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*Technical Assistance Packet for Communications
Strategy for Health Care Reform in Macedonia*

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OVERVIEW

The Health Sector Transition project calls for the design and implementation of an effective communications strategy aimed at the major stockholders in financial, administrative and regulatory reforms in the health sector. Rank's role is to provide technical assistance to guide the development of a communications strategy and an implementation plan.

This document describes the Terms of References (TOR) for the tasks to be done on the communications strategy and proposes an implementation schedule.

OVERALL SCOPE OF WORK

The communications strategy will be implemented by organizational units consisting of the RAND Resident Adviser, a full-time IPU public relations specialist, Technical Committee members, an International Public Relations firm with Macedonian partner firm and local researchers. The IPU Public relations specialist will be responsible for managing the communications program. At the outset, the RAND Resident Adviser will work with the IPU Public Relations Specialist in organizing and coordinating a team effort (see Table 1).

Table 1
Implementation Units for Communications Strategy

Terms of Reference	Position	Primary Responsibility
TOR 1	RAND International Consultant (Resident Adviser)	Technical Assistance for Project Preparation
TOR 2	Technical Committee	Evaluate Products
TOR 3	Full-time IPU Public Relations Specialist	Project Management
TOR 4	International Public Relations Firm, with Macedonian partner firm	Communications strategy
TOR 5	Local researchers	Social Assessment

Interviews with key media informants in Macedonia have led to the decision that a tender be offered to an International Public Relations Firm with Macedonian partner firm. This partnership assures international-standard quality in communications and public relations, but also guarantees that the campaign will be suitable to local environment and sensitivities. To further reinforce the importance of local knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors, independent social assessments will be conducted by local researchers. These assessments will guide the development of the communications strategy and contribute to product development.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR 1):

**RAND International Consultant
(Resident Adviser)**

Scope of Work

Working with the IPU, RAND's Resident Adviser will take the preparatory steps needed to manage and implement the Communications Strategy.

- Prepare draft TORs for the IPU Public Relations specialist, the Technical Committee, the Public Relations Firm and local researchers,

- Prepare Communications Strategy Implementation Schedule,
- Conduct interviews with NGOs, media specialists, pension fund and other social reform workers, chambers of commerce, USIS, World Bank and other key informants on communications and social assessment strategies,
- Provide start-up mailing list for IPU,
- Plan and facilitate workshops, forums and briefings on RAND's technical studies.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR 2):

**Technical Committee I
(Finance and Management)**

Scope of Work

- Review and finalize TORs,
- Review TORs and shortlist,
- Develop criteria for evaluation of candidates,
- Participate in selection of experts,
- Evaluate Products before they go public,
 1. overall marketing strategy,
 2. stakeholder/audience analysis,
 3. preliminary social assessments,
 4. key messages on reform and health education,
 5. press kits and promotional materials, and
- Participate in forums and conferences.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR 3):

**Full-Time
IPU Public Relations Specialist**

The following Terms of Reference describe the primary responsibilities of the PUBLIC RELATIONS CONSULTANT of the International Project Unit (IPU) of the Ministry of Health of the Republic of Macedonia. This Unit will be responsible for coordination and implementation of activities under the proposed Health Sector Transition Project.

PUBLIC RELATIONS (PR) CONSULTANT will provide assistance to the IPU of the Ministry of Health in the implementation of Health Sector Transition Project. The public relations consultant will work as part of the core staff in the IPU, under the supervision of, and reporting to, the IPU Director. Specifically, the core responsibility of the PR Consultant is to successfully advance the health sector reforms by raising public awareness and building broad-based support from the citizens of Macedonia.

Qualifications

- University degree in social science, such as economics, sociology, journalism, management,
 1. Preference for applicants with post graduate studies,
 2. Excellent writing ability,
 3. Excellent communications skills ,
 4. Bilingual in English and Macedonian, and
 5. Computer skills: Windows, and Microsoft Office, Database Applications

General and Specific Experience

- Demonstrated experience in designing strategies with measurable outcomes. This could be in designing strategies for a product, an event or political issues,
- At least 1 year experience working with the media (television, newspaper, radio), public relations firm or marketing firm,
- Prior experience working with international firm in Macedonia or abroad,
- Project management experience with successful and completed outcomes, including conference planning, publicizing events or campaigns, and production of newsletters and annual reports.

