

# GSMA

## REQUEST FOR QUOTATION

### **Policy landscape of mobile based early warning systems**

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# Requested Services and Deliverables

## 1. GSMA overview

The GSMA Mobile for Development Foundation, Inc. (“GSMA M4D”) is a U.S. 501(c)(3) charitable organisation that seeks to relieve poverty and improve living conditions throughout the world through identifying opportunities for social, economic and environmental impact and to stimulate the development of scalable, life-enhancing mobile services. GSMA M4D is a wholly owned subsidiary of the GSM Association (“GSMA”).

The GSMA represents the interests of mobile operators worldwide, uniting nearly 800 operators with more than 300 companies in the broader mobile ecosystem, including handset and device makers, software companies, equipment providers and internet companies, as well as organisations in adjacent industry sectors. The GSMA also produces industry-leading events such as Mobile World Congress, Mobile World Congress Shanghai and the Mobile 360 Series conferences. For more information, please visit the GSMA corporate website at [www.gsma.com](http://www.gsma.com).

For this project, the successful Respondent will contract with The GSMA Mobile for Development Foundation.

## 2. Project overview

### Background

The [GSMA Mobile for Humanitarian Innovation \(M4H\)](#) programme envisions an inclusive digital humanitarian future, where mobile and digital solutions provide affected populations with improved access to life-enhancing mobile-enabled services across preparedness, response, and recovery. The programme acts as a convenor between mobile network operators (MNOs), humanitarian actors and national governments to promote innovation, collaboration, and impact in crisis settings.

Climate change has dramatically increased the frequency and intensity of natural hazards. Over the last 50 years, the number of disasters has increased by a factor of 5.<sup>1</sup> Early warning systems (EWS) save lives by helping people to take appropriate action or evacuate ahead of a crisis. However, they take investment of capacity and resource alongside complex multi-sectoral collaboration to be effective - not everyone is covered by an EWS. To address this, In March 2022 the UN Secretary General announced the Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative with the goal of ensuring everyone on earth is covered by an EWS. The GSMA Mobile for Humanitarian programme is involved in both the strategic and operational aspects of the initiative, in particular through membership of Pillar 3 (warning dissemination

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<sup>1</sup> WMO. (2021). [WMO Atlas of Mortality and Economic Losses from Weather, Climate, and Water Extremes 1970–2019](#).

and communication), ensuring the power of mobile is fully harnessed to develop and implement lifesaving EWS.

Given that 96% of the global population is covered by mobile networks, mobile technology is a powerful channel for delivering life-saving alerts quickly and at scale. The mobile industry has played a pivotal role in supporting mobile based EWS through partnerships with disaster management agencies and humanitarian organisations. However, the role of MNOs in EWS design and implementation is often shaped, enabled, or restricted by national policy and regulatory frameworks.

Within this context, the GSMA is commissioning a policy landscaping study to map the regulatory environment that governs the deployment and operation of mobile-enabled EWS. This study will be a combination of a desk-based review and key informant interviews (KIIs). It will focus on identifying and examining the regulatory components that underpin the functioning of mobile EWS, including , infrastructure considerations, interoperability standards, handset requirements, and other relevant technical enablers.

The study will also examine how capital expenditure (CapEx) and operating expenditure (OpEx) considerations are addressed in regulation through financial models such as cost-sharing arrangements and public–private partnerships. By mapping these frameworks, the research will highlight enabling provisions, regulatory gaps, and potential constraints to mobile EWS implementation. The findings will inform future engagements under the EW4All initiative and support GSMA’s work with operators, policymakers, and partners in advancing more inclusive and sustainable early warning systems.

## **Project objectives**

1. To identify and map the policies and regulations that govern EWS as they relate to the mobile industry. This includes assessing relevant cross-sectoral policies that, whether or not they explicitly reference EWS, shape the mobile industry’s ability to support timely and effective warning dissemination.
2. To map the policy and regulatory frameworks that govern financial arrangements for EWS implementation, including how capital and operational expenditures (CapEx/OpEx), cost-sharing and public–private mechanisms are addressed in regulation or policy standards.
3. To validate the relevance and impact of key policy and regulatory components of MNO engagement in early warning message dissemination, and to identify and prioritize the most significant implementation challenges through stakeholder feedback.
4. To highlight real-world examples of effective policy frameworks that have enabled MNO participation in EWS, and, where possible, include illustrative case studies for further exploration

## Research questions

This study will address three core areas of inquiry. These are designed to surface how regulatory and policy frameworks shape the deployment of mobile-enabled EWS, with particular attention to national structures, financing models, and core regulatory components. **These areas of enquiry are articulated in the following three overarching research questions, each supported by sub questions that will inform the desk-based mapping and analysis of the policy and regulatory landscape for mobile-enabled early warning systems (EWS):**

1. What does the global policy and regulatory landscape for Early Warning Systems look like as it relates to the mobile industry, particularly in the area of warning dissemination and communication (Pillar 3)?
2. How are financial arrangements for mobile-enabled EWS, such as CapEx/OpEx, cost-sharing models, and public–private mechanisms structured within relevant policy and regulatory frameworks?
3. Which policy and regulatory components are most significant in enabling or constraining the mobile industry's role in EWS delivery, and what examples of effective policy models or persistent challenges can be identified across different contexts?

