



Term of reference

Digital media research to inform campaign strategies against political disinformation and deregulation agenda

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Deadline for submission: 11 November 2025

Who we are

[#HandsOffNature](#) (also operate under the name #ItsOurNature) is a campaign targeting stakeholders/actors at many levels: policy-makers, media and citizens. This is an NGO-led movement, steered by a Brussels coalition (Birdlife Europe, ClientEarth, European Environmental Bureau and WWF EPO) but consisting of many organisations around Europe.

We are working together and with partners to push back against deregulation attempts in Europe that are watering down vital environmental laws.

Our context

The EU is undergoing a rapid deregulation push, driven by industrial, conservative, and far-right forces, threatening key environmental laws under the European Green Deal. This includes crucial nature policies such as the Habitats Directive, Nature Restoration Law, Water Framework Directive, and the EU Deforestation Regulation.

Hostile narratives are gaining ground, often framing environmental laws as a barrier to economic or social progress, for example:

- Renewable energy expansion is blamed for high electricity prices
- Rules to avoid/limit water pollution are blamed for stopping mining or other critical projects
- Environmental permitting is portrayed as slowing housing development
- EU companies are seen as uncompetitive due to stricter environmental rules

- Reporting rules (such as on sustainable supply chains) are overly cumbersome and creating insurmountable administrative burdens for companies and hampering competitiveness
- Nature is being put before people (so people get upset with nature protection/restoration initiatives)

Additionally, the same media and politicians also blatantly and falsely frame civil society as powerful and untransparent lobbies pushing environmental agenda under the command of the EU Commission. These show a clear pattern of targeted disinformation to weaken both the legal framework and civil society supporting the EU environmental policy, pushing false narratives and curtailing democratic participation on matters that directly impact human livelihood.

In response, our coalition has launched a campaign to defend strong environmental protections and shift the public narrative on regulation.

To succeed, we need to go beyond the usual NGO and green media audiences and engage broader segments, particularly in persuadable and influential mainstream digital media spaces. We are commissioning **digital media research to better understand how deregulation and disinformation narratives are structured, spread, and received** - both at the **EU level** and in **key member states**. We also need **developed framing and strategies to effectively reach audiences beyond our traditional allies**.

We believe this campaign provides a strong opportunity to test how to break through the polarised media landscape, and we need research and practical support to guide this work.

While our campaign focuses on nature, these narratives target the full spectrum of environmental laws - from pollution control to corporate accountability. We use nature as an entry point because it resonates across the political spectrum, evokes stronger emotional responses, and connects easily to issues people care about, such as clean air and water. Recent public engagement (e.g. [200,000 submissions in 10 days](#)) confirms this approach works.

Objective

To produce actionable strategic intelligence on digital disinformation against environmental protection and anti-regulation narratives, supporting the #HandsOffNature coalition communication and campaign strategies to defend nature policy wins.

Specific Objectives

1. Map and analyse how environmental deregulation, justification to deviate from democratic procedures and anti-NGO narratives are communicated and coordinated across digital

media (in 3-6 priority countries with a view for learnings that can be shared more broadly across the EU).

2. Understand the actors, networks, media outlets, influencers, and communities involved in these narratives.
3. Identify the narratives that are actively used among specific political parties/online groups, analyse what makes them successful, and identify workable counter-narratives.
4. Develop concrete counter-narratives and recommendations for delivery of these messages (i.e., influential messengers, channel, scalable format, audience)
5. Equip the coalition's national partners with concrete insights to improve communication in contested media spaces and support our collective campaign efforts
6. Identify other useful narrative opportunities and potential allies for the upcoming campaign phases.

Technical Specifications

The supplier will deliver strategic, action-oriented research - prioritising insights that inform campaign decisions over exhaustive academic depth.

Detailed deliverables:

1. Strategic Intelligence Report

- Summary of deregulation and disinformation narratives at 3-6 country levels and potential learnings that can apply more broadly across the EU
- Actor and media ecosystem maps
 - Particularly, identification of some key actors and ecosystems in the digital sphere that could support the collective campaign (content creation, dissemination)
 - What are the opinions of our potential audiences on deregulation and do they feel impacted?
- Narrative opportunities for the campaign to test out in the next phase

2. Dashboard + Data Visualisations

- Online or exportable dashboard with key data (narratives, actors, frames) in 3-6 selected countries.

3. Presentations to #HandsOffNature coalition and partners

- Slidedeck of findings and recommendations for campaign planning including top narratives and messengers
- Online presentations and Q&A with #HandsOffNature networks and national partners

- Short briefs for each priority country in respective languages, including:
 - Top narratives and messengers for identified persuadable audiences
 - Media environment and risks
 - Strategic recommendations for local partners

The research will be translated into analysis and slide decks with visualisations per country and in general. Raw data needs to be available.

Geographic Scope

Research will focus on:

- EU-level analysis
- Three to six key EU member states (to be jointly selected based on strategic importance and partner support.)
- Mainstream European digital media and social media platforms

Thematic Scope

- Disinformation tactics on environmental legislation such as digital narratives targeting EU environmental legislation (e.g., eroding trust in NGOs, greenwashing, renewables, housing, health, food security/agriculture, corporate due diligence/competitiveness, defense, deregulation frames)
- Identification of emerging narrative opportunities for environmental campaigns

Timeline and budget

Please submit your proposals before **11 November**. Please email your proposal to tenders@eeb.org and in CC bich.dao@eeb.org and christian.skrivervik@eeb.org.

The deliverables should be presentable to the Hands Off Nature by **February 2025**.

Budget: between 30,000-50,000 euros, incl. 21% VAT. Please include budget breakdown in your proposal.