

MINUTES OF BID CONFERENCE
RFPS-NYH-2021-503380

Long Term Arrangement for the Provision of Solar PV Systems at UNICEF Facilities

Date/Time: 1st September 2021 @11:00 AM (New York Time)

Method: Microsoft Teams

The bidder's conference began by presenting a presentation by UNICEF (DFAM, Division of Financial and Administrative Management) on the background of the required services including the purpose of the assignment and scope of work of the requirement. The following administrative parts of the RFP were briefly explained.

- Document that are part of the RFP and what each document is
- Evaluation process and criteria
- How to submit bid
- Deadline of the submission
- Q&A after the Bidder Conference

Question and answer session were held with the following summary:

S/N	Questions from Bidders	UNICEF's Response
1.	Is there a preference for companies that are based in different region like we are located in Botswana, around south Africa, Zimbabwe does the bidders have to be from that region or there's an equal opportunity for all bidders from any region to bid if they are interested.	<p>There are several LOTs in this RFP. If you refer to the RFP, it is clearly indicated that the LOTs are divided based on regions and the type of commercial modalities (leasing or other Solar PVC alternative financial option). Bidders are welcome to submit one or more LOTs depending on their ability to provide the required services within that specific region and for the specific type of commercial modalities (leasing or other Solar PVC alternative financial option).</p> <p>For more details, please refer to page 4 of the TOR.</p> <p>In addition to the above, bidders are also recommended to look at the technical evaluation criteria stated in Appendix 4 of the TOR (Annex B) to understand the eligibility criteria of the bidders. UNICEF will use this Appendix 4 - Evaluation Criteria to evaluate proposals from the bidders. Please kindly note that there was a revision in the Appendix 4 - Evaluation Criteria from the originally published. Please use the attached Revised Appendix 4 - Evaluation Criteria (Dated 7 September 2021) as a reference moving forward.</p>
2.	We are asked to provide a fixed price for either a leading option or any other financial option for the projects considering the LOTs. Can you please	Bidders are expected to provide two financial proposals for each LOT that they are offering:

