **Contribute to hbs' broader duty of care** and commitment to a healthy, respectful and supportive working environment, while maintaining a clear separation between confidential individual counselling and organisational/management processes.

1.3 Target Groups

The services must cater to the following **hbs staff categories**:

1. **Seconded Staff**: Ca. 44 Expatriates (mainly German nationals) staff working in hbs country offices.
2. **Locally Employed Staff**: Approximately 296 National staff hired in hbs country offices, many of which are working with vulnerable groups in high-risk contexts and are under direct pressure themselves.

1.4 Requirements for the Provider

- **Organization** with a minimum 5 years of experience providing psychosocial support to international NGO staff with a proven track record of working with high-stress, high-stakes environments.
- **Counselors** hold a Master's or PhD in psychology, counseling, or social work with experience supporting NGO/human rights/activist staff. Experience with decolonial approaches, such as liberation psychology, are an asset.
 - **Cultural Fit**: Counselors must have direct experience working with staff from the regions where hbs operates.
 - **Languages**: The provider must offer services in all languages spoken in hbs offices. (Attachment 1 List of Offices)
- **Service Delivery**
 - **Session Limits**: Maximum 5 sessions per person per work-related case, up to two cases per year (max. 10 sessions per staffer per year).
 - **Referral to local mental health experts**: Refer staff to local mental health services where needed (e.g., for long-term therapy or psychiatric support). If the counselor identifies a need for long-term or specialized support in an initial assessment, the referral to local mental health experts must happen as soon as possible in order to ensure the best long-term support for staff.
 - **Scheduling**: Must offer flexible scheduling to accommodate different time zones. Hbs staff must be able to contact the provider directly (via e-mail, an app or website) to access scheduling options easily and within a reasonable time-frame, according to the urgency of the case. The provider shall reply within 72 hours and offer a session within an adequate time-framework, according to the urgency of each case (within maximum 7 days). For urgent cases, a reply within 24 hours or an emergency hotline are desirable. Details on how cases are to be classified according to their urgency, will be assessed in written form before contract begin between the contracting parties.

- **Accessibility:** Must accommodate **low-bandwidth regions** (e.g., audio-only options, chat-based counseling). User-friendly platforms for staff with varying levels of tech literacy.
- **Confidentiality & Data Security**
 - **Anonymity:** The provider is bound by medical confidentiality. No individual usage data (e.g., names, session details, or personal identifiers) may be shared with hbs. The provider must keep track of the requested and implemented sessions in an overview sheet that is attached to the quarterly invoice. Aggregated, anonymous reports (e.g., number of sessions per office/region) must be provided quarterly.
 - **Encrypted Platforms:** All online sessions must be conducted on end-to-end encrypted platforms. No recordings of sessions may be stored. **Data Protection:** The provider must ensure and demonstrate that all cross-border transfers of personal data within its global network, subcontractors, and hosting infrastructure comply with Chapter V of the GDPR (e.g., via valid EU Standard Contractual Clauses or applicable adequacy decisions).
 - **Data storage:** Session notes and health data must be retained strictly in accordance with local statutory/professional retention periods and deleted immediately upon expiration of these terms.
- **Payment Model:** Offers may be given for a flat fee (fixed fee per employee per month) and/or for the price per service. For both payment models, a cap of max. 10 sessions per employee per year applies. Please include offers for both payment models if they are offered by your company, or provide the offer for the payment model that your company offers. Offers for the two models can be compared within each model category and across payment models by using an hbs-internal breakdown of the estimated annual usage (amount of sessions used per year). The total annual cost of the flat rate model will be divided by the estimated amount of sessions to estimate a price per session that can then be compared with the per service model.

2.Proposal Requirements

Bidders must submit a **comprehensive proposal** addressing the following:

◆ 2.1 Organizational Information

- **Company profile** (including mission, vision, and years of operation).
- **Legal registration** (e.g., business license, NGO status).
- **Insurance:** Proof of **professional liability insurance** for counseling services.