Research Question 1: Frameworks	Research Question 2: Financing	Research Question 3: Models
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What global and regional frameworks (e.g. ITU, UNDRR, EW4All) provide guidance on the use of mobile technology for EWS?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do national policies or plans outline who bears the costs of EWS delivery; governments, MNOs, or shared mechanisms?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What regulatory or policy instruments support the integration of mobile-based alerting into national early warning systems?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do these frameworks influence national policy and regulatory approaches to mobile-based warning dissemination?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are MNOs reimbursed, subsidised, or incentivised for supporting EWS infrastructure and dissemination?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Where are the main regulatory pain points?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Which countries have explicitly integrated mobile channels (e.g. SMS, Cell Broadcast, mobile apps) into national EWS policies or telecom regulations?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What formal cost-sharing mechanisms (e.g. public–private agreements, emergency telecom acts) exist?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there flexible or emergency-specific regulatory mechanisms (e.g. fast-track approvals, waivers, sandboxes) to support rapid EWS activation?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there shared features across countries where mobile-enabled EWS is well developed?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To what extent are Universal Service Funds (USFs) used to support EWS infrastructure or services, and how is their use defined in policy?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What technical or regulatory barriers exist around interoperability between government alerting systems and MNO infrastructure?</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>What coordination structures (e.g. between regulators, disaster authorities, and MNOs) are reflected in national-level policies?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are there other funding models in place, such as telecom levies, donor support, or tax exemptions?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are Universal Service Funds (USFs) governed in ways that enable or restrict their use for mobile-enabled EWS and infrastructure resilience?</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How is long-term financial sustainability addressed in national policies (e.g. maintenance, upgrades, ongoing OpEx)?</li> </ul>	

## **Scope**

### **In Scope**

- Global and national regulatory and policy frameworks for mobile-enabled EWS, with a focus on warning dissemination (Pillar 3).
- Core regulatory components: infrastructure considerations, interoperability, handset compatibility, liability and accountability.
- National structures involved in EWS implementation (e.g. regulators, disaster agencies, MNOs).
- Financial models as defined in regulation (e.g. CapEx/OpEx, cost-sharing, public-private partnerships - PPPs).
- Enabling and constraining factors affecting MNO participation in EWS.

### **Out of Scope**

- Technical evaluation of EWS platforms.
- Non-natural hazard EWS (e.g. health or conflict-related alerts).
- Broader MNO-government engagement beyond EWS.

## **3. Methodology and High-Level Services and Deliverables Requirements**

This research will primarily be a combination of a desk review and key informant interviews (KIIs). The supplier will review up-to-date national policies, regulations, and strategies related to early warning systems, disaster risk management, and telecommunications to map the enabling and constraining factors affecting mobile-enabled early warning dissemination (Pillar 3).

Additionally, the supplier will engage key stakeholders to understand how mobile network operators are involved in the planning, implementation, and delivery of early warning systems. This will include interviews with MNOs, national regulatory authorities, disaster management agencies, and relevant regional or international actors. Ideally, this would include approximately 8 key stakeholders. All KIIs will be conducted virtually.

The countries selected for review will include a spread of 5 to 10 markets across different geographies and income levels (including both high-capacity and lower- and middle-income countries). Country selection will be confirmed in agreement with the GSMA. The GSMA M4H team will support interviewee identification and provide introductions where possible.

### **Work Plan**

#### **1. Kick-off call**

A session should be scheduled within the first week of the project to align research objectives, questions and approach with all project stakeholders involved. The chosen supplier will lead this session.

Following this, weekly calls between the supplier and the GSMA M4H team will be scheduled to monitor progress and discuss any changes that may need to be made.

*Deliverable 1: Kick-off deck submitted and session completed.*

## **2. Desk review and inception phase**

As part of the inception phase, the supplier will conduct a structured desk review and prepare a short inception report (approximately 5–8 pages) as a starting point. This should include:

- A brief literature and policy review summarising current trends in mobile-enabled EWS, focusing on relevant regulatory and policy instruments.
- A proposed list of countries for review with justification.
- A proposed stakeholder list for KIIs.
- Draft interview guides.
- A clear research timeline and responsibility matrix.