<p>explain how we plan to adjust for the projects that require batteries as the battery elements can have different incidents on the costing and since there's no exact details on every single location. I would like to know how the fixed prices will be evaluated and based on what elements? Will there be some adjustments to that?</p>	<p><i>1) Appendix 5 (Price Schedule (Fixed-Rate Cost for the LTA).</i> Bidders are requested to use the relevant Appendix 5A-P form depending on which LOT they are offering.</p> <p>Bidders are requested to provide Unit Prices based on quantities for parts and pieces on the areas mentioned in the Price Schedules. The quoted fixed rates in Appendix 5 will be used later during the LTA implementation as a basis to create and calculate the costs to undertake specific assignments based on a specific Terms of References (TOR). Rates should be fixed for the initial 3 years period of the LTA as proposed by the bidder during the RFPS stage where subsequent extension would be reviewed by UNICEF and subject to UNICEF approval. In case of reduction in the market price, the discounts shall be passed on to UNICEF.</p> <p>While those Unit Prices that are location and requirement specifics are not expected to be provided by the bidders at this point using the Appendix 5. As the outcome of this RFP process, UNICEF intends to issue several LTAs for each LOT and when specific needs arise, UNICEF will request specific technical and financial offers/quotations (from those appointed LTA vendors), for furnishing the specific UNICEF facilities with solar PV systems. At that time, UNICEF shall provide specific requirements and time frames for each task for specific UNICEF Facilities and conduct mini/secondary competitions among the LTA vendors. Appointed LTA vendors will then provide their technical proposal and pricing according to that specific need (site verification might be necessary). If the specific need requires the same items or services as requested by UNICEF and offered by the bidders under the Appendix 5, the appointed LTA vendor should use the same Unit Rates offered during this tender/RFP.</p> <p><i>2) Appendix 10 (Scenario-Based Price Proposal)</i></p> <p>Bidders are requested to use the relevant Appendix 10A-B form depending on which LOT they are offering. Bidders are requested to provide prices in the Scenario-Based Price Proposal as a response to the scenario being provided under Appendix 9 requirements for the design and costing of a specific case for the solar PV system (intended for evaluation purpose only). For this Price Proposal, bidders need to provide prices that correspondence to their response</p>
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		<p>in their technical proposal demonstrating what will be their approach method in providing the services given that particular scenario. Please note that “Quality of the draft design based on the provided information” is part of the Appendix 4 - Evaluation Criteria.</p>
3.	<p>Where do we see the size estimates for the various LOTs? Is there an appendix with all the summarized info for each lot (coordinates, load/consumption, interconnection)?</p>	<p>In addition to the commercial modalities, the LOTS are divided based on regions which do not mean where the bidders are located, but for which locations or regions bidders are capable of providing services to UNICEF offices as UNICEF offices are located globally (please refer to Appendix 8 of the TOR, Annex B, for List of Regions and Countries with UNICEF Programs). In the technical proposal, bidders need to provide information which locations they can provide services whether it's for leasing or other financial options.</p> <p>As a summary of the locations of the information provided to the bidders, please review the content table of the TOR which is located on page 2 to get the idea where the details are provided in which parts of the TORs or as a separate document.</p> <p>At this stage, besides Appendix 9 (scenario-based requirements) there are no specific size estimates to propose a system for. Following the LTA agreement, during the implementation stage, a mini/secondary competition will be held, where bidders will be requested to design a solar system using measurements as per a specific developed TOR. Please refer to answer to Q4.</p>
4.	<p>Do we have the availability on the details whether where the sites are located in? This will allow us to visit the sites and then design the appropriate submission.</p>	<p>This RFP will result in the issuance of Long Term Arrangement (LTA) with multiple vendors for an initial period of three (3) years with possibility of extensions for two (2) additional periods of two (2) years each (“3+2+2 years”) at the discretion of UNICEF and subject to satisfactory performance by the LTA vendors to deliver the required solar PV systems and services. LTA is a contractual framework in which UNICEF and the appointed vendors agree on a list of services, the conditions of their delivery, and their prices for a defined period.</p> <p>After signature of the LTAs and during the Project Implementation Phase, when specific needs arise, UNICEF will request specific technical and financial offers/quotations (from those appointed LTA vendors), for furnishing the specific UNICEF facilities with solar PV systems. At that time, UNICEF shall provide specific requirements and time frames for each task for specific</p>

		<p>UNICEF Facilities and conduct mini/secondary competitions among the LTA vendors (site verification might be necessary). Appointed LTA vendors will then provide their technical proposal and pricing according to that specific need. If the specific need requires the same items or services as requested by UNICEF and offered by the bidders under the Appendix 5, the appointed LTA vendor should use the same Unit Rates offered during this tender/RFP.</p> <p>Upon concluding the mini/secondary competition, an Institutional Contract will then be issued to the recommended LTA vendor.</p> <p>With the RFP at this point UNICEF want to ensure that bidders can provide services to the geographical areas of the regions the LOTs refer to.</p>
5.	Regarding Appendix 9, it is mentioned to follow the technical specifications, after screening, we found that there are some information that are hard to understand for example on panel efficiency: on appendix 7, it mentions that the appendix should have an efficiency more than 22%, on appendix 6 mentions that the efficiency should be higher than 60%, so please advise whether which appendix should be taken into consideration while designing the case scenario?	<p>All appendixes are mandatory to observe.</p> <p>As clarified before, the efficiency of the PV module should be $\geq 20\%$ (to be amended all over the tender documentation).</p> <p>There is no such 60% efficiency in Appendix 6.</p>
6.	<p>On the scenario case, it indicates that bidders should be providing a battery bank that can generate 50,000 KW power per month, we are not aware of the size of batteries and if evaluation is based on financial proposal, battery banks increase total cost of the project. We need to ensure that the battery banks are induced in the cost that we will be presenting.</p> <p>Follow up Question: How would UNICEF then evaluate when all bidders will offer different scenarios, how will be you able to compare?</p>	<p>You may propose the size or the configuration of batteries for providing this sort of energy, so you may provide in different blocks of batteries depending on the brand of batteries you will be offering.</p> <p>Also, we are aware that the of scenario of the batteries will have additional costs and this is part of scenario exercise. In addition, you can propose another solution for reducing the battery size or the requirement of battery capacity. For example, an investment in energy efficiency inside of the building to reduce the consumption and also battery cost. This depends on bidder's creativity</p> <p>In leasing scenario or in proposal scenario, bidders will be expected to offer cost of electricity or a monthly leasing cost, this will be the point of comparison as we will be examining the numbers. For example, one bidder will offer \$0.10 KW per hour while other bidder will offer \$0.12 KW per hour, so maybe the calculation for the bidder who has offered \$0.10 is incorrect or the assumptions are wrong. We expect the bidders to</p>

