

Request for Proposals: LLM Specialist Consultancy

Terms of Reference:

1. Consultancy assignment background

The Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is a humanitarian organization with a global presence, working to provide protection and assistance to people displaced by conflict and natural disasters. To improve efficiency, information access, and decision-making, NRC is seeking to develop a custom AI-powered knowledge base with integrated applications.

As we advance in our efforts to build responsible AI applications, we are seeking an experienced data scientist or data science firm with expertise in LLM and RAG to collaborate closely with our Data Solution Lead to build the foundation for these AI applications.

2. Objectives and Deliverables

The primary objective of this consultancy is to support NRC in developing and implementing a robust and adaptable AI knowledge base. This will involve:

- Selecting a suitable Large Language Model (LLM) based on NRC's specific needs.
- Curating a comprehensive dataset of internal documents, ensuring quality, diversity, and mitigating bias.
- Integrating data from trusted external sources like ReliefWeb and HAPI.
- Implementing Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG) for initial LLM functionality.
- Developing a pilot application (e.g., Knowledge Chatbot) to test the system.
- Providing recommendations and support for the development and integration of additional AI applications tailored to NRC's needs (e.g., NRC Finds - Smart Search, Automated Reporting).
- Establishing a knowledge base governance framework to ensure data security, privacy, and ongoing maintenance.

3. Scope of Work:

The consultancy will provide the following services:

- **Feasibility Study:** Conduct a comprehensive assessment of NRC's information management challenges and opportunities for AI integration.
- **LLM Selection:** Evaluate and recommend a suitable LLM (open-source or commercial) based on factors like scalability, capabilities, and alignment with NRC's needs and existing/planned technology stack.
- **Data Curation and Preprocessing:** Develop a data curation strategy to clean, enrich, and de-bias internal documents for LLM training.

- **Knowledge Base Development:** By integrating data from internal and trusted external sources and implementing Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG).
- **Pilot Application Development:** Develop and test a set of pilot applications (e.g., Knowledge Chatbot, Reporting Tool, etc.).
- **AI Applications Roadmap:** Create a roadmap for the development and integration of additional AI applications based on user feedback and evolving needs.
- **Knowledge Base Governance:** Develop recommendations for data security, privacy, and a sustainable knowledge base management framework.
- **Capacity Building:** Provide knowledge transfer sessions and training materials to equip NRC staff with the knowledge to maintain and manage the AI knowledge base.
- **Project Management:** Oversee all project activities, ensure adherence to timelines and budget, and manage communication with NRC stakeholders.

4. Deliverables:

1. Feasibility Study Report: A report outlining NRC's information management challenges and opportunities for AI integration.
2. LLM Selection Report: A detailed recommendation for a suitable LLM based on the needs assessment.
3. Data Curation Strategy: A documented plan for internal data cleaning, enrichment, and de-biasing.
4. Functional AI Knowledge Base: A functioning knowledge base utilizing RAG with integrated data from internal and external sources.
5. Pilot Application (e.g., Knowledge Chatbot): A fully functional pilot application showcasing the capabilities of the AI knowledge base.
6. AI Applications Roadmap: A roadmap outlining the development and integration of additional applications.
7. Knowledge Base Governance Framework: Recommendations for data security, privacy, and sustainable knowledge base management.
8. Training Materials: Materials to equip NRC staff with the knowledge to maintain and manage the AI knowledge base.
9. Project Management Reports: Regular reports outlining project progress, potential challenges, and mitigation strategies.

3. Institutional and organisational arrangements

NRC will own the intellectual property rights to all materials submitted by the consultants under the contract. The consultants must therefore ensure that they have possession of any materials provided to NRC as a part of the deliverable. The rights to reproduce the reports will fall to NRC and its contracted agents. NRC will be free to reproduce the materials at will and to grant reproduction rights.