Specific Duties

- With the IPU Director and RAND's Resident Adviser, design the strategy and workplan for the public information component of the HST project,
- Manage the public information activities of the health sector transition project,
 1. Prepare press releases, public service announcements, media spots, interviews for the IPU/MOH to publicize reform activities,
 2. Coordinate the activities in the search and invitation for the PR firm,
 3. Act as liaison with the selected PR firm,
 4. Coordinate local activities in market research
 5. Oversee the timeliness of task completion in the public information campaign,
 6. Convene public awareness forums with physicians, health care workers, NGOs, trade unions, parliament members and other stakeholders,
- Plan and coordinate conferences, workshops and seminars,
- Support the IPU Director in preparations of internal and external communications,

- Oversee the production and dissemination of annual reports for the project,
- Write monthly newsletter on IPU activities, and health sector reform,
- Write monthly articles for newspapers on health sector reform, and
- Build and manage a mailing list for information dissemination.

Search Process

Full-Time IPU Public Relations Specialist

- Recruitment will entail posting of short job advertisement in MOH one week prior to general solicitation via ad placement in at least 2 newspapers. Newspaper advertisement should be no later than December 1, 1996.
- The validity date will be 10 business days from the time of ad placement. The specific date will be placed on the ad. The validity date should terminate no later than December 11, 1996.
- The ad will include an introduction about the project, the IPU, qualifications and summary of job responsibilities, validity date and instructions for application. The ad will not publicize salary.
- The ad will instruct applicants to send the following:
 1. Curriculum vitae with current address and phone number
 2. One-page cover letter in English and Macedonian introducing themselves and their interests and how they meet the job qualifications
 3. Three references from individuals with their phone numbers
- Each applicant will be instructed to come to the IPU to pick up a TOR. Salary will not be on TOR.
- Each applicant will be given written notification of receipt of application. This notification will thank the applicant and will say that a short list will be selected from the pool of applicants. The short list of individuals will be notified by phone and will be invited for an interview.
- Short list will be based on criteria of the TOR.
- At least 3 individuals will be invited for an interview. Selection will be based on the criteria of TOR and performance during the interview, and references.
- Selection will be made 1 week after the final interview, and no later than December 20, 1996.
- Salary negotiations and terms of work will be discussed with the IPU Director.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR 4):

**International Public Relations Firm
with Macedonian partner firm**

Goal 1: To design a communications and education strategy aimed at obtaining public support for the Health Sector Transition Program.

Goal 2: To design a health education campaign to promote healthy behaviors related to immunization coverage, maternal child health, tuberculosis and AIDs prevention and safe blood supply.

Project Background

Macedonia is a developing country, undergoing economic reforms in the early stages of market-transition. Health sector policy reform is one element of the economic reforms.

The Macedonian public health insurance system (HIF) currently provides comprehensive health care coverage for virtually all the residents of Macedonia, relying on payroll deductions, other contributions, and modest copayments and user fees from patients. This system is struggling with a variety of issues that are weakening the financial position of the HIF and consequently compromising the quality of care. As a result, the government has embarked on a Health Sector Transition Project, supported by World Bank credit. This three-year, broad-based project covers the initial phase of a systemwide strategy for reforms. Core policy areas are: (1) health finance and management, (2) basic health services, and (3) pharmaceutical policy and supply.

The proposed changes in the health system will affect citizens, employers, and providers. Some of the proposed changes are outlined below (See Table 2) in terms of positive changes as well as perceived negative changes.

Clearly, the proposed health sector reforms call for the design and implementation of an effective communications strategy. This strategy should build public support by informing the public on current problems, tradeoffs in alternatives, and needed solutions. The strategy should have a spirit of encouraging citizen's participation as well as professional collaboration within the medical community. Finally, it is imperative that the firm work in partnership with a Macedonian counterpart firm to guarantee that the concepts developed and communications channels used are appropriate for Macedonian audiences.

Proposal Guidelines

The organization should submit a proposal of no more than 15 pages (not including exhibits and attachments) describing their Communications Strategy. Proposals should respond directly to the objectives outlined above and refer to the World Bank Staff Appraisal Report's Letter of Development Policy. Price quotations should include: consultant fees, international travel and per diem, local per diem for international consultants, local staff costs, plus production and delivery of all media including television, print, radio and other media over a 24 month period.

