

UN Capital Development Fund



RFP No. UNCDF ITB 98000
Drilling and equipment of 6 boreholes for 6 (six) municipal schools in Freetown and building of peripheral structures.
Minutes of the Pre-Bid Conference held on 28 September 2023

28 September 2023

Location: Zoom meeting
Date: September 28, 2023
Start time: 2:00 PM GMT
End time: 2:38 PM GMT
Language(s): English

Participants:

1. Mr Abass Kamara – Ya Marie Investment & General Merchandise
2. Mr Ahmad Wurie – Associates In Infrastructure and Consultancies Limited
3. Mr Albert Williams - Duo-Initiatives Consort
4. Mr Mahmoud Gassama – Interlinks Investment SL Limited
5. Mr Kamasel Koroma – Trine Investment (SL) Limited

Representing the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF):

1. Alfred Akibo-Betts – Project Lead, Freetown Blue Peace Initiative, UNCDF
2. Issam Chariag – Hydraulic Engineer – Program Officer, UNCDF
3. Ethel Capuno – Operations Specialist, UNCDF
4. Myrna Lavides – Procurement Associate, UNCDF

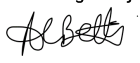
Minutes - Opening

- The meeting started at 2:05 p.m. GMT.
- A communication was published on the Procurement Notices page of UNDP with instructions on how to join the webinar. The webinar was hosted on Zoom.
- The chairperson of the pre-bid conference, Mr Alfred Akibo-Betts, Project Lead for Freetown Blue Peace Initiative at UNCDF, started the meeting by explaining that this is a pre-bid conference for RFP No. UNCDF ITB 98000: Drilling and equipment of 6 boreholes for 6 (six) municipal schools in Freetown and building of peripheral structures.
- Mr. Akibo-Betts explained that UNCDF is looking for a Construction Company to drill boreholes for six municipal schools in Freetown. UNCDF seeks to support the city regarding its water and sanitation goals.
- Mr. Akibo-Betts informed participants that the pre-bid conference will be recorded for reference and quality assurance.
- Participants made introductions.
- Ms. Ethel Capuno noted that the objective of the pre-bid conference is to clarify issues that may need guidance or advice from UNCDF and that bidders should take advantage of the opportunity to raise questions and get clarity.
- Subsequently, the question-and-answer session commenced.
- It was further highlighted that questions can still be submitted in written format after this pre-bid conference to uncdf.procurement@uncdf.org, and UNCDF is also available for follow-up discussions if required.
- The session was adjourned at around 2:38 PM GMT as the attendees had no additional questions.

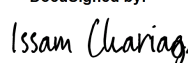
The questions raised by the bidders during the meeting and the responses provided by UNCDF are summarized below:

No.	Questions and Comments from Bidders	Responses from UNCDF
1	What are the specific locations of the boreholes, and what is the access to electricity?	<p>i. Locations of schools: The schools are listed on Page 25 of the Invitation to Bid document. One school is in the East of Freetown, three are in Central Freetown, and two are in the West of Freetown. All of the schools have vehicle access, as noted during inspections of the schools.</p> <p>ii. Electricity: All of the schools have access to electricity. However, as Freetown has energy challenges, the boreholes will be powered by solar power, as noted in the invitation to bid.</p>
2	What is the project's start date? Is the appropriate time to drill a borehole geologically to find water around March?	<p>Considering the steps yet to be undertaken to fulfil UNCDF's procurement processes, it is estimated that the project may commence in Quarter 1 – 2024. Therefore, the timing coincides with the appropriate time to drill the boreholes. Also, UNCDF understands that there may be situations where some construction works are not feasible, such as the rainy season or any other natural situations in the environment. In this regard, UNCDF would like to clarify that we have the flexibility to extend due dates, provided that the factors that cause the delay are beyond the contractor's control, such as the weather. Suppose the environment truly confirms that work is not feasible. In that case, UNCDF can extend due dates provided that the contractor notifies UNCDF early enough and provides that the reasons for the delay are beyond the contractor's control and unrelated to performance. Kindly note that UNCDF may perform its validation of the reason for the delay before granting an extension of due dates.</p>
3	If, as a contractor, you've drilled up to 100 meters or even 200 meters without finding water, have you considered any contingency plans? When water remains elusive after drilling a significant depth, is there an option to shift to a different site? Furthermore, how do the payment terms or conditions adjust based on these drilling outcomes?"	<p>The initial step is to conduct feasibility studies, as mentioned in the first item of the BOQ. These studies and the logs guide our expectations regarding the likelihood of finding water. As it stands, UNCDF is planning to work on five specific sites. If the studies suggest that these sites may not yield water, then relocation is an option that can be discussed with the Freetown City Council.</p> <p>We would like to inform bidders that UNCDF consulted the technical partners, GVWC and the FCC engineers before settling on these six sites. The data assures us that water is present beneath these chosen sites. However, if there is no water, the first step would be to understand the reason behind it.</p> <p>If feasible, UNCDF will consider relocating within the same school premises. If not, the primary decision would be to refrain from proceeding with the project for that particular school and contemplate relocating. Any such relocation would necessitate an official administrative procedure to justify the decision.</p> <p>Additionally, UNCDF typically offers contracts at a fixed price, with payments being released upon the successful completion of specific milestones and agreed-upon deliverables within a set timeframe. While there is flexibility to amend these contracts, it is important to note that UNCDF only compensates for tasks that have been fully</p>