Duties of the consultant

Everything submitted to NRC must be the original work of the consultants. Any plagiarism in any form, or any other breach of intellectual property rights, will automatically disqualify the consultant from receiving any further payments under the contract by NRC, and NRC will seek to recover any payments already made.

Reports should be submitted in Microsoft Word format, in UK English. All text should be unformatted. Graphs or other graphical devices should be editable (i.e., not pictures). All

references must be cited according to convention, and detailed in a bibliography, using the Harvard system as set out in the [UNESCO Style Manual](#). All verbatim quotations must appear in quotation marks and must not be of excessive length. All data collected under the consultancy must be submitted with the deliverables, in a widely recognised format such as Microsoft Excel. Any use of Generative Artificial Intelligence tools to produce any content should be clearly signposted as part of the document, indicating the section of the document and the tool used.

The consultant will follow [Ethical Research Involving Children](#) guidance on the ethical participation of children. In addition, all participants in any study or other interaction will be fully informed about the nature and purpose of the interaction and their requested involvement. Informed consent must be obtained for any photographs, audio, or video recordings, etc., in accordance with NRC’s policy on consent.

Duties of NRC

This may include provision of transport, accommodation, materials, documents (including visa), arranging flights, assistance with workshops etc. Clarify what documents NRC will provide for document review, and when it will provide them. It must be made clear what costs will be borne by NRC and what is expected to be paid by the consultant and included in their all-in fee.

5. Qualifications of the consulting company / sole trader

The ideal consultant will possess the following qualifications:

- Proven experience in developing and implementing AI-powered knowledge bases.
- Expertise in Large Language Models (LLMs) and data curation practices.
- Strong understanding of natural language processing (NLP) and retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) techniques.
- Experience integrating AI solutions with existing IT infrastructure.
- Capability in developing chatbot applications.
- Experience working with humanitarian or development organizations or NGOs is a plus.
- Excellent communication, project management, and reporting skills.

The subsequent table will serve as the evaluation framework for appraising candidates’ consultancy experience and qualifications:

Experience and qualification	Weight
AI/ML Expertise	30%
Experience with LLM and RAG	30%
Web Development experience	10%
Humanitarian experience	10%
Financial offer	20%

Schedule of Deliverables

Commencement

The Assignment shall commence on August 15, **2024**.

Period for the Assignment

The Assignment shall continue until **December 31, 2024**.

The Assignment shall be provided on an ongoing basis up to a maximum of the overall financial limit for the Agreement.

Schedule of deliverables

The project is expected to be completed within 5 months with a focused schedule of deliverables. Below is a preliminary indication of specific milestones:

Deliverable	Timeframe
Feasibility Study Report	Week 4
LLM Selection Report	Week 5
Data Curation Strategy	Week 6
Knowledge Base	Week 10
Pilot Application	Week 12
AI Applications Roadmap	Week 14
2 nd Pilot Application	Week 18
Training Material	Week 20
Further development	Week 20 and beyond, dependent on budget availability

This timeline and milestones are subject to adjustment based on project requirements, proposed roadmap, feedback, and unforeseen challenges. Regular communication and collaboration with the project team and stakeholders will be essential.

How to apply

Your quotation should include the following:

- A cover letter expressing interest in the consultancy.

- **A Technical proposal** that outlines the approach and work plan based on the schedule of deliverables. A detailed roadmap and a clear description of the outputs you will deliver is mandatory.
- An overview of relevant experience and credentials, including CVs with relevant work experience and qualifications for each individual that will be involved as part of the consultant team.
- Financial proposal including the daily rate. Please provide offers based on the following:
 - The work will need to be finalized before December 20, 2024.
 - It is expected that the estimated amount of work will total a maximum of 50 days throughout the duration of the contract.
 - Tasks will be conducted on a part-time basis with an estimated 2 –3 working days per week.
 - Currency of offer: EUR.
 - Price offer should be inclusive of any relevant taxes that the consultant is liable for.
 - Validity of the offer: 90 days.

