

**MINUTES – BIDDERS CONFERENCE**  
**Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Procurement of Consulting and Professional Services**  
**RFP Reference #: 105343**

**Project Title: Technical Assistance Partnership– Expert Deployment Mechanism (TAP-EDM)**  
**for**  
**DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, TRADE AND DEVELOPMENT**  
**(DFATD)**

**November 9, 2020 from 1-3 P.M. EST**

**I. INTRODUCTION AND ADMINISTRATION**

Administration of the conference call was explained. Global Affairs Canada (GAC) also emphasized that the purpose of the Bidders' Conference is to provide clarifications to potential Bidders. However, the RFP documents which are posted on Buy&Sell are the governing documents for this RFP process. If any changes result from discussions during this conference the information will be posted as amendments to the RFP. Bidders should therefore regularly check Buy&Sell for amendments and answers to questions.

**II. OVERVIEW OF RFP AND PROJECT BY GLOBAL AFFAIRS CANADA**

**The Global Affairs Project Manager provided an overview of the project, supported by a PowerPoint presentation which included information available in the RFP documents.**

**Bidder Question:** Regarding the timeframe of 12 – 18 months to deliver a project, can you please explain the rationale for the 12 – 18-month timeframe?

**Answer:** While we have determined that the execution of technical assistance initiatives should not take more than 12 months or 52 weeks, however, we must also factor in the time length it will take for the Contractor to process the contracts, refine the Terms of Reference, and manage all of the logistics. Also, it depends on the timing of the initiative itself, and that has to be clarified with the recipient, the national level entity. A 6-month buffer is included as a possibility, but the expectation is that when the Canadian expert has been contracted and is ready to go, then the specific Technical Assistance Initiative is to be completed within 12 months.

**III. ANSWERS TO CLARIFICATIONS REQUESTED**

***NOTE: All questions or requests for clarification submitted in advance of, or following, the Bidder's Conference will be responded to in writing on Buy and Sell.***

1. **QUESTION:** Is there a template form for the Bidder's proposed methodology/Approach to implementing the project?

**ANSWER:** Except for the forms and financial tables in Annex E of the RFP, there is no template for the proposed methodology/approach to implementing the project. The only other formatting requirement is to respect the 12-page limitation in filling out this section. As with the entire Technical Proposal, Bidders should use the headings and numbering system detailed in Annex D- Evaluation Criteria. To avoid duplication, Bidders should use cross-referencing by referring to specific paragraphs and page numbers in different sections of their Proposals where the subject topic has already been addressed.

2. **QUESTION:** Is the logic model in Appendix A complete? In other words, will all proposals use the logic model as it appears in the appendix, or is this merely an example of a successful logic model?

**ANSWER:** The logic model in Appendix A is complete for the bidders to prepare their proposal.

3. **QUESTION:** In the PMF in Appendix A, will any of the TBD sections be updated by DFATD or are these areas for the bidders to complete.

**ANSWER:** Specific sections in the PMF in Appendix A are purposively left TBD for the bidders to fill in as part of their Technical Proposal in response to the RFP requirement B - Bidder's Proposed Methodology/Approach to Implement the Project.

4. **QUESTION:** What is the envisioned process for drafting TORs?

**ANSWER:** The question is a little unclear to us. We don't have an answer, but we were hoping that the person who asked the question might clarify it on the call and we could try to proceed from that clarification.

**CLARIFIED QUESTION:** We had situations in the past where we staffed similar positions for Global Affairs Canada for different embassies worldwide and they all had a different way of coming up with the Terms of Reference. For some of them, the requesting authority would already have a draft, it would then be pre-cleared with the embassy and sent to us to add the finishing touches. For the others, the process of negotiation would have to be much more detailed where we would be directly in touch with the requesting authority and we would have to actually try to suss out the details on what is it that they really need and how would that work out. Because many people don't have experience drafting Terms of Reference on the side of the requesting authority, and so sometimes what happened in the past is they would sit and try to write the Terms of Reference for an ideal person, so you would have to have a PhD, 20 years experience, and speak 6 languages, only to find out that none of this is a must. There are 2-3 that are a must and everything else is a nice to have. It can create all kinds of issues. My colleague is actually a recruitment officer, so this is top of his priorities to makes sure that we are not put in a situation where we have to do recruitment for positions that are not necessary in some ways.

