

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Hiring of an Official Public Relations (PR) Firm

Pakistan Software Houses Association for IT & ITES (P@SHA)

Date Issued: 30th May, 2025

Submission Deadline: 6th June, 2025

1. Introduction and Background

About P@SHA

Established in 1992, the Pakistan Software Houses Association for IT & ITES (P@SHA) is the apex trade body representing Pakistan's Information Technology and IT-enabled Services sector. With over **1,600 member companies**, P@SHA serves as the industry's voice, driving policy advocacy, global brand visibility, and capacity-building initiatives. The association has been instrumental in facilitating the growth of Pakistan's IT sector through government collaboration, international delegations, and recognition such as the Asia Pacific ICT Alliance (APICTA) Awards.

Mission and Vision

- **Mission:** To empower Pakistan's digital future by fostering innovation, advocating for industry-friendly policies, and creating a conducive ecosystem for IT businesses.
- **Vision:** To position Pakistan as a global leader in technology and digital services.

Purpose of PR Engagement

P@SHA seeks to engage a reputable and experienced Public Relations (PR) firm to:

- Amplify its role as a national and international advocate for Pakistan's IT industry.
- Manage reputational risks and crises proactively.
- Enhance stakeholder engagement with government bodies, private sector entities, and international partners.
- Align PR strategies with P@SHA's values of innovation, collaboration, integrity, and inclusivity.
- Address challenges such as policy lobbying, global outreach, reputation management, and public perception.

2. Scope of Work

Key PR Services Required

1. Strategic Communication and Messaging

- Develop and implement comprehensive PR strategies that align with P@SHA's mission and objectives.

- Craft compelling narratives highlighting P@SHA's achievements (e.g., policy wins, international awards, industry milestones).
- Develop press releases, op-eds, white papers, and thought leadership content targeted at government stakeholders, industry leaders, and the public.
- Ensure consistent messaging across all communication channels.

2. Media Relations and Outreach

- Secure coverage in national and international media outlets (e.g., *Dawn*, *The News International*, *TechCrunch*, *Forbes*).
- Manage and cultivate relationships with journalists, editors, and influencers covering IT, trade, and policy.
- Organize press conferences, media briefings, and interviews with key P@SHA representatives.

3. Crisis Management and Reputation Safeguarding

- Develop a comprehensive crisis communication plan, including protocols for rapid response to potential reputational risks (e.g., policy controversies, data breaches, industry crises).
- Provide 24/7 support for crisis situations, ensuring timely and effective communication to mitigate negative impacts.
- Monitor media and public sentiment to proactively identify and address emerging issues.

4. Government and Stakeholder Liaison

- Support advocacy campaigns for IT policies (e.g., tax reforms, export promotion, ease of doing business).
- Facilitate meetings and engagements with government officials, regulatory bodies, and policy influencers.
- Prepare briefing documents, policy position papers, and advocacy materials to support P@SHA's lobbying efforts.

5. Event PR and Promotions

- Plan and execute PR activities for P@SHA-led events (e.g., ICT Awards, policy forums, tech conferences).
- Coordinate with event management teams to ensure effective publicity before, during, and after events.
- Leverage events to enhance P@SHA's brand visibility and stakeholder engagement.

6. Digital PR and Social Media Management

- Develop and manage a comprehensive digital PR strategy, including social media content creation and community engagement on platforms like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.
- Highlight member success stories, industry insights, and P@SHA initiatives through digital channels.
- Optimize online presence to enhance search engine visibility and audience reach.

7. Content Development and Thought Leadership

- Produce high-quality content including case studies, industry reports, newsletters, and blogs.
- Position P@SHA's leadership as industry thought leaders through keynote speeches, panel discussions, and expert commentary.

8. Monitoring, Reporting, and Evaluation

- Provide regular media monitoring reports, including coverage analysis, sentiment tracking, and key metrics.
- Deliver quarterly PR performance reports and annual impact assessments.
- Use data-driven insights to refine PR strategies and demonstrate ROI.

Deliverables

- A comprehensive PR strategy document, updated annually.
- Monthly media monitoring and analytics reports.
- Quarterly progress reports outlining activities, coverage, and outcomes.
- Crisis communication plan and playbook.
- Annual PR impact assessment and recommendations.
- Content calendars and media engagement schedules.
- Documentation of all PR materials produced (press releases, articles, etc.).

3. Selection Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. Relevant Experience and Track Record (20%)

- Demonstrated experience in providing PR services to the IT sector, government bodies, and private sector entities, preferably chambers of commerce and industry associations.
- Proven success in policy advocacy, media relations, and strategic communications.

- Submission of at least **five (5)** case studies showcasing previous work, including at least:
 - **Three (3)** cases with the private sector, chambers of commerce or industry associations.
 - **Two (2)** cases with government agencies or public sector organizations.
- Evidence of effective crisis management in situations such as data breaches, policy controversies, or organizational crises.

2. Team Qualifications and Expertise (15%)

- A dedicated team with senior consultants possessing at least **10 years** of experience in PR, communications, IT industry, or public affairs.
- Team members must have in-depth understanding of Pakistan's IT ecosystem and regulatory environment.
- Proficiency in Urdu and English is mandatory; additional languages are a plus.
- Include detailed resumes of key team members highlighting relevant experience and achievements.

