Request for Proposals - Science Based Targets initiative
strategic communications tender

Introduction
The Science Based Targets initiative (SBTi) wants to appoint a strategic communications /
public relations agency to support its work internationally during a period of significant
change and growth.

The successful contractor will be appointed on a retained basis, initially for a period of three
months, with potential for an extension to 12 months. The budget for the initial period (likely
to start November 2022) will be a maximum of $35,000.

Background on the SBTi
The SBTi is an international and rapidly-growing initiative developed and delivered by four of
the world’s most credible and respected environmental organizations: the World Wide Fund
for Nature (WWF), World Resources Institute (WRI), United Nations Global Compact and
CDP, and supported by the We Mean Business Coalition.

The initiative was founded in 2015 as a means of driving large businesses to voluntarily set
emissions targets which were in line with what the latest science showed were needed to
limit global heating to below catastrophic levels. The initiative was staffed by a small number
of people from within the four partner organisations, often working on it part-time.

Since then, awareness of and participation in the SBTi has increased significantly. In the
past year the number of businesses setting or committing to set science-based targets has
grown exponentially; the SBTi’s profile has also grown, and with it the amount of scrutiny it is
under.

This is also a period of sizable change for the SBTi with the appointment of its first CEO,
Luiz Amaral, in February 2022 and the move from a steering group model whereby the
initiative was led by representatives of the four partner organizations to the appointment of
an executive leadership team. Within the coming months the initiative will also be
incorporated as a stand-alone organization, retaining strong links with but independent from
the four partners, it will grow both its executive leadership team and executive board, double
the number of staff and introduce a new technical committee and other measures to
strengthen its technical decision-making and governance alongside the continued
development of its products. You can learn more about some of these plans by watching this
webinar.

Currently the SBTi team is ~60 strong, with all staff employed by one of the four partner
organizations. Colleagues are based in 12 countries, with the majority in Mexico, Germany,
the UK, US and South Africa. There is a small communications team, all of whom have
joined within the past 15 months. Currently this team comprises a Head of Communications
who sits on the executive leadership team, Senior Communications and Senior Digital Managers, and three other team members whose responsibilities span business sector communications, content development, editorial, social media and correspondence with businesses. Recruitment is underway for three posts covering social media, media relations and an internship. Currently communications team-members are based in the UK, US and Mexico; additional hires are likely to be US and Germany-based.

To date, communications have largely been managed in-house, with light support from partner organizations. In the past year a UK-based PR agency has provided ad-hoc support for launches and other projects and there was some agency support around strategy development in the early days of the initiative. Our working language is American English and this is the default language for all our communications, however we recognize the growing need to deliver communications in the most appropriate languages to meet our audiences’ needs.

Core funding is provided by the initiative’s long-term funder, the IKEA Foundation, and since 2021, the Bezos Earth Fund, plus the Laudes Foundation. Project funding comes from a range of philanthropic and business sources. Businesses and financial institutions must also pay to have their targets validated.

**Business objectives**

- **By 2025:**
  - $20 trillion of the global economy with approved 1.5°C targets.
  - Covering 5GT of corporate emissions.
  - And 10,000 companies.
- **Also by 2025,** science-based target setting will be embedded within the climate-action ecosystem, including, among others:
  - Relevant corporate net-zero frameworks (e.g. Race to Zero, The Climate Pledge, Transform to Net Zero, etc.).
  - Relevant financial market standards (e.g. TCFD, Climate Bonds Initiative, etc.).
  - Key climate action frameworks for financial institutions (e.g. Net-Zero Asset Owners Alliance and Climate Action 100+, etc.).
- **By the end 2022,** the SBTi will have transitioned into a robust and professional organization that can drive and support exponential growth in the adoption and implementation of science-based climate targets amongst corporates and financial institutions.

**Audience and stakeholders**

We have identified a need for a greater understanding of our stakeholders and will share the findings of a planned stakeholder mapping exercise with the successful bidder. Broadly, however, key stakeholders are as follows:

- National governments, particularly of G20 nations excluding Russia
● International bodies (UNFCC, WEF etc).
● Partner organizations (WWF, WRI, CDP, UN Global Compact and We Mean Business Coalition) and close collaborators (Race to Zero, Mission Possible Partnership, GFANZ, Global Citizen etc).
● Wider climate action ecosystem, including campaigners, pressure groups, other NGOs etc.
● Large multinational companies which do not yet have science-based targets:
  ○ Particularly in the steel, cement, aviation, construction and forest, land and agriculture sectors.
  ○ Particularly based/with major operations in the US, Europe, India, China, South Korea, Indonesia, Japan, Mexico, Brazil, Egypt or South Africa.
  ○ Plus in emerging economies/the global south.
● Trusts and foundations and other philanthropic funders (including current funders).
● Major international news, business, financial and environmental broadcast, digital and print media outlets.

The communications need
The SBTi’s growth in profile over the past year has resulted in increased scrutiny, in particular around its governance, scientific rigour and independence. These challenges are largely a result of rapid growth and are being addressed in the ways outlined above, however in the interim they pose a significant reputational risk.

In addition, the high volume of businesses seeking to set science-based targets in the wake of COP26 resulted in unacceptable waits for target validations and while this time has reduced significantly and will be within one month by 2022 Q4, these delays have posed a reputational risk. Similarly, the number of people contacting the SBTi - and the limited ways in which they can contact the SBTi - has meant that they have not always received a prompt response or received the information requested. This again has posed a challenge as the SBTi has been perceived as lacking transparency and failing to deliver good customer service.

There is a growing number of net-zero and other pledges, targets and initiatives of differing scientific rigor aimed at businesses. While technical and other experts from within the sector may be able to understand and assess the purpose and merit of each, they are less likely to be understood by broader business audiences.