No.	Questions and Comments from Bidders	Responses from UNCDF
		<p>completed. The contracts explicitly specify this payment condition.</p> <p>As a risk mitigation strategy, UNCDF advises contractors to undertake a comprehensive assessment before initiating any task. This is to avoid potential losses from mobilizing resources and being unable to complete the work. Despite the availability of a feasibility study, UNCDF strongly encourages contractors to validate these findings independently. If any potential risks or uncertainties about completing a project on a given site arise, contractors should immediately communicate these concerns to UNCDF's supervising engineers.</p> <p>The primary recommendations from UNCDF for risk mitigation are proactive assessment and open communication. Compensation cannot be provided for incomplete work, and contractors are therefore encouraged to undertake measures to minimize such potential loss for their benefit.</p>
4	<p>How involved are the school authorities in this initiative? The project was conceptualized in collaboration with the Freetown City Council. However, with the schools that stand to benefit, it's crucial to understand their active participation and partnership. Given that schools are currently in session, what measures have been put in place to secure the collaboration of these institutions, particularly during borehole drilling activities? The safety of the students during these operations is paramount.</p> <p>Additionally, some technical issues appear to be unresolved. For instance, how is the winning bidder compensated if the task becomes unexpectedly intricate or expensive—like hitting a rock preventing water access at a depth of 100 meters? Other contracts with different entities have integrated clauses to address similar challenges, such as the 'Payments by Measurement' approach. Are there stipulations within this project to adequately compensate the winning bidder for unanticipated complications?</p>	<p>UNCDF confirmed the involvement of school authorities when feasibility studies were conducted at the six schools. Due to timing constraints, there is a possibility that the operations might align with the academic year. As the next step, once bids are received, and the procurement process moves forward, UNCDF intends to collaborate with FCC to re-engage the school authorities in further discussions regarding the borehole installations. This proactive engagement aims to facilitate the process.</p> <p>UNCDF acknowledges the concerns raised. It is crucial to note that procurement policies differ among organizations. The provisions available in one funding organization might not mirror those in others, including UNCDF. Despite the absence of that specific provision in UNCDF's policy, there is potential for dialogue. Technical discussions can be held with UNCDF's project engineers to determine how projects can benefit from certain tasks.</p> <p>Yet, the inherent limitations of project budgets and donor stipulations cannot be overlooked. UNCDF remains open to discussions and negotiations, approaching such concerns with the intention of mutual agreement and a situation-specific mindset. A definitive stance cannot be provided at this point, especially given the hypothetical nature of the situation discussed.</p>
5	Suggestion for the bid deadline to be postponed to 16 th October 2023	UNCDF will strongly consider this suggestion. If any changes are made, they will appear on the procurement notice online.

DocuSigned by:

 04-Oct-2023
 4EEE9E34B32640C...

Alfred Akibo-Betts
 Secretary
 (Project Lead, Freetown Blue Peace Initiative, UNCDF)

DocuSigned by:

 4-Oct-2023
 E81E23E64583438...

Issam Chariag
 Hydraulic Engineer – Program Officer
 UNCDF