◆ 2.2 Technical and Financial Proposal

- **All documents and references** mentioned in column “verification method” of Document 2 “Key Criteria for Provider Selection”
- **Quality Assurance:** Supervision and training for counselors (e.g., regular case reviews, peer support). Feedback mechanisms for hbs staff.
- **Cancellation policy**

Tenders must be sent to **psychosocialsupport@eu.boell.org** by **18:00 CET on 02.11.2026**. Tenderers are bound by their tenders until 31.12.2026. Please pose any questions to the above e-mail address mentioning "Questions" in the subject line.

Attachment 1: List of hbs offices

Africa Division

- **Nigeria:** Abuja
- **Kenya:** 2 offices in Nairobi:
 - Regional Office for East Africa (with partner networks covering **Kenia, Uganda, Tanzania**)
 - Horn of Africa office (covering **Somalia/Somaliland, Sudan, Ethiopia**)
- **Senegal:** Dakar
- **South Africa:** Cape Town (covering **South Africa, Namibia, Zimbabwe**)

Asia Division

- **China:** Beijing
- **India:** New Delhi
- **Thailand:** Bangkok (Regional Office for Southeast Asia for ASEAN)
- **Cambodia:** Phnom Penh
- **South Korea:** Seoul (East Asia Office, with a focus on **Japan** and **Korea**)

Latin America Division

- **Mexico:** Mexico City (Mexico and the Caribbean)
- **Guatemala:** Guatemala City (Regional Office Central America, covering **El Salvador, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Honduras** and **Nicaragua**)
- **Brazil:** Rio de Janeiro
- **Colombia:** Bogotá
- **Chile:** Santiago de Chile (covering **Chile, Peru, Bolivia**)
- **Argentina:** Buenos Aires (covering **Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay**)

Middle East & North Africa Division (MENA/SWANA)

- **Israel:** Tel Aviv
- **Palestine:** Ramallah (covering **Palestine** and **Jordan**)
- **Lebanon:** Beirut (covering **Lebanon, Syria, Iraq**)
- **Tunisia:** Tunis
- **Morocco:** Rabat

Eastern & Southeast Europe Division

- **Ukraine:** Kyiv
- **Georgia:** Tbilisi (South Caucasus office with offices in **Georgia** and **Armenia**, also covering partner networks in **Azerbaijan**)
- **Serbia:** Belgrade (covering **Serbia, Montenegro, Kosovo**)
- **Bosnia and Herzegovina:** 2 offices in Sarajevo
 - Country office covering **Bosnia & Herzegovina** and the **Republic of North Macedonia**
 - Global Unit for Feminism and Gender Democracy
- **Albania:** Tirana
- **Vienna:** Global Unit for Human Security

Europe & North America Division

- **Belgium:** 2 offices in Brussels
 - European Union I Global Dialogue Office
 - Global Unit for Democracy and Human Rights
- **France:** Paris (covering **France and Italy**)
- **USA:** Washington, D.C. (covering **USA and Canada**)
- **Greece :** Thessaloniki
- **Czech Republic :** Prague (covering **Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary**)
- **Turkey:** Istanbul
- **Poland:** Warsaw (covering **Poland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania**)

Key Criteria for Provider Selection

The following minimum criteria need to be fulfilled for the bid to be considered:

Category	Criteria	Verification Method <i>Please include in your proposal the following documents:</i>
Ethical Standards	Code of conduct: Must adhere to international ethical guidelines.	Self-declaration describing what ethical guidelines you follow and how you ensure compliance; including your safeguarding policy for protecting vulnerable staff and how to obtain informed consent; Your organization's Code of Conduct
Expertise & Qualifications	Counselor qualifications: Counselors must hold a master's or PhD in psychology, counseling, or social work (with expertise in psycho-social care) and be licensed/accredited in their country of practice as a mental health provider.	Proof of qualifications and licenses
	Multilingual counselors: Counselors provide services in at least English, Spanish, Arabic, French.	List of languages covered by your organization
Confidentiality & Data Security	Anonymous to employer: Provider must guarantee full anonymity for staff (no individual usage data shared with hbs).	Self-declaration indicating how to ensure anonymity incl. detailing the anonymization process for the report
	Data security and storage: Remote/ video/ telephone sessions must be fully confidential. Session notes and health data must be retained strictly in accordance with local statutory/professional retention periods and deleted immediately upon expiration of these terms.	Certificates, such as ISO 27001-Certificate or SOC-2-Report Data protection/data storage policy and information about the server locations
Service Delivery	Online sessions: Apart from video sessions, must offer fallback option for low-bandwidth regions, such audio or in-person counseling. Availability: The provider offers flexible scheduling to accommodate different time zones The provider replies to request within 72 hours and offers a session within an adequate time-framework, within maximum	Self-declaration describing how services will be delivered (e.g., platforms, session structure), your organization's response time to requests, triage management, time until service provision, scheduling system (its online booking system, time slot availability and accommodation across time zones), platforms to be used and their security features, as