The project consists of two components addressing each of the two goals. The first component, corresponding to the first goal will begin immediately. The second component, corresponding to the health education goal will begin 6 months after the start of the project. In writing the proposal, the consulting firm should bear in mind that 75% of the effort should be devoted to the first component and 25% to the second component.

Table 2
Proposed Changes

Perceived Negative Changes	Positive Changes
Limiting the basic benefits package.	The limited package will have guaranteed funding and will include the most used and most needed services.
Reducing exemptions from copayments.	Reducing exemptions, in principle is more equitable.
Revising copayments and user fee policies or services and for prescription drugs.	The project will buy basic equipment for 250 rural primary health centers and training primary care personnel to update prevention and treatment protocols.
Enforcing employer sanctions for non-contribution of insurance.	The project will invest in design, testing and introduction of an integrated medical and financial information system.
Introducing a capitation system for primary care providers.	Primary care doctors will face competitive pressures to perform better, therefore care is likely to improve.
Reducing the number of public sector doctors.	Material support for disease promotion and health promotion in immunization, maternal child health, tuberculosis and AIDs prevention and safe blood supply.
Limiting reimbursements for drugs by the HIF to an essential drugs list.	Essential drugs will be available to consumers at the lowest possible cost.

The proposal should include the following elements in order to be considered:

1. Overall Marketing Strategy

- Description of the overall marketing strategy. The firm should provide convincing examples and arguments that the firm's effort will successfully meet the needs of the HST project reforms. Content, timing, and mode of dissemination of products to be delivered should be relevant to intended target audience. Description on the scope of work, collaboration, and daily coordination with local Macedonian firm.

2. Social Assessment Phase

- *Stakeholder/Audience Analysis.* This should include a discussion on all the stakeholders, and how the audience should be appropriately segmented (i.e. general public, providers, policymakers).
- *Public Opinion Research.* Describe methods to assess public opinion across a cross-section of citizens.

3. Development of key messages. Discussion on the methods for developing key messages for (a) the reform activities and (b) health education

4. List of Products. Describe products for print and broadcast media (e.g. brochures, press-kits) for (a) reform activities and (b) health education. Include discussion on conferences and forums.
5. Schedule of workplan: Workplan should have name, position, responsibility, designation of international and local component. Workplan should be on a monthly schedule. Workplan should match milestones of reform products with timely communications strategy/outputs.
6. Firm Qualifications and Experience:
 - Describe experience and successes in transitioning economies, Eastern Europe and/or developing countries. Highlight experience with social marketing and health education campaigns.
 - Provide CVs of key personnel.

Hiring Procedures

The government of Macedonia will invite a shortlist of three to six consulting firms specializing in communications. The IPU, Technical Committee and RAND Resident Adviser will evaluate the technical bids received by the deadline according to the criteria described below. The contract will be awarded to the firm that submits the best technical bid.

Hiring Schedule

By December 1996, develop TORs and shortlist of firms
Between January and March 1997, invite proposals from shortlist of firms,
By March 1997, evaluate and select firm,
By April 1997, the winning firm will implement communications strategy.

Criteria for Selection

The firm will be ranked from 0 to 100, where 100 is maximum.

1. **Overall Marketing Strategy** **15 points**
Rate the firm's proposal on the following:
 - Strength of examples and arguments that the firm's effort will successfully meet the needs of the HST reforms.
 - Relevance of content, timing, and mode of dissemination of products to intended target audience.
 - Feasibility and likelihood of success of the firm's collaboration with local partner. Evaluate the scope of work undertaken by the local firm and proposed coordination. Firm should provide evidence of collaboration with Macedonian firm, i.e. memorandum of understanding, letter of support, list of previous collaborations.

2. **Social Assessment** **15 points**
Rate the firm's proposal methodology, specifically:
 - *Stakeholder/Audience Analysis.*
 - Evaluate the discussion on all the stakeholders, and audience segmentation vis-à-vis appropriateness to Macedonia and the health sector reform issues.
 - *Public Opinion Research.*
 - Evaluate the scientific merits of the firm's methods to assess public opinion across a cross-section of citizens.

3. **Development of key messages.** **15 points**
Evaluate the firm's methods for developing key messages for (a) the reform activities and (b) health education. Firms should earn more points if the messages are populist, informative and educational.

4. **List of Products.** **5 points**
Evaluate the proposed products for their relevance and appropriateness to the (a) reform agenda and to (b) health promotion. Keep in mind the tradeoff between quantity and quality of products.

