

Request for Communication Support to RPCL

Consultancy Services to Develop RPCL Communication Strategy and Implementation Plan

1. Introduction

Rusumo Power Company Limited (RPCL) is a special-purpose company jointly and equally owned by the Governments of Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania. RPCL has rights to develop, construct, own, and operate the 80MW Regional Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric Project located on the Kagera River at the Rusumo border between Rwanda and Tanzania.

RPCL is established to increase electricity supply to Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania's national grids and therefore position itself as a leading force in hydropower operations. Concurrently, RPCL is nurturing a durable relationship with local communities in the Rusumo area, advancing social, environmental, and economic development through robust Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives. As a prominent, profit-oriented energy developer, RPCL prioritizes fulfilling its social responsibilities. To strengthen its corporate image and amplify engagement with stakeholders, RPCL is seeking specialized expertise in communication to establish a robust framework for public relations initiatives.

2. Rationale and Objective of the Consultancy

In order to effectively and efficiently communicate the update of RPCL, the consultant will develop a comprehensive communication strategy considering relevant literature/ project documentation, existing communication initiatives undertaken by all entities involved in the Regional Rusumo Falls Hydroelectric Project notably RPCL including the use of new technology with a view to completing a situational analysis that will form a basis for highlighting communication priorities for RPCL.

The rationale of the RPCL communication strategy is to raise awareness of its existence as a world-class hydropower making a difference in increasing electricity to the national grids of their member countries and taking into account the socio-economic development brought to riparian communities and considering stakeholders' information needs, their knowledge, attitude, and perceptions about RPCL.

Communication and engagement activities will be proposed with a monitoring and evaluation system that will help to assess the communication implementation status.

RPCL is seeking an experienced and qualified individual communication consultant. The main objective of the assignment is to develop a comprehensive communication strategy and implementation plan that will support RPCL to effectively and efficiently communicate RPCL's updates and achievements.

3. Scope of work

3.1. Develop a communication strategy and implementation plan

- Conduct a rapid identification of key internal and external stakeholders and an assessment of their information needs within the shareholder countries (Burundi, Rwanda, Tanzania), the region, and beyond. This includes private sector companies, intergovernmental organizations, and civil society institutions operating in the hydropower and energy sectors.

- In collaboration with RPCL departments, identify communication risks, information gaps, misunderstandings, and/or perceived shortcomings related to RPCL projects and advise on communication risk mitigation.
- Utilize findings of the assessments to develop a comprehensive communications strategy aligned with RPCL's Corporate Social Responsibility profile. This strategy should include a realistic implementation plan, timeline with budget, roles and responsibilities, and proposals to integrate the communications activities within RPCL's overall action plan.
- The strategy will propose an effective communication mechanism to be used to engage RPCL stakeholders with appropriate methods and tools, including radio, TV programs, stakeholder meetings, etc.
- The strategy will also propose a sound RPCL (i) media engagement plan – social media and the press - and (ii) an event management plan that is considerate of RPCL's mandate and brand image including RPCL's high-level meetings and events. The plans will guide RPCL on how to facilitate communication and inter-country coordination among key ministries and stakeholders in Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania on RPCL's development matters as required.

3.2. Development of Communications and Advocacy Products

- Draft terms of reference for an advertising agency that will support RPCL's visibility in producing communication materials needed by RPCL such as video documentaries, newsletter, booklets, posters, and leaflets, including producing public information materials in multiple languages (English, French, Swahili, Kirundi, Kinyarwanda...) in line with RPCL's procurement requirements.
- Collaborate with the RPCL IT office to update, create and enhance content on RPCL's website and social media platforms, including X (previously Twitter), Flickr, YouTube, Instagram etc.

