

Request for Proposals (RFP)

Hiring of Creative Design Services for the CIRCLE Visual Identity and Communications Toolkit

CIRCLE: Co-creating Inclusive Research Culture and Leadership Environments

Issued by the University of the Punjab in partnership with the University of Glasgow

Information	Details
RFP published	27 th July 2026
Deadline for clarification questions	7 th August 2026
Proposal submission deadline	12 th August 2026
Outcome and appointment	21 st August 2026
Maximum budget	PKR 1,75,000/-.
Submission email	circle.project@pu.edu.pk
	info.dm@pu.edu.pk
Project period	2026–2027

1. Invitation

The University of the Punjab (PU), in partnership with the University of Glasgow (UofG), invites technical and financial proposals from suitably qualified creative agencies, design studios, communications organisations and independent professionals based in Pakistan to develop the visual identity and communications toolkit for the CIRCLE project.

The selected service provider will create a clear, accessible and adaptable visual system for use across project documents, presentations, events, digital platforms and the CIRCLE recognition initiative.

The commission will form one package delivered in three stages as the project develops.

2. About CIRCLE

The UofG and PU have been awarded funding through the Glasgow Centre for International Development Small Grants Fund to deliver CIRCLE (Co-creating Inclusive Research Culture and Leadership Environments). The project cross-links practice in how research culture, leadership, and inclusion are cultivated within large public universities. Through participatory consultation, policy mapping, and a co-designed recognition initiative adapted from UofG's [People Make Research](#) initiative the partnership will surface hidden contributions and informal leadership in research success and identify structural barriers affecting women, early-career researchers, and professional and technical staff.

3. Project aims

CIRCLE aims:

To contribute to more inclusive and enabling research environments in which people across roles, disciplines, and career stages can participate, develop, and contribute fully to research

success. CIRCLE seeks to strengthen the cultural and institutional conditions that support collaboration, fairness, belonging, and research excellence.

To broaden how research leadership and contribution are understood, recognised, and supported. CIRCLE will surface the less-visible contributions of women, early-career researchers, technicians, professional services colleagues, and others whose leadership, expertise, mentoring and relational work enable research communities to thrive.

To build an adaptable foundation for research culture development that can support universities in Pakistan and beyond to understand their own contexts, establish meaningful priorities, and develop sustainable action. CIRCLE's longer-term ambition is to make research culture development more accessible to institutions exploring to create formal strategies, policies and action plans in the research culture space.

4. Project ethos

Equitable partnership. PU and UofG will share decisions, expertise, responsibility, and learning while recognising the different contexts and contributions each partner brings.

Participatory and inclusive practice. People across roles, disciplines, and career stages will help define the questions, interpret the evidence, and shape the next steps through accessible, respectful, and safe engagement.

Disruption of institutional hierarchies. We will challenge narrow, status-based understandings of leadership by recognising leadership wherever people enable others, strengthen collaboration, solve problems, mentor colleagues, or sustain the conditions needed for good research.

Recognition of diverse contributions. We will make less-visible contributions visible, not only to celebrate individuals but also to understand what institutions should value, support, and reward.

5. Purpose of the commission

The commission will establish a coherent visual identity for CIRCLE and provide editable materials that PU and UofG can use throughout the project.

The visual identity should communicate:

- Partnership and reciprocal learning
- Inclusion and belonging
- Recognition of less-visible contributions
- Research culture
- Leadership beyond formal hierarchy
- Collaboration across institutional and national contexts

The identity should work in both Pakistan and the United Kingdom while remaining grounded in CIRCLE's purpose and PU's institutional context.

The CIRCLE identity must work appropriately alongside the established identities of PU and UofG and the required textual acknowledgement of the GCID Small Grants Fund. It should also be capable of appearing alongside the [Lab for Academic Culture](#) identity and materials

connected with [People Make Research](#), where required, while remaining clearly recognisable as an original and independent project identity.

The visual system should not rely on stereotypes, tokenistic cultural imagery or representations of leadership based only on seniority and formal positions.

6. Scope and deliverables

Applicants must quote for the complete commission. The work will be delivered in three stages.