There is anecdotal evidence of increasing scepticism among consumers about businesses’ sustainability claims and greater awareness of and ability to recognize greenwashing. And in the US there is a well-funded and organized anti-ESG campaign which is already having an impact on decisions being taken by institutional investors and corporates and is set to grow - and potentially spread to Europe - in the coming months and years.

Against this backdrop, the SBTi is seeking support to help it:
● Protect and strengthen its reputation.
● Position science-based targets as the gold-standard targets for corporate climate action and differentiate them from other initiatives.
● Grow its profile in comparison to its partners and other initiatives (e.g. B Corps).
● Help drive the adoption of science-based targets among businesses in priority sectors and geographies.

We welcome your recommendations about how to do this, however we envisage this work may incorporate:

● Identifying and exploiting opportunities to present the SBTi CEO - and potentially other leaders - as a thought-leader on the global stage.
● Developing and delivering the media strategy for significant external launches, including an upcoming G20 report, an MRV position paper and the 2022 Progress Report.
● Proactive media relations targeting major international news, business and financial media.
● Supporting the in-house communications function while it increases its capacity and capability.
● Reactive and crisis communications in response to any reputational issues/challenges that arise.
● Identifying and exploiting opportunities for profile-raising off the back of existing/third-party news stories, events etc.
● Providing strategic counsel to the CEO, executive leadership team and executive board on matters of high reputational risk.
● Developing and delivering campaigns targeting key audiences, including using the data we have available to craft engaging stories.
● Providing media relations support including, potentially, a press office function.
● Horizon-scanning and reacting to opportunities and risks identified.

Specific requirements

The successful bidder must be able to demonstrate its ability to:

● Provide both strategic and operational/delivery support.
● Deliver communications in multiple languages in addition to English, including at least two out of Portuguese, German, Spanish, French and Mandarin.
● Work across multiple time zones and cultures.
● Work collaboratively and flexibly with an in-house communications function.
● Deliver excellent results against a backdrop of significant change, ambiguity and scrutiny.

We are also looking for an agency that:
● Proactively looks for opportunities for our spokespeople and the SBTi to feature in high profile international media.
● Communicates with us about opportunities and potential challenges.
● Always assesses for potential reputational risks.
● Is aware of and up-to-date with the wider global corporate climate agenda.
● Is focused on achieving outcomes - and ultimately, delivering impact - rather than outputs.
● Always looks for and shares new ideas and opportunities with us.

Risks and Challenges
● The SBTi is a complex international matrix organization. We are streamlining our approvals process, however for some outputs we still need to engage with multiple internal stakeholders and sometimes partner organizations. The SBTi communications team manages this engagement and has no expectation that the successful bidder liaises with other internal or external stakeholders, however while we would endeavour to agree to turn around approvals within a timescale that would work for both parties, it is important that you are aware that the nature of the organization’s structure means approvals can sometimes take longer than is ideal.
● The SBTi is a rapidly growing initiative, which means that business priorities can change quickly, as can levels of risk.
● As mentioned previously, the SBTi has been subject to increasing scrutiny in recent months about its technical governance and target validation approach, details and further info can be seen here:
  ○ Measuring corporate Paris Compliance using a strict science-based approach - Nature Communications article, August 2022.
  ○ New SBTi boss takes over as criticisms mount - FT interview with Luiz Amaral, May 2022.
  ○ Group That Vets Corporate Climate Plans Aims to Strengthen Its Own Governance - WSJ interview with Luiz Amaral, Feb 2022.
  ○ Climate targets oversight group under scrutiny over its own governance, FT interview with Alberto Carrillo Pineda, Feb 2022.
  ○ Corporate climate targets group SBTi to hire complaints director, Reuters interview with Luiz Amaral, May 2022.
Timeline

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<tr>
<th>Timing</th>
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<tr>
<td>1200 BST 26 August</td>
<td>EOIs and initial questions to be received, and introductory calls to be arranged.</td>
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<tr>
<td>1200 BST 12 September</td>
<td>Written proposals to be received</td>
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<tr>
<td>1200 BST 16 September</td>
<td>Presentations to be arranged</td>
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<td>26 and 27 September UK time</td>
<td>Presentations to take place</td>
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<tr>
<td>1200 BST 29 September</td>
<td>Final decision to be made</td>
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Proposal format

- Proposals to include:
  - Scope of Work
  - Delivery timeline
  - Creative ideas
  - The project team (to be the same as those involved in the tender)
  - Budget breakdown and invoicing terms
  - Details on reporting and evaluation, including suggested KPIs
  - Evidence of delivering a similar piece of work

N.B. This is an open tender.

Budget

$35,000 for three months.

Conflicts of Interest

It is extremely important that none of SBTi’s suppliers support organizations or trade bodies that knowingly and/or willingly cause harm to the environment. It is particularly important that any agency we work with should not have been involved in any lobbying activity, for example for organizations such as oil and gas trade bodies or similar. With large global agencies, this will apply to the entire organization worldwide. Please inform us of any previous or current project where you feel there might be a conflict of interest with these values.

It would also be helpful to understand your current and historic client roster.


Scoring criteria

The proposals will be scored against the following criteria:

- Evidence of meeting the brief.
- Knowledge of the SBTi.
- Knowledge of the corporate climate ecosystem and sector.
- Evidence of successfully delivering similar pieces of work.
- Creativity and creative ideas.
- The account team and working relationship.
- Global media contacts
- Pricing structure and budget.
- Client roster.

Contact

All EOIs and questions to be sent to communications@sciencebasedtargets.org with the subject ‘PR RFP’.