**ANSWER:** We understand your position and experience, and the constraints you might be facing doing this kind of mandate. This is exactly where, during implementations it would be possible for the Contractors to work and to improve some of the documents that are being processed upstream. Let's say GAC will send the Contractor something like a concept note

describing the request, but in terms of mandate, the Contractor's mandate is to refine that concept note in collaboration with the recipient, which is the national level entity.

5. **QUESTION:** The \$2.4M for additional personnel - When are these positions to be identified and are they supposed to include overhead as well or just salary and benefits?

**ANSWER:** There are 4 budget envelopes for this project, described in 5.2.1, page 16. This is 5.2.1 (c). This is a budget which is available should the Contractor determine during the course of the work that additional personnel are needed. The Contractor will be required to submit a proposal for additional personnel to DFATD for approval prior to adding anyone to work on the project. You will see the process for approving those additional personnel in part (a) of the Resulting Contract (See Part 8 – Resulting Contract, section 2.3. (Contract Approvals)). Overhead costs for the Contractor can only be included in 5.2.1(a) and 5.2.1(c).

6. **QUESTION:** We understand that the reimbursable cost table that is to be completed would be for costs incurred by the positions that are specifically identified. There is to be no overhead in these costs. Is this interpretation correct?

**ANSWER:** This is the envelope described in 5.2.1 (b) – Contractor's Reimbursable Expenses. This envelope covers only out-of-pocket expenses which the Contractor would incur exclusively in the performance of the Project. The expenses which are eligible under this envelope are described in 5.3.2. Note that 5.3.2 also specifies that "Reimbursable expenses must not contain any elements of fees, nor overhead or indirect costs."

7. **QUESTION:** The winner of the contract is expected to absorb a part of the financial risk. All the overhead needs to be priced into 5.2.1(b), which are the 5 positions that are being articulated in the contract. Is this interpretation correct?

**ANSWER:** We think the section intended to be referenced here is 5.2.1 (a) – Fees for the Personnel of the Contractor. Answer to the second sentence is that the overhead needs to be priced into 5.2.1 (a), and 5.2.1 (c) if a proposal is ever made for Additional Personnel. No overhead is to be included on Contractor's Reimbursable Expenses (5.2.1 (b)) or the Responsive Technical Assistance Fund. Paragraph 5.3.2 specifies that "Reimbursable expenses must not contain any elements of fees, nor overhead or indirect costs."

8. **QUESTION:** This project is to be billed monthly. Is this interpretation correct? Is any advance billing possible?

**ANSWER:** Interpretation is correct. See Annex B – Basis of Payment – Section 6. GAC considers this a reimbursable contract so there would be no advance billing. (No bulk purchasing or infrastructure to pay for under this project)

9. **QUESTION:** The budgets for the Technical Assistance Fund assignments will include travel related costs for the volunteers and the cost of a contractor if a contractor is needed. There is to be no overhead in these costs. Is this interpretation correct

**ANSWER:** Yes. The Responsive Technical Assistance Fund envelope is described in 5.2.1 (d). The SoW and RFP imply the use of sub-contracted experts, rather than volunteers. GAC will

reimburse the Contractor out of the Responsive Technical Assistance Fund for the Contractor's costs related specifically to the Technical Assistance Initiatives, such as Canadian experts' fees, travel, and training. There will be no Contractor overhead amounts added to the Contractor's invoices to GAC but presumably overhead of the Canadian experts would be included in the price which the Contractor pays to the Canadian experts. GAC does not pay the experts directly. No contractual relationship will exist between GAC and the experts being deployed.

#### IV. OPENED FLOOR TO OTHER QUESTIONS

10. **QUESTION:** In the RFP it says that federal government employees will not be not allowed to be part of the EDM. Seeking clarification as to why that is. We've used everyone from Treasury Board, Privy Council, Ministry of Transport, etc. on other EDM's we implement. What's the reason that they're not allowed on this one specifically?

**ANSWER:** The deployment of Government of Canada experts will be part of a separate initiative under the TAP umbrella, independent of the services required under this RFP.

11. **QUESTION:** Related to the Evaluation Grid, specifically Requirement A "Bidder's Experience".... More clarification is required on GAC's intent with regard to profile eligibility, as it remains unclear. Perhaps it is due to the fact that the terminology is different than the typical GAC RFP. Can you please clarify project references, for example, what does "executed" mean? Does that mean operational, completed, or started? As well, provide more clarity on the 60% completion requirement.

**ANSWER:** GAC requested that the Bidder follow up in writing with more specifics and GAC will provide a response in writing.