Manner of Submission:

Please submit your quotation in accordance with the requirements detailed below by email to: procurement.ict@nrc.no or a sealed envelope to the Norwegian Refugee Council at the address:

Prinsens gate 2
0152 Oslo
Norway

Deadline for submission of quotations is through May **July 31, 2024**. Sole traders or companies who do not submit their quotation by this deadline will not be considered.

When the bid is submitted electronically, please make sure you comply with the below:

- The following title shall be inserted in the Subject Line of the email: **RFQ for ML Specialist Consultancy**
- Bid documents required, shall be included as an attachment to the email in PDF format and if there are multiple documents, they can be provided as a compressed ZIP file. Documents in MS Word or Excel formats will result in the bid being disqualified.

All inquiries and questions should be addressed to: procurement.ict@nrc.no

NRC reserves the right to accept or reject the whole or part of your quotation based on the information provided. Incomplete quotations which do not comply with our conditions will not be considered.

Suppliers will be required to sign and submit an [Ethical Standards Declaration](#), together with their bid. Please sign the pages below.

Ethical Standards Declaration for all Supply, Service and Works Contractors

We, the undersigned, ('we', 'our' or 'us') **CONSIDERING THAT:**

FIRST, we are bidding for, or entering into, a contract with the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to supply goods, services or works to NRC ('the Contract').

SECOND, we understand that as a humanitarian organisation, NRC expects its suppliers and contractors to have high ethical standards.

THIRD, we understand that NRC therefore needs us to confirm that we adhere to the required ethical standards ('the ethical standards') by signing this declaration ('the Declaration').

THEREFORE, we DO HEREBY DECLARE as follows:

1. Declaration concerning compliance with applicable laws and these ethical standards

We declare that we shall:

- a. Meet the ethical standards in this declaration ('ethical standards')
- b. Ensure that any party representing us, including but not limited to:
 - board members
 - directors
 - employees
 - contractors or sub-contractors, and their employees
 - consultants and sub-consultants, and their employees;
 - other legal representatives

('our Representatives') are aware of and comply with these ethical standards.

In the event that we, or our Representatives, do not meet the ethical standards at present, we shall:

- a. Explain to NRC in what way we do not currently meet the ethical standards
- b. Agree a plan and timeline with NRC to implement changes that allow us to meet the ethical standards
- c. Provide regular updates to NRC on the implementation plan.

2. Declaration concerning status

We hereby declare that neither we, nor to the best of our knowledge our Representatives, are in any of the following situations:

- 2.1. Have made an offer, payment, consideration or benefit of any kind, which constitutes illegal or corrupt practice, directly or indirectly, as an inducement or reward in relation to the tendering, awarding or execution of the Contract.

- 2.2. Are involved in any form of fraud, corruption, collusion, coercive practice, bribery, involvement in a criminal organisation or other illegal activity
- 2.3. Are insolvent, in receivership, bankrupt, or being wound up
- 2.4. Have suspended activities
- 2.5. Are subject to legal proceedings related to 2.1
- 2.6. Have at any time been found guilty and sentenced by a court, whether in the country of employment or abroad, for a criminal offence in respect of children or vulnerable adults
- 2.7. Are engaged in:
 - terrorism or the material support of terrorism
 - the sale or manufacture, either directly or indirectly, of anti-personnel mines or any components produced primarily for the operation thereof
 - the sale or manufacture, either directly or indirectly, of weapons
 - the production of alcohol, tobacco, or pornography.

3. Declaration concerning Conflicts of Interest

We declare that neither we nor, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives have an undisclosed conflict of interest with NRC.

Where any potential conflict of interest exists between our Representatives and NRC or any NRC staff member, we shall notify NRC in writing of the potential conflict. NRC shall then determine whether action is required.

A conflict of interest can be due to a relationship with an NRC staff member such as family or friends.