Stage 1: Core CIRCLE identity and communications toolkit

A. Visual identity

The selected supplier will provide:

- At least three initial creative directions for discussion
- Refinement of one agreed creative direction
- A primary CIRCLE logo
- At least one logo version that includes the full project name: Co-creating Inclusive Research Culture and Leadership Environments
- Versions suitable for light and dark backgrounds
- A defined colour palette with HEX, RGB, CMYK and, where relevant, Pantone specifications

B. Brand guidelines

The supplier will develop a concise and practical brand guide covering:

- Logo use
- Logo variations
- Clear space
- Minimum sizes
- Colour specifications
- Typography
- Image and illustration style
- Accessibility
- Placement of PU, UofG and GCID identities
- Use of the required funding acknowledgement
- Examples of correct and incorrect use

C. Microsoft Word template

The editable Word template should include:

- Cover page
- Standard content page
- Heading levels
- Body text
- Tables
- Callout boxes
- Header and footer
- Page-number format

- Placement of project, partner and funder identities

D. Microsoft PowerPoint template

The editable PowerPoint template should include approximately eight to ten practical master layouts:

- Title slide
- Section divider
- Standard content slide
- Two-column slide
- Text and image slide
- Quote or key-message slide
- Data or chart slide
- Process or timeline slide
- Closing and contact slide
- Event holding slide

The template must remain fully editable and must not require specialist paid fonts.

E. Additional communications templates

The supplier will also provide:

- Project email signature or email footer
- Editable LinkedIn graphic template
- 16:9 digital-screen template for multimedia screens and events

Stage 2: Event and conference communications

This stage will produce event-ready materials before CIRCLE's planned conference activities. The project team will provide the final text and event details.

The supplier will provide:

- Three or four final poster designs covering agreed project and event communication needs
- A CIRCLE project overview poster
- A project activities
- An event or conference poster
- Digital-screen versions of the approved posters
- One event backdrop, stage-screen or pull-up banner design

Stage 3: Recognition initiative materials

CIRCLE will develop a university-wide recognition initiative. Its final name and format will be agreed later. The selected supplier will receive a separate content brief before this stage begins.

The supplier will provide:

- A campaign identity or sub-brand aligned with the main CIRCLE visual system
- A nomination-launch poster
- Social media graphics for the launch, reminders and closing date
- A nominee recognition-story template

- A certificate or digital recognition-card template

Reference materials:

The appointed service provider will receive relevant approved reference materials, including institutional brand guidance, official partner logos, examples of the People Make Research identity, the Lab for Academic Culture identity, and examples from other relevant projects, such as [InFrame](#). These references are provided to clarify the wider identity environment and must not be copied or treated as instructions to reproduce an existing visual style.

7. Required file formats and final handover

The selected supplier must provide a complete and organised handover package containing:

- Editable source files for every approved design
- Logo files in PDF, PNG and JPG formats
- Transparent-background logo versions
- Editable Microsoft Word and PowerPoint files
- Print-ready PDF files
- Web-ready files optimised for screen use
- Font names, files or legally accessible download links
- A record of all photographs, icons, illustrations and other assets used
- Details of the source and licence for every third-party asset
- A logically organised final folder
- A short handover session for the CIRCLE project team

The templates should allow PU and UofG colleagues to create new materials without requiring specialist design software.

8. Design and quality requirements

Originality. The CIRCLE identity must be original and must not copy or closely imitate any existing project, institutional or commercial identity.

Accessibility. Digital materials should follow WCAG 2.1 AA principles where applicable, including adequate colour contrast, readable fonts, legible text sizes, clear visual hierarchy and communication that does not depend on colour alone.

Institutional logos. Approved PU, UofG and funder logos must be used without being redrawn, recoloured, stretched, distorted or incorporated into the CIRCLE logo. Their use remains subject to institutional approval and brand guidance.

Images and personal information. Project photographs and personal information may only be used for this commission. The supplier must handle them securely and must not reuse, share or publish them without written permission.

Generative artificial intelligence. Applicants must disclose any proposed use of generative AI. AI may support early-stage research, brainstorming or design exploration, but the final CIRCLE logo and core visual assets must be designed originally by the appointed supplier and must not be generated directly through AI.

AI, confidentiality and ownership. Project photographs, personal information and confidential materials must not be uploaded to external AI platforms.

Technical quality. Final logos and visual assets must be professionally created as editable, scalable vector artwork. Pixelated, low-resolution or non-editable AI-generated outputs will not be accepted.

