

RFP No.: RFP/ UNCDF/ 66544 Long – Term Agreement with a pool of specialized evaluation firms to implement evaluations under UNCDF’s Evaluation Plan

Questions and Answers

Round 3

- 1. Would ex-staff members of UNCDF be deemed to have a conflict of interest? Would ex-staff members of UNCDF who performed a supervisory role of programmes being evaluated be deemed as having a conflict of interest? Would ex-staff or consultants reporting to managers of projects being evaluated be deemed as having a conflict of interest?***

If the answer to (1-3) above is time dependent, please specify time when any conflict of interest expires (e.g. if a staff or consultants left 2 or 3 years ago). Even if there is a conflict of interest, can ex-staff and consultants be part of the proposed team so long as they declare any conflict of interest and/or recuse themselves from projects that pose specified conflicts?

Consultants or firms who have worked on the design and implementation of programmes would generally not be eligible to evaluate those same programmes. The task of this LTA is to establish a set of pre-qualified firms for all evaluations coming up in the next three-year period. We would consider conflict of interest issues on a case-by-case basis as we prepare to conduct individual evaluations.

Having said that, this does not mean that a bidder to this LTA will not be able to obtain an LTA. In the event that such company submits a proposal for this LTA selection process, and is found to be fully responsive to the requirements, then the bidder can be awarded the LTA. However, the “call-off” for the specific evaluation work will take into consideration the previous involvement of the company on the programme implementation and would be excluded in the secondary competition for that programme. For the evaluation of programmes where that company was not involved, the company will of course be given equal opportunity to participate in the secondary competition.

At the individual level (i.e., ex-staff, ex consultant, etc.), the determination on whether or not a conflict of interest exist shall be on a case-by-case basis. In the event that UNCDF found any such conflict, whether actual, perceived or potential conflict, UNCDF reserves the right to request the company to provide a replacement of such team member. For this reason, and for the purpose of this RFP, the bidders are therefore encourage to expand the list of experts they will line up, if such line up includes ex-staff or ex-consultants of UNCDF, in order to have a pre-approved replacement if UNCDF finds potential conflict of interest.

- 2. Can you please provide a list of studies conducted for these projects (e.g. baseline, pro-poor study, gender study, mid-term evaluations etc.), clarifying whether these were done internally or through independent 3rd parties?***
- 3. Can you please clarify whether the projects have established monitoring aggregation systems (enabling results from numerous investments to be aggregated)? Can you please confirm whether the M&E systems established for the projects are in line with DCED standards (or any other standards) and whether the systems have been audited?***

Responding to Questions 2 and 3:

If Question 2 relates to the two case-study programmes included in the RfP, bidders are requested to make use of the information provided.

If bidders are interested in how UNCDF monitors its work more generally, please refer to the Strategic Framework and UNCDF's Integrated Results and Resource Matrix referenced in the ToR.

Regarding DCED standards, again as set out in the ToR, we expect bidders to be familiar with relevant initiatives to improve the practice of monitoring and evaluation in the sectors in which UNCDF is active.

4. Regarding the requested CVs per category of expert, can the same profiles be proposed for several of the expert positions to be filled? (e.g. in the case that an expert has suitable expertise and experience to be either project director, team leader or evaluation methodology expert)

This is permissible provided you meet the minimum total of experts overall (i.e. three experts per category). However, in the event that you succeed in obtaining the LTA, and you also succeed in multiple secondary competition, your proposed team composition will likely impact the workload and timeliness of the completion of services. In the event that such situation occurs, UNCDF shall exercise its right to request the company to provide a different expert. This is why we strongly encourage you to pool as many experts in the proposed personnel, so that UNCDF can pre-approve them at this stage, and not at the point of secondary competition.

5. In case of association with other firms, do we understand correctly that each of the participating firms needs to fill in Form D: Qualification Form?

From RFP (p.66) Form D: Qualification Form, it was stated that *"If JV/Consortium/Association, to be completed by each partner."*

Please also refer to Item 14.4 of the ITB, in RFP: "14.4 The description of the organization of the JV, Consortium or Association must clearly define the expected role of each of the entity in the joint venture in delivering the requirements of the RFP, both in the Proposal and the JV, Consortium or Association Agreement. All entities that comprise the JV, Consortium or Association shall be subject to the eligibility and qualification assessment by UNCDF".