We understand that if we fail to report a potential conflict of interest and are later found to have a conflict of interest, we may be removed from the NRC vendor database.

4. Declaration concerning compliance with national law

We declare that we and, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives:

- 4.1. comply with all applicable laws and regulations in effect in the country or countries where the Contract will be carried out.
- 4.2. comply with all applicable export laws concerning the country or countries where the Contract will be carried out.
- 4.3. are registered with the relevant government authority with regard to taxation for the duration of the Contract.
- 4.4. pay taxes according to all applicable national laws and regulations for the duration of the Contract.

5. Declaration concerning compliance with labour standards

We declare that we and, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives:

We declare that we and, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives comply with applicable national labour law standards and the International Labour Organisation Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work.

Specifically, we declare that we and, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives comply with the following minimum labour standards:

5.1. Working Conditions

- a. All workers receive a contract of employment that is written in a language they understand.
- b. All workers are free to leave after giving reasonable notice.
- c. All workers have the right to join or form trade unions of their own choosing and to bargain collectively.
- d. No worker is required to lodge 'deposits' or identity papers or immigration documents in order to obtain employment.

5.2. Wages and benefits

- a. Wages and benefits paid for a standard working week meet, at a minimum, national legal standards or industry benchmark standards, whichever is higher. Wages are always sufficient to meet basic needs.
- b. No deductions from wages are made as a disciplinary measure.

5.3. Working time

- a. Working hours comply with national laws and benchmark industry standards, whichever affords greater protection. Whenever possible working hours do not exceed 48 hours per week (8 hours per day).

- b. Workers are provided with at least one day off for every 7-day period.

5.4. Health and safety

- a. Steps are taken to prevent accidents and injury to health arising out of, associated with, or occurring in, the course of work, by minimising, so far as is reasonably practicable, the causes of hazards inherent in the working environment.
- b. Workers receive regular and documented health and safety training, and such training is repeated for new workers.
- c. Workers have access to clean toilet facilities and to potable water, and, if appropriate, sanitary facilities for food storage is provided.
- d. Accommodation, where provided, is clean, safe and adequately ventilated.

5.5. Discrimination and abuse

- a. No worker is forced, bonded or an involuntary prison worker.
- b. There is no discrimination at the workplace based on ethnic background, religion, age, disability, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, union membership or political affiliation.
- c. Measures are in place to protect workers from sexually intrusive, threatening, insulting or exploitative behaviour, and from discrimination or termination of employment on unjustifiable grounds, e.g. marriage, pregnancy, parenthood or HIV status.
- d. Physical abuse or punishment, or threats of physical abuse, sexual or other harassment and verbal abuse, as well as other forms of intimidation, are prohibited.

5.6. Persons under 18

- a. No persons under the age of 18 shall be engaged in work which is hazardous to their health or safety, including night work.
- b. The working hours and nature of work of any worker who is under the age of 18 shall not interfere with their opportunity to complete his or her education.

6. Declaration concerning the environmental standards

We declare that we and, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives comply with applicable national environmental law standards and with international environmental standards, to the greatest extent possible.

Specifically, we declare that we and, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives adhere to the following standards:

- 6.1. We respect national and international environmental legislation and regulation.
- 6.2. We ensure that production and extraction of raw materials for production does not contribute to the destruction of the resources and income base

for marginalised populations, such as in claiming large land areas or other natural resources on which these populations are dependent.

6.3. We take environmental measures into consideration throughout the production and distribution chain ranging from the production of raw material to the consumer sale. This includes reasonable steps to minimise negative environmental impacts (e.g. emissions, water usage, waste) and to use - where possible - sustainable resources. Local, regional and global environmental aspects shall be considered. The local environment at the production site will not be exploited or degraded by pollution and waste.

6.4. We carefully manage hazardous chemicals and other substances in accordance with documented safety procedures.

7. Declaration concerning protection from sexual exploitation and abuse

We and, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives comply with international standards related to protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) and sexual harassment.