	7 days. The provider maintains a session tracking system.	well as describing how your organization ensures accessibility (e.g. audio only or in-person counselling). Description of your organization's Session Tracking System
Reporting	Aggregated, anonymous reporting: Must provide quarterly reports on usage (e.g., number of sessions per region) without individual identifiers, to be used by hbs (International Department, incl. Programme Coordinator Security and Risk Management, and HR) to contribute to prevention and early identification of psycho-social risks and to contribute to hbs' broader duty of care.	Self-declaration on data anonymization process, describing how you will anonymize and aggregate data and what metrics you will include in quarterly reports + Sample report template

The following additional criteria will be used to **evaluate and compare bids** from potential providers.

Category	Criteria	Weight (%)	Verification Method
Expertise & Qualifications 55%	Counselors have experience with work-related challenges: Demonstrated expertise in incident debriefing, vicarious trauma, stress, secondary stress, compassion fatigue, cross-cultural issues, and burnout. Experience with decolonial approaches, such as liberation psychology, are an asset, as well as experience in digital care (providing frameworks to curb cognitive overloads; dealing with violence online).	15%	Self declaration outlining the experience, specialization, and approaches of the counselors, describing frameworks and methodologies used to address the listed work-related challenges. CVs of key counselors (highlighting experience with NGOs in a similar field like hbs), language proficiencies of the team and cultural competence of counselors (e.g., experience in MENA, Africa, Latin America) including proof of qualifications + 3 Client references from international NGOs with contact details for reference
	Provider has 5+ years of experience supporting international NGO staff in high-stress environments.	10%	Self declaration describing your organization's experience in providing psychosocial support to international NGOs similar to hbs, including examples of past clients and regions served.

			+ 3 Client references from international NGOs with contact details for reference
	Multilingual counselors: Counselors provide services in all languages spoken in hbs offices (refer to Attachment 1 for list of office locations).	10%	List of locations and languages covered by your organization CVs of key counselors (highlighting experience with NGOs in a similar field like hbs), language proficiencies of the team and cultural competence of counselors (e.g., experience in MENA, Africa, Latin America).
	Cultural competence: Counselors have direct experience working with people who are from the regions where hbs operates (e.g., MENA, Sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, Europe, North America, Asia). They are able to adapt clinical frameworks to local contexts.	10%	Self-declaration describing how your organization ensures cultural competence among your counselors, as well as your process for matching counselors with staff based on language, cultural background, and specific needs + client references (indicating the client regions)
	Trauma-Informed Care: Counselors are trained in trauma-focused modalities.	5%	Self-declaration describing the trauma-informed care training your counselors have completed
	Experience with activists/HRDs: Counselors demonstrated work with human rights defenders, journalists, or political activists in high-risk contexts.	2%	Self-declaration describing your organization's experience in supporting activists and human rights defenders +at least 2 Client references indicating the described experience, including contact details for reference
	LGBTQ+ and gender-sensitive support: Counselors are trained in LGBTQ+ affirmative therapy and gender-based violence support.	2%	Self-declaration describing how your counselors are trained in LGBTQ+ affirmative therapy and gender-based violence support
	Counselors are trained in the support of neurodivergent staff and staff living with disabilities	1%	Self-declaration describing how your counselors are trained in the treatment of neurodivergent staff and staff living with disabilities
Costs 35%	Lowest Costs and Cost Transparency Price Model: either per service, flat fee or both	35%	Written offer Financial Proposal incl. detailed price breakdown for the cost per individual session of 50 minutes and/or cost per month, as well as any additional fees (e.g., setup costs, platform subscriptions)