*Deliverable 2: Inception report submitted (including literature/policy summary, country list, stakeholder list, interview guides, and work plan).*

## **3. Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) and analysis/outline**

The supplier will conduct approximately 8 virtual interviews with key stakeholders to explore implementation experiences, challenges, and insights that complement the desk-based review. After KIIs have been completed, the supplier will provide brief interview documentation and a synthesis of cross-cutting findings. Upon initial analysis, the supplier should submit an outline to indicate the structure of the policy landscaping report for GSMA review and feedback.

*Deliverable 3: Interview documentation and short thematic synthesis with draft report outline.*

## **4. First draft of the policy landscaping report**

The supplier will submit the first full draft of the policy landscaping report for GSMA review and feedback. This draft should reflect findings from the desk review and KIIs, and include preliminary analysis of country examples, emerging themes, and initial recommendations.

*Deliverable 4: First draft of the policy landscaping report submitted for review.*

## **5. Final policy landscaping report**

The final output will be a concise policy landscaping report (approximately 20 pages), presenting key findings on policy and regulatory enablers and constraints for mobile-enabled EWS. The report should also include country-level analysis, cross-cutting themes, and strategic recommendations.

*Deliverable 5: Final policy scoping report submitted.*

## **4. Additional requirements**

The following elements are mandatory service requirements and processes through the research process.

### **Communication**

All communication, both written and verbal to the GSMA, to be conducted in English (including the translation of any documents that are required by local law in the markets that are created in local language). Additionally, this includes any documentation submitted as final deliverables to the GSMA, including transcripts and research materials. Suppliers should also demonstrate their ability (either through direct employment or via partners) to bring on highly skilled bilingual researchers in various contexts to deliver detailed qualitative testing and refinement of tools.

### **Transparency**

GSMA requires the appointed supplier to be fully transparent about local partner / fieldwork agencies they intend to use & GSMA has the power to veto selection.

### **Safeguarding**

As part of our commitment to ensuring all those involved in research and evaluation are safeguarded, the supplier is requested to provide information on their safeguarding approach / mitigating activities to ensure the safety and dignity of any vulnerable persons. A full safeguarding plan will be formulated together once a supplier is selected and integrated into the research tools and fieldwork plan.

### **Service availability**

GSMA M4H requires a named project manager and ideally requires response to emails within two working days. Any delays must be communicated in a timely manner. Any changes to the required services/deliverables must have prior written approval from the GSMA contract manager.

### **Project management requirements**

Regular weekly updates with the M4H project manager either at the GSMA London office or via video conference throughout the project. During the KII phase M4H expects weekly calls.

### **Ongoing support of deliverables**

It is expected that the successful supplier will respond in a timely manner to GSMA for clarification of the project activities and/or deliverables for up to four weeks after the final debrief.

### **Licenses**

The supplier will be responsible for ensuring all data collection is in line with local requirements and that they have all relevant permissions.

## 5. Request for Quotation

Evaluations of proposals will consider the following elements. It is unlikely the GSMA will consider proposals that do not include all elements listed below:

- I. **Understanding of the brief:** Suppliers should outline their understanding of the requirements and the value they believe the results will have.
- II. **Approach:** Suppliers should outline how they intend to deliver the project as specified above. This should include:
  - a) How you intend to meet the requirements of this document;
  - b) Suggestions for alternative/supplementary approaches to address the central objectives;
  - c) An indicative timeline for delivery and demonstration of capacity to meet this; and
  - d) Any dependencies on GSMA staff.
- III. **Team and responsibilities:** The proposed individual or team (if applicable) should be included with a short bio alongside proposed roles.
- IV. **Relevant experience:** Include examples of previous work which demonstrates experience where possible with:
  - a) Experience conducting research or policy analysis in the telecommunications or digital technology sector;
  - b) Experience analysing early warning systems, particularly in relation to mobile-based dissemination or public alerting frameworks;
  - c) Demonstrated understanding of regulatory and policy frameworks, especially in low- and middle-income countries
  - d) Experience engaging with mobile network operators , regulators, or disaster risk management agencies through research, consultancy, or advisory work;
  - e) Familiarity with or experience in the humanitarian or development sector, particularly where digital technologies intersect with emergency preparedness or response;
  - f) (Optional) Experience conducting multi-country policy or regulatory reviews, or comparative research across diverse national contexts.
- V. **Risks and mitigation strategies:** All RFQ responses should include how any potential risks may be mitigated, e.g., security risks, ethical considerations etc.
- VI. **Itemised quote:** Suppliers should provide a fully itemised quote. The GSMA default currency requirement for all proposals is 'UK Pounds Sterling'. It should include at a minimum a price for commissioning the project as described in Sections 2 and 3 of this document. Please note in those sections we have outlined estimated sample sizes and locations of research for costing purposes. If significant changes to budget will occur as a result of the backup locations listed in section 3, please indicate where and how those would impact the budget.