6. Could you please provide all returnable bidding forms in Word version?

The RFP as published online should be used by bidders for compiling the technical and financial proposals. A sample RFP template is publicly available at

[https://popp.undp.org/layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PSU_Solicitation%20Process_Solicitation%20Documents_Request%20for%20Proposal%20\(RFP\)%20-%20150k%20and%20Above.docx&action=default](https://popp.undp.org/layouts/15/WopiFrame.aspx?sourcedoc=/UNDP_POPP_DOCUMENT_LIBRARY/Public/PSU_Solicitation%20Process_Solicitation%20Documents_Request%20for%20Proposal%20(RFP)%20-%20150k%20and%20Above.docx&action=default)

7. The procurement notice says on page 68 that financial statements must be audited. According to Spanish law (where our company is registered) we are not required to audit our financial

statements and we have a certificate to provide evidence for this. We have won many contracts with UN agencies, including also a recent one with UNCDF, and would assume that it is not an exclusion criterion if we cannot provide audited financial statements. Could you please confirm this?

Audited financial statement is an attachment to Form D (Qualification Form) and is considered a requirement. This is because UNCDF would like to ensure that the bidder has sufficient financial capacity for a long-term relationship with UNCDF, and that the financial condition of the bidder had been reviewed independently and rendered compliant to generally accepted accounting standards.

Please see the following conditions of financial statement as being compliant:

- Must reflect the financial situation of the Bidder or party to a JV, and not sister or parent companies
- Historic financial statements must be audited by a certified public accountant
- Historic financial statements must correspond to accounting periods already completed and audited. No statements for partial periods shall be accepted.

If the above requirements cannot be provided, and the prospective bidder continues to desire to submit an offer, a signed statement explaining why the document cannot be provided must be submitted. However, after thoroughly evaluating all the documents received, and the evaluation panel determines that the explanation is not acceptable, the evaluation panel for this procurement action reserves the right to reject the proposal and render it non-compliant.

We also would like to clarify to bidders that the procurement rules of UN entities vary from one agency to another. A bidder's success with, or any consideration obtained from, one UN agency does not imply that the same could be obtained from other UN agencies, neither do other UN agencies have any obligation whatsoever to grant the same to the bidder.

8. Kindly note we have worked with UNCDF under LTA for DFS and HCD projects as well as on other projects outside LTA in the past. Are we eligible to participate for this bid for the stated purpose of the project?

Please see our response on question no. 1.

9. Section 2, Instructions to Bidders, under conflict of interests, we would like to state that we work on many donor-funded projects in various countries with many service providers. We may not be sure of which service providers UNCDF engages for procurement processes, hence if there is any chances of conflict of interest. Kindly let us know if you may share a list of such organizations so we may ensure there is no such conflict in participating in this bid.

Please see our response in question no. 1.

At the moment, we cannot provide such "list" of organizations that has some chance of conflict of interest. As we have previously mentioned, the assessment of such conflict shall be done on a case-by-case basis.

At the outset, we also expect bidders to conduct their own thorough review of the service providers they may partner with for the purpose of this LTA, and thus ensure that such companies are not likely to be have conflict of interest when engaged to evaluate UNCDF projects.

10. The RFP states under the duration and location of LTA, “UNCDF works in 31 of the LDCs. Successful firms will be expected to mobilize evaluation team who are able to work in any one of UNCDF’s partner LDC countries in Africa, South East Asia and the Pacific working in either English or in French as appropriate.” Since at this stage, countries of work are not specified and will be different for different ToRs under this LTA so what are we required to submit under following at the RFP stage:

- **Local Government permit to locate and operate in assignment location, if applicable**
- **Official Letter of Appointment as local representative, if Bidder is submitting a Bid in behalf of an entity located outside the country**

On the need for Local Govt permit to locate and operate, the bidder should submit such documents on all locations where it currently has permit to operate. This does not refer to the locations where the UNCDF projects to be evaluated are located.

On the Official Letter of Appointment as local representative, as indicated in the requirement, this only applies to bidders who are representing another company. If the bidder falls under such criteria, this letter of appointment needs to state that the local representation is valid for all countries of UNCDF operations in the regions stated in the RFP, as well as any country excluded from such authorization, for whatever reason the appointing company may have.

11. On Page 22, Technical Evaluation Criteria: Section 1 Bidders’ qualification, capacity and Experience, RFP asks for evidence for various experience parameters, kindly let us know what needs to be submitted as evidence? We can share narratives of projects with Client detail and links to reports (if not confidential) in the public domain. Kindly let us know if these would suffice.

12. Under Section 4. Evaluation Criteria, bidders’ qualification, previous experience, RFP states to submit minimum 2 contracts of similar value, nature and complexity. In this case, we have contracts signed by Clients but those cannot be shared due to NDA signed with Clients. Kindly let us know the alternative documents to be submitted in such cases.

Responding to Questions 11 and 12: From RFP at page 22: “In cases where firms are not able to provide copies of the evaluation report themselves for confidentiality reasons, bidders are invited to summarize (in not more than half a page per evaluation the type and scope of evaluation conducted, the budget of the evaluation and the methodology deployed).”