5. **Schedule of workplan** **5 points**
Assess the feasibility and timeliness of the deliverables.

6. **Firm Qualifications and Experience** **30 points**
Rate the firm's success in transitioning economies, Eastern Europe and/or developing countries. and with social marketing and health education campaigns. Rate the quality of the CVs of the key personnel based on education, experience and skills.

7. **Competitive Price** **15 points**

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR 5):

Local Researchers

Supplemental and complementary studies may be needed for social assessments at various phases of the project.

Scope of Work

- Prepare research design for qualitative and quantitative research
- Develop research instruments, train interviewers, supervise data analysis and prepare report on findings and recommendations for communications strategy
- Collaborate in workshop design and utilization of research data for communications strategy development.

Qualifications

- Knowledgeable about all aspects of health sector reform issues in Macedonia
- Experience in managing research teams
- Experience in facilitating meetings with stakeholders
- PhD in social or behavioral sciences
- Affiliation with university or research firm

Hiring Procedures

Hiring procedure should adhere to the World Bank procedure for hiring local consultant services.

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The aim of the communications strategy is to ensure the launching and implementation of the public information campaign, so vital to the health sector transition project. This document serves as a project management tool with concrete recommendations. It includes job descriptions, terms of reference and step-by step instructions for the hiring process. A proposed schedule is provided in Appendix A. Dates may change due to delays of the project, but the lead time, scope of responsibilities and implementation units responsible should remain the same. The most important recommendation is that the MOH Technical Committee should guarantee that the public information campaign be launched at least 3 months prior to the submission of the Benefits Package and Participation Policies to Parliament, and prior to the implementation of the pilot projects on capitation and information systems. Without a public information campaign, health sector reforms may fail to succeed due to public dissatisfaction and professional non-compliance.

List of Persons Met

World Bank Resident Mission, Macedonia
Ellen Goldstein, Resident Representative
Saso Ordanoski, External Affairs

World Health Organization, Macedonia
Maria Kishman, Liaison

United States Information Office
Information Officer

Agency of the Republic of Macedonia for Transformation of Enterprises with Social Capital
Olga Mihajlova Tikvarovska, Director PR and Promotion

Institute for Sociology Political and Juridical Research
Klime Babunski, Researcher

Carana Corporation
Dianna M. Porter, Director for Macedonia

Appendix 1

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY
Implementation Schedule

	RAND	IPU/MOH	Technical Committee I	Public Relations Firm		Local Researchers
				International Component	Local Counterpart	
Management Activities						
1. Hire experts to design campaign						
TORS & shortlist	Oct-96	Dec-96	x	x	x	
invite proposals	Jan-97	Mar-97	x	x	x	
Evaluate & select experts	Mar-97	Mar-97		x	x	
2. Implement Campaign	Apr-97	Jun-99		x		
3. Evaluate Products	Apr-97	Jun-99			x	
Products						
1. Overall Marketing Strategy	Apr-97	Apr-97			x	
2. Stakeholder/Audience Analysis	Apr-97	Apr-97			x	x
3. Social Assessments	Feb-97	Apr-97			x	x
4. Development of key messages						
Reform	Apr-97	Dec-97			x	x
Health Education	Dec-97	Sep-98			x	x
5. Organization of Forums and conference						
Seminars to Media	Mar-97	Jun-99		x	x	x
Provider Awareness Forums	Feb-97	Jun-99		x	x	x
Citizen Focus Groups	Mar-97	Jun-99		x	x	x
Legislative Education	Apr-97	Jun-99		x	x	x
Policy Conferences	May-97	Jun-99	x	x		
6. Printed Media						
6a. Development						
Quarterly IPU Magazine	Apr-97	Jun-98			x	
Monthly IPU Newsletter	Apr-97	Jun-98			x	x
Health education brochures	Dec-97	Jan-98			x	x
6b. Implementation and Dissemination	May-97	Jun-99		x		
7. Radio & Television Spots						
7a. Development						
Health Reform Messages	Apr-97	Dec-97			x	x
Health Education Messages	Dec-97	Jan-98			x	x
7b. Implementation and Dissemination	May-97	Jun-99		x		
8. Press kits (continually updated)						
8a. Development						
For IPU/HIF/MOH	Apr-97	May-99			x	x
For Parliament & Government	Apr-97	May-99			x	x
8b. Implementation and Dissemination	May-97	Jun-99		x	x	x