3. Operational Capacity and Infrastructure (10%)

- Firm must have an established presence in Pakistan with offices in Islamabad. Office in Karachi also would be advantageous.
- Demonstrated capacity to deliver services nationally and internationally.
- Adequate resources to manage multiple projects simultaneously.

4. Compliance and Legal Standing (5%)

- Compliance with all legal and regulatory requirements in Pakistan.
- Submission of all required legal documents (e.g., SECP registration, tax certificates).
- Adherence to GDPR, PECR, and other international data protection regulations for global outreach.
- Evidence of ethical business practices and no history of legal disputes or violations.

5. Financial Proposal and Cost Competitiveness (50%)

- Detailed budget proposal with cost breakdowns.
- Competitive pricing aligned with industry standards.

4. Proposal Requirements

Required Sections

1. Executive Summary

- Overview of the firm, including mission, vision, and core values.
- Explanation of how the firm's expertise and approach align with P@SHA's mission and objectives.

2. Technical Proposal

- **Methodology and Approach**
 - Detailed strategies for achieving the scope of work.
 - Customization of services to meet P@SHA's specific needs.
 - Innovative approaches to PR, including use of technology and data analytics.
- **Work Plan and Timeline**
 - A comprehensive 12-month roadmap with clear milestones and deliverables.
 - Gantt chart or similar visual representation of the project timeline.
- **Team Composition**
 - Organizational chart for the project team.
 - Roles and responsibilities of each team member.
 - Availability and commitment levels.

3. Experience and Past Performance

- Case studies as specified under "Selection Criteria."
- Testimonials or references from previous clients, specifically from the government, public limited companies, and private sector entities including Chambers of Commerce and Industry Associations.
- Awards, recognitions, or certifications relevant to the PR industry.

4. Compliance Documentation

- Copies of SECP registration certificate, NTN, and sales tax registration.
- Proof of compliance with international data protection regulations (e.g., GDPR certification).
- Declaration of no conflicts of interest.

5. Financial Proposal

- Detailed cost breakdown in PKR, including fees, expenses, and any other charges.
- Payment terms and conditions.

6. Additional Information

- Any value-added services or offerings.
- Policies on confidentiality and data security.
- Risk management strategies.

Formatting and Submission Guidelines

- Proposals must be clear, concise, and well-organized.
- Pages should be consecutively numbered.
- All documents must be submitted in English.
- Include a table of contents for easy navigation.

5. Terms and Conditions

● Confidentiality

- All information provided by P@SHA must be treated as confidential.
- The selected firm must sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) before commencing work.
- No information should be disclosed to third parties without prior written consent from P@SHA.

● Contract Duration

- The initial contract will be for **one (1) year**, with the possibility of renewal based on performance and mutual agreement.

● Termination

- Either party may terminate the contract with a **30-day written notice** in case of non-performance or breach of contract terms.
- P@SHA reserves the right to terminate the contract immediately if there is any violation of legal or ethical standards.

● Intellectual Property Rights

- All materials, content, and deliverables produced under this contract will be the sole property of P@SHA.

- **Compliance with Laws and Regulations**

- The firm must comply with all applicable laws, regulations, and professional standards in Pakistan and internationally, where relevant.

- **Conflict of Interest**

- The firm must disclose any potential conflicts of interest and must not engage in activities that could compromise the integrity of the services provided.

6. Submission Guidelines

- **Submission Deadline**

- All proposals must be submitted **no later than 5:00 PM PKT on 6th June, 2025.**

- **Submission Method**

- Proposals should be submitted electronically via email to **brand@pasha.org.pk** and **secretariat@pasha.org.pk**.
- The email subject line should read: "**Proposal for Hiring of Official PR Firm – [Your Firm's Name]**".
- Attachments must be in PDF format.

- **Inquiries and Clarifications**

- All questions or requests for clarification must be submitted in writing via email to **brand@pasha.org.pk** and **secretariat@pasha.org.pk** no later than **3rd, June, 2025.**
- Responses to inquiries will be shared with all bidders to ensure transparency.

8. Additional Information

- **Evaluation Process**

- P@SHA will evaluate all proposals based on the selection criteria outlined.
- Shortlisted firms will be invited for presentation and discussion on strategy to further assess their proposals.

- **Reservation of Rights**

- P@SHA reserves the right to:
 - Reject any or all proposals without assigning any reason.
 - Accept a proposal other than the lowest bid.
 - Request additional information or clarification from bidders.

- Conduct reference checks and seek additional information from third parties.
- **Notification**
 - All bidders will be notified of the outcome of their proposals by one week after the deadline.
- **Conflict Resolution**
 - In the event of a dispute, parties agree to first attempt resolution through mutual discussion. If unresolved, the matter will be referred to arbitration in accordance with the Arbitration Act 1940 of Pakistan.
- **Governing Law**
 - This RFP and any resulting contract shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.

Issued by:

P@SHA Secretariat, Islamabad, Pakistan Contact: +92-51-8736624, Email: secretariat@pasha.org.pk , Website: www.pasha.org.pk

Note: Proposals that fail to meet the legal, technical, or submission requirements will be disqualified. P@SHA emphasizes strict adherence to the guidelines provided.