	For 10 sessions per person per year (five times per case, max. two cases per year)		
Service Delivery 5%	Providers who can, in some regions, offer face-to-face sessions , are prioritized.	5%	Self-declaration describing the availability of in-person counseling and a map of the counselor network
Local Partnerships 5%	Collaboration with local MHPSS providers: Ability to refer hbs staff to local mental health services where needed (e.g., for long-term therapy or psychiatric support). The provider's counselors may refer staff to a local mental health provider if an initial assessment demonstrates the need for specialized or long-term support.	5%	Self-declaration describing the referral policy for hbs staff who need long-term or specialized support, including a description of local partner networks and referral pathways.

Cost center/cost unit: enter number
Contract number: enter number

■■■ HEINRICH BÖLL STIFTUNG, Schumannstrasse 8, 10117 Berlin, Germany
VAT ID: DE812656172

FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT FOR SERVICES

between

Full name	Profession	enter profession
Address	Phone	enter phone number
Postal code and city	Mobile	enter mobile phone number
Country	E-mail	enter e-mail address

hereinafter referred to as Contractor,

and the Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung e.V.

hereinafter referred to as the Heinrich Böll Foundation (hbs)

hereby conclude the following Contract:

Preamble

The Heinrich Böll Foundation intends to commission the Contractor to provide services. This framework agreement (hereinafter referred to as the "Contract") establishes the basis for the collaboration as well as the rights and obligations of the contracting parties with regard to individual contracts. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the contracting parties hereby enter into the following Contract:

§ 1 Subject of Contract

- 1.1 Contractor undertakes to provide the following service within the context of: description of the service
- 1.2 The point of contact at hbs for this Contract is full name, name of department/team.
- 1.3 Under this contract, hbs may place individual contracts at the prices bindingly offered by the contractor as set forth in the proposal (appendix 2). The maximum quantity during the term of the contract is 90,000,- EUR net. There is no entitlement to the conclusion of one or more individual contracts.
- 1.4 This Contract shall be deemed part of each individual contract even if not expressly incorporated therein, and shall govern the performance of the services agreed upon therein. In the event of any conflict between this Contract and the individual contract, the latter shall take precedence.
- 1.5 The Contractor's general terms and conditions do not form part of the Contract.

§ 2 Fee

- 2.1 Upon rendering the contractually agreed service, Contractor shall receive a fee in accordance with his or her proposal (appendix 2 to this Contract).
- 2.2 This fee covers all costs related to the provision of the service, including personnel expenses as well as any conveyances of rights of use that may be applicable, inasmuch that no reimbursements of costs/expenses have been agreed under Section 4.
- 2.3 Contractor is **Select an element** :
- 2.4 In the event that Contractor is a sole proprietor, freelancer or owner of a single-member company with no further employees, Contractor hereby warrants that he/she maintains his/her own established business operation and that hbs accounts for no more than 5/6 of his/her total business volume.

§ 3 Payments

- 3.1 The fee shall be paid after the service has been rendered and within 30 calendar days after an invoice has been issued by Contractor.
- 3.2 Invoices will be issued as follows:
- ☐ per order, i.e., separately for each individual call-off under the framework agreement
 - ☐ at the end of the month
 - ☒ at the end of the quarter
 - ☐ on the following dates: click or tap here to enter text
- 3.3 The invoice must be accompanied by an activity report for the billing period, which may differ in form from the template in appendix 5 of this Contract but must at least include the information listed therein.
- 3.4 The invoice has to be sent in an electronic form to invoice@boell.de and include the order no. as well as the hbs contact person.
- ☐ The order no. is:
 - ☐ The contact person will provide the order no. in a timely manner.

§ 4 Reimbursement

Error! Bookmark not defined.No expenses will be reimbursed.