9. Working arrangements and approvals

The selected supplier will work with a nominated CIRCLE project team, with input and approval from the PU and UofG project leadership.

The expected process will include:

1. An inception meeting to confirm the audience, work plan, formats, timetable, reference materials and approval process.
2. Presentation of the initial creative directions for Stage 1.
3. Selection and refinement of materials.
4. Formal approval of each stage before the supplier prepares the final files.
5. A final quality check, source-file handover and short orientation session.

The CIRCLE team will provide consolidated feedback. The supplier must not undertake work beyond the agreed deliverables or revision rounds without written approval.

10. Indicative timetable

Milestone	Indicative timing
RFF published	27 th July 2026
Deadline for clarification questions	7 th August 2026
Proposal submission deadline	12 th August 2026
Evaluation and appointment	21 August 2026
Inception meeting	Last Week of August
Stage 1 completed	October 2026
Stage 2 completed	January 2027
Stage 3 completed	March 2027
Final handover	No later than 31 st May 2027

Applicants should identify any dependencies or alternative timings in their submission.

11. Budget and payment

The maximum available budget for the complete three-stage commission is **PKR 1,75,000/-**.

This amount must include:

- All professional fees
- All applicable taxes
- All expenses
- All revision rounds
- Final source files and handover

Applicants must provide an itemised quotation showing:

- Stage 1 cost
- Stage 2 cost
- Stage 3 cost
- Applicable taxes

Subject to PU's financial and procurement approval, payment will be made against the completion and acceptance of agreed stages.

No work should begin before the supplier receives the required written appointment, contract or purchase order.

12. Eligibility

Applications are welcome from individual professionals, partnerships, studios, organisations and agencies based in Pakistan.

Applicants must:

- Be legally able to provide the services
- Be able to submit an invoice acceptable to legal requirements
- Meet supplier-registration, tax and procurement requirements
- Demonstrate relevant experience in visual identity and communications design
- Demonstrate experience developing editable templates
- Have sufficient capacity to complete all three stages
- Disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest

13. Submission requirements

Applicants should submit one PDF proposal. Portfolio links or a separate portfolio file may also be included.

The submission must include:

1. A brief profile of the applicant or organisation, including legal status, location and contact details.
2. A portfolio containing three to five relevant examples of visual identity, institutional communications, event materials or editable templates.
3. A short explanation of the applicant's role in producing each portfolio example.
4. A statement explaining the applicant's understanding of CIRCLE and proposed creative approach.
5. A work plan covering all three stages.
6. Details of the people who will undertake the work.
7. An itemised financial quotation in PKR, including taxes and the total cost.
8. The number of creative directions and revision rounds included.
9. Contact details for one or two recent clients who may be approached for references.
10. Disclosure of any proposed subcontracting, third-party assets or generative-AI use.

Submission details

Submission email or portal: circle.project@pu.edu.pk

Email subject: CIRCLE Branding RFP – [Company/Applicant name]

Deadline: 12th August 2026; 5 PM, Pakistan Standard Time

Late or incomplete submissions may not be considered. Applicants are responsible for ensuring their submission before the deadline.

14. Evaluation and selection

CIRCLE representatives will evaluate compliant submissions against the following criteria:

Criterion	What will be assessed	Weight
Quality and relevance of portfolio	Quality, originality and relevance of comparable visual identity and communications work	35%
Understanding and creative approach	Understanding of CIRCLE, its audiences, partnership context and the proposed design process	25%
Value for money	Clarity, completeness and competitiveness of the quotation across all three stages	20%
Delivery capacity and timetable	Availability, work plan, team capacity and ability to meet the required dates	10%
Accessibility and cultural sensitivity	Inclusive design approach, accessibility knowledge and ability to work responsibly across institutional and cultural contexts	10%

The commission will not necessarily be awarded to the lowest-priced applicant.

The evaluation panel may:

- Invite shortlisted applicants to a brief clarification discussion
- Verify client references
- Request clarification of a quotation
- Confirm the availability of the proposed team

15. Clarification questions

Applicants may submit questions about the brief by the clarification deadline shown on the first page.

Where a response materially affects the scope or submission requirements, PU may share the clarification with all potential applicants or publish it alongside the RFP.

Clarification contact: circle.project@pu.edu.pk