



## **PROJECT SPECIFICATION BRIEF:**

# **UK Think Tank landscape – Communications briefing**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Amnesty International UK (AIUK) wishes to engage a consultant to produce a briefing to inform a communications strategy for our policy and research work. We increasingly want to integrate our policy work into the “think tank” space in the UK and better establish ourselves as thought leaders on human rights law and policy. To do that, we need a greater understanding of the think tank sector, the communications techniques of the leading and most influential think tanks, together with recommendations on how to better communicate policy analysis, proposals and ideas to a highly engaged political audience.

1.2 This work will support our project to build, develop and expand our think tank function as an organisation. We plan for it to be an internal document to inform our analysis and comms development for this work.

1.3. The research will be commissioned and owned by AIUK.

### **2. ABOUT AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL**

2.1 Amnesty International is the world’s largest grass-roots human rights organisation with over three million members across more than 150 countries and territories. We investigate and expose abuses, educate and mobilise the public, and help transform societies to create a safer, more just world.

2.2 Amnesty International is an unincorporated worldwide movement consisting of independent sections throughout the world and an International Secretariat (IS) based in London which coordinates the worldwide movement and provides support for global governance structures.

2.3 AIUK is one of the largest of 69 national entities that make up the global Amnesty movement. It has over 325,000 members, supporters and activists, 232 local groups, 114 student groups and 567 youth groups.

2.4 Amnesty International UK is made up of two separate legal entities. The UK Section is a membership body. Its 132,000 members control the Section through its General Meetings and by electing a Board of Directors. It is a campaigning organisation and much of its work does not fall within the prevailing definition of “charitable”. AIUK Charitable Trust funds global charitable activity, including human rights research, monitoring and education, and promoting public support for human rights. Although there are 48,000 regular donors to the charity, it is not a membership body and it is governed by trustees. AIUK Section and the Charitable Trust have separate constitutions and governance arrangements. However, they work to a common vision. In August 2006, the UK Section acquired Amnesty Freestyle Limited, a trading company.

### **3. BACKGROUND**

3.1 Over the past decade, Amnesty International and the wider human rights movement has been in almost constant reactive and defensive mode when it comes to human rights, its legal frameworks and core principles. This has consumed our capacity and energy for over a decade and has left little space for developing positive, progressive, solutions-focussed policy proposals.

3.2 Our approach within our campaigning work will therefore be to build and develop our think tank function as an organisation, create the space and capacity to think big, develop our analysis, communicate our policies, and become a go-to organisation for policy ideas, solutions and big ideas for human rights now and in the future. This work sits beside and directly supports our campaigning work where we seek to bring depth and contextual understanding to the specific and targeted campaigns we run.

3.3 One of the most influential groups currently in UK politics is think tanks. Some think tanks are not only doing the “thinking” for political parties they are (or were) operating as an “alternative civil service”. The influence they hold is not only on specific public policy change objectives but in the ideology, the analytical frameworks and narratives that surround those individual policies. For Amnesty to influence the political discourse in the ways we need to, we need to adopt more of the approaches and techniques of think tanks in tandem with our “classic model” of policy change campaigning and public attitudinal change.

3.4 Traditionally, campaigning models are laser-focussed on very specific policy-change or behaviour-change, or both. Think tanks function in more of an educational model and engage more holistically in the issues that they are seeking to influence. We certainly have the knowledge and expertise to be a thought-leader and the go-to organisation in our field, but we need to find different ways to communicate and engage this knowledge in policy circles and political discourse more widely.

3.5 This “think tank project” will include developing and promoting an over-arching human rights narrative which sets out our progressive vision for human rights domestically and internationally. Under this banner we will also produce research and analysis on our focus areas including police accountability, the immigration system, corporate accountability, a rights-based UK foreign policy including international justice and accountability mechanisms and tackling the anti-rights movement. But this will be a rolling programme of outputs, events and activities which will develop as our campaigns and other projects progress.

### **4. DELIVERABLES**

4.1 This briefing will aim to give us;

- a brief overview of the think tank landscape in the UK relating only to our organisational areas of work;
- select a number of the key influential think tanks in our sector and explore their communications strategies;
- provide a list of;

- Top 20\* think tanks that are or are expected to be influential with the new Labour Government, that will maintain their influence from the previous to the new government or are the “ones to watch”.
  - Top 50\* media targets for think tanks including political broadcast shows, news & politics magazines, podcasts, political columnists, etc.
  - Top 20\* public political influencers i.e. individuals who may be journalists, commentators, hosts, public intellectuals, academics and who are expected to be or are the ones to watch.
  - (\* exact numbers to be agreed)
- provide us with key communications recommendations for engaging with our target audience in the ecosystem of think tanks, academics, political influencers and political targets in ways that are different to our current communications and more similar to influential think tanks.

## **5. METHODOLOGY**

5.1 The following is an outline of a proposed methodology but we expect to develop this with the consultants;

5.1.1 Initial meeting with the AIUK’s Head of Policy and Research, Head of Communications, Digital Engagement Specialist to discuss objectives and approach.

5.1.2 Secondary research, analysis of existing materials on UK think tanks to produce a summary of the current think tank landscape in the areas of Amnesty’s interest.

5.1.3 Monitor public communications of select number of UK think tanks to draw out significant communication tactics and differences with Amnesty UK comms.

5.1.4 Any quantitative data that may be publicly obtainable on reach or impact of think tanks or target media.

5.1.5 Interviews with comms professionals with experience of think tank communications strategies.

5.1.6 Develop recommendations for key elements to a comms strategy for Amnesty’s “think tank” project for us to consider.

### **Case studies**

5.2 The consultant will agree a list of think tank case studies with Amnesty and conduct an analysis of their public communications, potentially conduct interviews with think tank comms professionals, and summarise learnings and key takeaways from them.

## **6. BUDGET**

6.1 This piece of work has a budget of £5k, inclusive of VAT and expenses.

## **7. TIMESCALE AND KEY DATES**

7.1 We would like the work to begin in September 2024 with the aim for the briefing to be submitted and presentation to be given in October 2024, but timelines are flexible for the right contractor.

## 8. REPORTING LINES

8.1 The Head of Policy & Research, Naomi McAuliffe and our Digital Engagement Specialist, Sharon Natt are the key contacts for this research.

## 9. REQUIREMENTS

9.1 We envisage that this assignment will be undertaken by an agency/Individual that will be able to demonstrate their experience and expertise of undertaking similar types of work.

We will assess the proposals based on:

- Demonstrable experience of overseeing and implementing guidance for other similar research, including case studies and recommendations
- The consultation methodology proposed
- Availability against timeline
- The diverse set of skills needed including the ability to communicate clearly, concisely and engagingly in a way that effects change
- Value for money

## 10. NEXT STEPS

10.1 Candidates are requested to provide a written proposal no longer than 2 pages which includes the following:

- An outline of the methodology proposed, timescale (including any risk analysis and resourcing required), and structure of the output envisaged.
- A cost (or cost options) for the project.
- CV and/or other relevant information about the proposed project team or your organisation's experience and credentials such examples of previous work (annexed)

10.2 Proposals should be submitted by email to [sharon.natt@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:sharon.natt@amnesty.org.uk) no later than **Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> September 23:59**. To ask questions ahead of submission you can also contact [naomi.mcauliffe@amnesty.org.uk](mailto:naomi.mcauliffe@amnesty.org.uk)

10.3 We will be meeting with all prospective consultants before making a decision. These will be conducted on the week commencing **Monday 16<sup>th</sup> September** (possibly outside working hours).

/Ends