UNCDF trusts that the bidders will be truthful to their statement of their previous experience. Nevertheless, UNCDF reserves the right to randomly request the bidder for reference on some of the previous experiences and for further verification as may be deemed necessary.

13. Given that UNCDF expects the contract to start in August 2020 and that there is still international travel restriction due to the pandemic, how does this situation is handled? Is UNCDF open to desk-based evaluations?

As COVID-19 spreads globally, it is a massive health, humanitarian, and development crisis. UNCDF Evaluation Unit remains operational and is adapting the way it works and manages evaluations.

Our priority is the safety of our staff, consultants and stakeholders while trying to ensure that UNCDF continues to benefit from high quality evaluative evidence to support its strategic learning and accountability.

Proposed evaluation schedules, methodology and data collection techniques may be subject to change. In the case of field-based evaluation, the work of the evaluation team during the country visit shall be done within the guidelines and protocols set by the local and national governments and the UN authorities.

Where it becomes necessary, UNCDF is prepared to grant time extensions on an ongoing contract, without additional cost, if the delays are deemed acceptable, reasonable and temporary.

14. Could you confirm that on page 25 of the RfP, when it states we should provide three (3) CVs per category of expert listed, this includes 3 CVs for project directors and three CVs for Team Leads?

For each proposal, bidders should propose a minimum of three (3) CVs for each category listed. The interpretation indicated in the question is correct.

15. We are planning to structure our proposal in line with the Technical Evaluation Criteria given on pages 22 – 26 of the RFP, with the subsections of our proposal corresponding with the subsections outlined on these pages. However, we noticed that Form E (page 69 – 70 of the RFP) gives slightly different (more generic) subsections. Are we ok to structure our Technical Proposal following the subsections outlined in the Technical Evaluation Criteria on pages 22 – 26 of the RFP?

Firms are invited to structure their proposal in accordance with the following three sections:

- SECTION 1: Bidder's qualification, capacity and expertise
- SECTION 2: Proposed Methodology, Approach and Implementation Plan
- SECTION 3: Management Structure and Key Personnel

Firms will be assessed as per Technical Evaluation Criteria subsections outlined on the RFP (pp.22-26).

16. We have worked on many financing mechanisms to catalyze investments in last mile projects like Clean Energy, Healthcare Service Delivery, Women Empowerment, Digital finance to

connect last mile beneficiaries. These financing mechanisms include green bonds, outcome based financing for clean energy, NBFC structuring etc. All these mechanisms were developed to catalyze financing from local/commercial investors, which to our understanding demonstrates our experience in the Local Development Finance area. This may be clarified.

At this point, and in the spirit of fairness of competition, UNCDF is unable to make an assessment of your experience, as this duty rests with the evaluation panel, and should happen only after the bid submission deadline, and simultaneously with all other bids. Please refer to relevant parts and links in the ToR which describe how UNCDF is operationalizing its mandate as a UN development finance agency working in the Least Developed Countries.

17. As per category 1.1, the consultants need to provide evidence (up to a total of five evaluation reports). Since we need to submit our proposal via email, could you please clarify on how to submit these evaluation reports. Do we need to submit complete evaluation reports? Please clarify.

Please read the RFP page 22 where the following is stated: “In cases where firms are not able to provide copies of the evaluation report themselves for confidentiality reasons, bidders are invited to summarize (in not more than half a page per evaluation the type and scope of evaluation conducted, the budget of the evaluation and the methodology deployed).” The address for submitting proposals is Uncdf.procurement@uncdf.org.

18. The portal (<https://popp.UNCDF.org/SitePages/POPPBSUnit.aspx?TermID=254a9f96-b883-476a-8ef8-e81f93a2b38d>) is not accessible to look for amendments, etc.

Please try <https://popp.undp.org/SitePages/POPPRoot.aspx>

19. In Form C, Proposed portion of responsibility, the proposed portion of responsibility may depend upon project to project basis. Hence, it may be appropriate to identify the responsibilities during the mini competition and not at this stage.

Please refer to the requirements indicated for JV, under Instruction to Bidders item 14. In particular, please refer to the following:

14.4 The description of the organization of the JV, Consortium or Association must clearly define the expected role of each of the entity in the joint venture in delivering the requirements of the RFP, both in the Proposal and the JV, Consortium or Association Agreement. All entities that comprise the JV, Consortium or Association shall be subject to the eligibility and qualification assessment by UNCDF.

At this point, overall framework role and responsibilities of the JV partners shall already be indicated within the requirements of the proposal. During the secondary competition stage, the proposed sharing of responsibilities among the JV partners shall be reviewed in accordance with what was submitted at this stage.