- a) All costs should clearly demonstrate breakdowns in terms of staff time, travel, direct costs and other expenses.
- b) Suppliers are also asked to provide costs for any alternative or supplementary approaches suggested in your proposal.
- c) A template can be found at the bottom of this document.

### **RFQ timeline**

The RFQ timeline below is subject to change at GSMA's sole discretion.

<b>Time and Date</b>	<b>Action</b>
23 June	RFQ Issued
27 June	Submit questions to GSMA by this date
2 July	Questions and answers circulated back to all respondents
18 July	Cut off time and date for proposal to be received by GSMA
25 July	Estimated invitation to contract
8 August	Contract fully executed

*Note: Timeline is subject to change*

### **GSMA Contact details**

All correspondence and queries in relation to this RFQ must be emailed to:

Barnaby Willitts-King ([bwillitts-king@gsma.com](mailto:bwillitts-king@gsma.com)) ("GSMA contact")

Angela Nkonu ([ankonu@gsma.com](mailto:ankonu@gsma.com)) ("GSMA contact")

Queries are accepted in written form by email, and GSMA's responses will be copied to all respondents, including an anonymous version of the query. No queries will be answered outside of the timeframe specific, except in extraordinary circumstances within GSMA's sole discretion.

## RFQ submission details

Respondents should submit a full documentation package via email no later than 1700hrs (GMT) 18<sup>th</sup> July 2025. Electronic submission should not exceed more than 5 MB in size per email and should be sent to: [bwillitts-king@gsma.com](mailto:bwillitts-king@gsma.com); [ankonu@gsma.com](mailto:ankonu@gsma.com). Acknowledgement of receipt of electronic submission will be sent by the next day of receipt before Close of Business. In case the Respondent encounters a problem in its electronic submission, please contact Angela Nkonu by telephone at +44 (0)7855 985 016. If, following submission of the tender, the information contained therein changes, please advise the GSMA Contacts immediately. Where proposals are incomplete or not supplied, they may not be considered for evaluation. By submitting a response, the respondent agrees to respond to any other questions issued by GSMA in connection with this RFQ within the stated deadlines.

## Milestone payment details

For the avoidance of doubt, GSMA's payment terms are contained in the GSMA Standard Terms & Conditions ("T&Cs"), and are thirty days from receipt of an undisputed invoice, which should be raised following acceptance of Services and/or Deliverables.

Please note, GSMA does not make advance payments prior to completion of the Services and Deliverables unless the payment requested is specifically traceable to purchase of items required to perform the Services or provide the Deliverables, which would otherwise be a loss for the Respondent. Any specific payment requirements must be notified as part of the RFQ response.

The Respondent's Total Price is inclusive of all costs, insurances, fees, costs, expenses, liabilities, obligations, risks, and all financial requirements for the performance of Services and provision of Deliverables. Any charge not stated in this Proposal, which extends above to the Total Price, is not permitted. Total Price is exclusive of VAT but inclusive of all other taxes.

## Summary of proposed timeline and payment milestones

Based on expected outputs outlined in Section 3, please find below the summary of proposed payment milestones to be made to the supplier upon delivery of outputs. The following will be amended based on the supplier's proposal.

Proposed payment milestone	Corresponding deliverable	Date
<b>Milestone 1</b> <b>Kick off call</b>	<i>Deliverable 1: Kick-off deck submitted, and session completed.</i>	15 August

Proposed payment milestone	Corresponding deliverable	Date
<b>Milestone 2. Desk review and inception phase</b>	<i>Deliverable 2: Inception report submitted (including literature/policy summary, country list, stakeholder list, interview guides, and work plan).</i>	15 September
<b>Milestone 3: Key informant KII's &amp; Outline</b>	<i>Deliverable 3: Interview documentation and short thematic synthesis with report outline</i>	15 October
<b>Milestone 4: Report Submission</b>	<i>Deliverable 4: First full draft of the policy scoping report submitted to GSMA for review and feedback.</i>	15 November
<b>Milestone 5: Final Report</b>	<i>Deliverable 6: Final report outline, draft and final reports submitted</i>	15 December

#### Itemised budget template

Please provide the total price and the breakdown by unit cost as per the table below.

Item/Title	Unit/Activity Description	Standard Base Rate	Discount Applied	Discounted Rate	Volume	Total Charge