Specifically, we declare that we and, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives adhere to the following standards:

7.1. We take sexual misconduct seriously and ensure that any employee found to have carried out sexual misconduct will be subject to disciplinary action.

7.2. We will ensure, that none of our employees engage in any sexual activity with persons (adult or child) in relation with this contract regardless of the age of majority or consent locally.

7.3. We will ensure that none of our employees produce, procure, distribute or use sexually explicit material in any activities under the Contract or on any sites used under the Contract.

7.4. We will ensure that none of our employees will exchange money, employment, goods or services for sex, including sexual favours or other forms of humiliating, degrading, or exploitative behaviour. This prohibition extends to any use of sex trade workers. If any sexual misconduct is found to have taken place, such employees face disciplinary action.

7.5. We shall report any incident or complaint of sexual misconduct or child abuse related to the activities carried out under the Contract through NRC's PSEA and Safeguarding Unit at psea@nrc.no.

7.6. We shall report any known or reported sexual relationship between our employees and NRC staff to NRC.

8. Declaration concerning protection of children

We declare that neither we nor, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives are engaged in any practice inconsistent with the rights set forth in the Convention on the Rights of the Child. We commit to upholding international and national laws and policies regarding child safeguarding.

Specifically, we declare that we and, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives adhere to the following standards:

8.1. We support and protect the complainant, survivors and witnesses of any raised incidents or complaints of sexual misconduct or child abuse.

8.2. We will ensure, that our employees will not abuse or exploit children or act in a manner that may place a child at risk of harm.

8.3. We will ensure that our employees are not left alone with children.

8.4. We will ensure our employees will not ask children for personal contact details without a valid reason to do so.

8.5. We listen, to the best of our ability, to children's views and opinions and treat boys and girls in a manner that is respectful of their rights and dignity during the performance of the Contract.

8.6. We shall report any suspicion of child safeguarding concerns through the Complaints and Feedback Mechanism, provided by the NRC contract focal point and at psea@nrc.no.

9. Declaration concerning anti-human trafficking

We declare that neither we nor, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives are engaged in trafficking in persons as defined in the protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons or the UN Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

Specifically, we declare that we and, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives adhere to the following standards:

9.1. We do not solicit persons for the purpose of employment, or offer employment by means of materially false or fraudulent pretences, representations, or promises.

9.2. We do not charge employees recruitment fees.

9.3. We do not provide or arrange housing for employees that does not meet host country housing and safety standards.

9.4. We commit to report any suspected violations of this clause to NRC immediately.

9.5. We commit to make our Representatives aware of the trafficking related prohibitions outlined above and share the Global Human Trafficking Hotline Information with them (1-844-888-FREE, help@befree.org).

10. General

We understand that:

- 10.1. The Declaration will be kept on file for a period of 10 years.
- 10.2. The Declaration will be updated every year or more often as appropriate.
- 10.3. We must inform NRC immediately in the event that there is a change to the Declaration.
- 10.4. NRC may perform checks to verify that the ethical standards are adhered to and shall be granted reasonable access to our premises and to our documentation, computer systems etc, in order to be allowed to do so.
- 10.5. In the event that NRC deem that we fail to meet or are not taking appropriate steps to meet, the ethical standards, NRC may immediately terminate any and all contracts and agreements we have with them and at no cost to NRC.

11. Requirement to notify NRC

We shall immediately notify NRC through the Complaints and Feedback Mechanism, provided by the NRC contract focal point if:

- 11.1. Any allegations of alleged corruption, sexual exploitation or abuse, or child abuse are made against us or, to the best of our knowledge, our Representatives, during the Contract, whether relating to the Contract or not.
- 11.2. Any allegations are made, or any changes occur, in relation to any of the declarations made herein.



Signed on our behalf as follows:

Signature	
Name	
Position	
Date	
Place	