§ 5 Term, Termination, and Options

- 5.1 The contract has a duration from 01/01/2027 to 31/12/2028. The term of individual contracts may be specified separately.
- 5.2 The parties to the contract are entitled to terminate the contract by giving notice, with a notice period of 3 months effective at the end of the month. Notice of termination must be provided in writing.
- 5.3 The Client may terminate the contract with immediate effect,
- a. if the Contractor breaches his or her duty of confidentiality or any obligation imposed on him or her to keep confidential any facts that have come to his or her knowledge in connection with the assigned work.
 - b. if insolvency proceedings or comparable legal proceedings have been initiated against the Contractor's assets, or if the initiation of such proceedings has been rejected due to lack of assets, or if the proper performance of the contract is jeopardized by the Contractor's failure to make payments, which is not merely temporary.
 - c. if, in the course of establishing or performing the contractual relationship, the Contractor has participated in impermissible restrictions on competition within the meaning of the Act Against Restraints of Competition (Competition Act - GWB). This includes, in particular, agreements with third parties regarding the submission or non-

- submission of bids, the prices to be charged, the payment of compensation for loss of business (profit-sharing or other payments), and the setting of recommended prices.
- d. if the contracting authority becomes aware of facts that would entitle it to exclude the contractor from the procurement procedure, in particular if grounds for exclusion within the meaning of Sections 123 and 124 of the Act Against Restraints of Competition (GWB) exist.

The statutory provisions regarding termination for good cause remain unaffected.

§ 6 Confidentiality, Privacy / Consent to Audio and Visual Recordings

- 6.1 Contractor undertakes to maintain strictest confidentiality vis-à-vis third parties with regard to any and all knowledge of hbs' political, personal, financial, business and operational affairs acquired during his/her activities, unless otherwise agreed with hbs.
- 6.2 This confidentiality clause shall remain in force after termination of the present Contract.
- 6.3 If the contractor is granted access to any personal information by hbs itself or by participants or collects such data in the course of executing her/his contract with hbs she/he agrees to adhere to the GDPR. The contractor in particular commits to deleting all personal information which she/he obtained from the foundation unless there is a legal requirement for data retention. This further data retention as well as its legal basis or the deleting of data must be confirmed to the contracting authority without delay upon request. Contractor shall ensure that her/his employees, and/or other persons involved in the provision of the service at Contractor's behest, shall also be bound to maintain strictest confidentiality in accordance with the above provisions.
- 6.4 Should visual and/or audio recordings be made in the course of his/her providing services, Contractor hereby consents that audio, visual or audio-visual recordings may be made during his/her participation in the Heinrich-Böll-Foundation e.V. select an element or delete the field!event and published and disseminated on all online and media portals, including streaming portals, Facebook, YouTube, etc. by Heinrich-Böll-Foundation e.V. under a cc-by-sa. 4.0. license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/legalcode>). This relates to live streaming during the event or delayed broadcasts on a variety of platforms as well as individual or sequential visual or audio recordings that are saved, duplicated or disseminated at a later juncture or made available or broadcast on the Internet. Photos may also be used for print media. Contractor is aware that he / she will not receive any payment for these visual and / or audio recordings.

§ 7 Supplementary Agreements

No supplementary agreements have been made.

§ 8 Final Provisions

- 8.1 Any amendments to this Contract or its components must be made in writing. This also applies to any amendment to this clause. Oral side agreements are invalid.
- 8.2 The present Contract shall be governed by German law. The place of jurisdiction shall be Berlin, Germany.
- 8.3 Should individual provisions of this Contract be or become invalid, or if the Contract contains a gap in its provisions, the validity of the remaining provisions shall not be affected. The Parties shall replace the invalid provision with a valid provision that most closely reflects the factual, economic and legal intent of the invalid provision. The same procedure shall apply if the Contract contains a gap.

§ 9 Appendices

The following appendices shall form an integral part of this Contract:

1. Invitation to submit a tender

2. Contractors's tender
3. Code of Conduct
4. Information concerning the collection of personal data pursuant to Articles 13 and 14 of Regulation (EU) 2016/679 of 27 April 2016 General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR)
5. Activity Report Template

In the event of any conflicts between different parts of the contract, the order of precedence set forth above shall apply.

Enter city, date

Enter full name and function of
first signatory

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung e.V.

Enter full name and function of
second signatory

Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung e.V.

Enter full name of contractor

Contractor

Activity Report

Contract number: For months January-March

Invoice number	
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