20. To estimate appropriately the requirements in terms of experience/manpower and financials, we request if you could please share the locations for possible evaluations studies that may be tendered under the Framework?

An overview of countries where UNCDF works is available at <https://www.uncdf.org/where-we-work>. At this point, there is no final determination of where the work will be in the coming three (3) years of the LTA, hence the need for the secondary competition.

21. Page 20, Previous Experience, Financial Standing : It appears that there is some mismatching to criteria and document submission requirement, which may be rectified and clarified.

In order to address this question, the bidder is invited to point us exactly on where the mismatching is.

22. Form B: The understanding is that all the consortium members have to provide Form B on standalone basis. This may be clarified, please.

Form B is not a requirement for the consortium member; relevant information on consortium member or JV partner may be included as attachment. Please see Form C which covers information on consortium /JV/association. Please also refer to ITB 14 of the RFP regarding JV/Consortium or Association.

Please also note QA Round 2 has been updated – see response to item 3, which now corresponds to three questions, (including related query on forms); kindly refer to updated version dated 30 June 2020:

https://procurement-notice.undp.org/view_notice.cfm?notice_id=66544

23. Form B - Local Government permit : Since the location of the assignment is not identified, this may not be applicable for this submission.

Please see our response to question no. 10 above.

24. Power of Attorney: No specific format of Power of Attorney has been provided. Kindly suggest if we can use a standard one?

There is no specific format required for this document, as the standard may vary from one country to another, depending on the accepted legal practices, provided that the key information required is in the document, the document is in the English language, and duly signed by the authorized signatory.

25. Financial Standing: Do all the consortium partners have to provide information with regards to financial standing?

Please see page 66 of the RFP which contains Form D: Qualification Form and which states the following: “If JV/Consortium/Association, to be completed by each partner.”

26. Given the fact that an expert may have experience in both the areas (Local Development Finance and Inclusive Finance), our understanding is that we can repeat the CVs in both the proposals, except for technical position, which is Lead Inclusive Finance Expert/Lead Local Development Finance Expert. This may be clarified.

This is permissible provided you meet the minimum total of experts overall (i.e. three experts per category). However, in the event that you succeed in obtaining the LTA, and you also succeed in multiple secondary competitions, your proposed team composition will likely impact your ability to complete the services requested within the timelines set by UNCDF. In the event that such situation occurs, UNCDF shall exercise its right to request the company to provide a different expert. This is why we strongly encourage you to pool as many experts in the proposed personnel, so that UNCDF can pre-approve them at this stage, and not at the point of secondary competition.

27. To our understanding, the all-inclusive daily fee rate will be the benchmarking rate that would be considered for the mini competitions which means that we would not be able to quote beyond this rate?

This is correct. The all-inclusive daily fee that will be submitted during this tender will be the basis of determining the best value for money and the award of the LTA. At the point of signing the LTA, the all-inclusive daily fee will be formalized in the LTA as the maximum daily fee that will remain fixed and valid during the life of the LTA. No revision on the daily fee shall be allowed during the life of the LTA. During the secondary or mini-competition, the rate can be lower but cannot be more than the daily fee that is locked in under the LTA.

28. We understand that it is important to minimize action with regards to replacement of CVs. However, there are reasons that are beyond the control which can lead to replacements. In such a case, what would happen if there is a replacement leading to increase in daily fee rate. Would that be acceptable post approval process?

Replacement of personnel must be minimized at all times, and shall always be subject to UNCDF review and approval. If an LTA holder is found to be constantly replacing personnel, UNCDF reserves the right to terminate the LTA or not invite the LTA holder on secondary competition.

In exceptional cases where UNCDF will allow replacement of personnel, the new personnel MUST be of equal or superior qualification than the one being replaced, and the said assessment shall be left at the sole judgement of UNCDF.

Furthermore, the new personnel must have the same fee or lower than what has been approved and locked into the LTA. Please see also response in Question No. 27.

29. Should our quote for individuals / experts be for one-year duration or for three years which includes possible extension.

The quote must be valid for 3 years, the maximum life of the LTA.

30. *The understanding is that we need to take into account the inflation, increments, overhead costs, etc. to arrive at the all-inclusive daily fee rate. Kindly clarify.*

The daily fee in the financial proposal must be all-inclusive and must take into account various expenses which covers daily professional fee and related expenses such as life, health and any other insurance, as well as inflation.

Cost of travel, living allowances, communications, etc. need not be incorporate to the effective daily fee at this point as they can only be determined during the secondary competition stage when the details of the work is better defined.

31. *Since we are not clear about the locations, we do not have to provide costs with regards to travel, subsistence, etc. Kindly clarify.*

Please see our response to Question no. 30 above.