3.3. Knowledge Transfer and Capacity Building on Communication

- Train RPCL CSR personnel on how to best document success stories and other relevant themes to bolster RPCL's visibility and impact within the member countries and beyond: producing content that narrates progress and achievements, success stories and stories of change with facts and figures and developing advocacy messages on environmental and social sustainability.
- Train appropriate RPCL personnel to manage media coverage and opportunities fostering positive media coverage at local and regional levels, how to write and/or review and edit media pitches, press releases, statements, op-eds, talking points, fact sheets, and journalist briefs.
- Provide communication advice to RPCL senior management to ensure alignment on RPCL strategic goals and priorities.
- Facilitate communication and inter-country coordination among key ministries and stakeholders in Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania on RPCL's communication matters as required.
- Participate as an active contributor to company-wide communication initiatives

4. Outputs and deliverables

- 4.1** Develop a comprehensive communication strategy and plan including a media engagement plan, and an event plan for RPCL's high-level meetings among others to guide RPCL senior management.
- 4.2** Facilitate knowledge transfer on the use of RPCL's website and social media accounts with relevant RPCL staff,
- 4.3** Produce public information packages
- 4.4** Establish professional advertising services (e.g. production of brochures, press releases, briefs, newsletters...); outsource professional translation services to ensure materials are translated into English, French, and local languages as requested needed with a proposed list of required communication products for RPCL. Produce and distribute RPCL success stories to targeted audiences to increase awareness and visibility
- 4.5** Develop proposals for strategic CSR interventions aligned with RPCL's objectives.

5. Reporting and timeline

- 5.1.** Inception Report: methodology and activity schedule to be submitted after signing of contract: including feedback and approval of inception report: **4 weeks.**
- 5.2.** Draft Communication Strategy: after approval of inception report, the consultant will conduct desk review, participatory process to compile information and submit a draft communication strategy: including feedback and approval of final draft: **6 weeks.**
- 5.3.** Terms of Reference (ToR) for RPCL advertising company, after approval of RPCL communication strategy, submit acceptable final ToR: including feedback and approval of final ToR: **4 weeks.**
- 5.4.** Prepare training materials for knowledge transfer on RPCL communication materials: documenting success stories / producing content that narrates progress and achievements with facts and figures / developing advocacy messages on environmental and social sustainability / developing content for RPCL's website and social media accounts with relevant RPCL staff: **2 weeks including feedback and approvals.**
- 5.5.** Knowledge transfer and capacity building on communication to RPCL personnel to (i) document success stories and content on progress and achievements with facts and figures, (ii) manage media coverage and opportunities fostering positive media coverage at local and regional levels, (iii) review and edit media pitches, press releases, statements, op-eds, talking points, fact sheets, and journalist briefs...: **2 weeks including logistical arrangement.**
- 5.6.** Proposed strategic CSR actions aligned with RPCL's mission and vision: final draft presented: **3 weeks including feedback and approvals.**
- 5.7.** Play key role in facilitating communication and inter-country coordination among key ministries and stakeholders in Burundi, Rwanda, and Tanzania on RPCL's development communication matters as required – working with relevant staff: **continuous activity**

- 5.8.** Provide communication advise in RPCL high-level meetings and events – working with relevant staff: continuous activity

6. Duration of the consultancy

The individual communication consultant is expected to deliver the above-mentioned outcomes within an agreed timeline, spanning from December 2024 to November 2025.

Additionally, the consultant will be required to be available on-site at Rusumo Falls Hydropower Plant as needed basis to provide support to RPCL team. This presence will ensure timely assistance and seamless coordination with RPCL's ongoing communication initiatives throughout the consultancy period.

7. Qualifications and Experience

The appropriate consultant sought to undertake this assignment should meet the following qualifications and experience requirements:

- 1) Possession of minimum master's degree in development communication, social mobilization, social marketing or a similar field
- 2) At least 7 years of working experience in communication in the areas of water resources management and development, energy, infrastructure projects.
- 3) Proven ability to conduct stakeholder mapping, analysis and develop communication strategies and plans for regional organizations
- 4) Ability to research, analyze, evaluate and synthesize information for infrastructure development projects or programs
- 5) Ability to craft messages to particular energy or water resources institutions in East African countries context is essential
- 6) Knowledge of computer skills and MS Office
- 7) Fluency and proficiency in communication and writing English or French is required, knowledge of local languages from Burundi, Rwanda and Tanzania is an advantage.