		justify the assumptions behind the numbers as not only the numbers, but the whole process will be examined.
7.	Can the extension of the deadline be extended with 3 weeks?	UNICEF has set strict deadlines for the RFP, we can only extend the RFP deadline until 27 September 2021.
8.	What is UNICEF's requirement for the preferred duration on leasing period or different payment period?	<p>We accept that the period will influence dramatically the offer, but this is important for the bidders to know that there could be situations where the leasing contract will not be respected due to many reasons such as UNICEF office leaving the country or is not changing the operations or whatever the reason of force measure that it could experience. Yes, the cost will be different and should be recalculation of what will be like the penalty or what will be the additional costing if you have a contract of 10 or 15 years while later it just follows a period of 5 years.</p> <p>Bidders are expected to come with their own best recommendation.</p>
9.	I see that bidders have to fill up the tables A5.1 - A5.10 with components, but solar PVC system consists of many different components. Please elaborate on how you will like for switch gear, panels and etc. where should we place them because one section just says invertors of 25KW and 50 KW, so there could be different interpretations of where to place equipment in sub-groups and how to deal with them?	<p>We have provided the basic elements of the solar system. How you are going to connect with switch gear and panels will be part of the 2nd phase when you will go to consider specific site. As of now we expect you to provide data of main components such as solar panels, combiner boxes, invertors, connection kits. This would be the best picture that we can get about an isolated solar system.</p> <p>We are proposing the numbers as references, we expect the bidders to read the footnote below every table. You may propose other sizes of equipment's. If you are familiar with 26 KW or 30 KW, you are free to provide the sizes.</p>
10.	Is UNICEF fully aware that the final price of the short-listed bidders during the LTA implementation will be totally different from what they are submitting in tender documents right now?	<p>Bidders are requested to use the relevant Appendix 5A-P form depending on which LOT they are offering. Bidders are requested to provide Unit Prices based on quantities for parts and pieces on the areas mentioned in the Price Schedules. The rates will be used later during the LTA implementation as a basis to create and calculate the costs to undertake specific assignments based on a specific Terms of References (TOR). Rates should be fixed for the initial 3 years period of the LTA as proposed by the bidder during the RFPs stage where subsequent extension would be reviewed by UNICEF and subject to UNICEF approval. In case of reduction in the market price, the discounts shall be passed on to UNICEF.</p>

		<p>While those Unit Prices that are location and requirement specifics are not expected to be provided by the bidders at this point using the Appendix 5. As the outcome of this RFP process, UNICEF intends to issue several LTAs for each LOT and when specific needs arise, UNICEF will request specific technical and financial offers/quotations (from those appointed LTA vendors), for furnishing the specific UNICEF facilities with solar PV systems. At that time, UNICEF shall provide specific requirements and time frames for each task for specific UNICEF Facilities and conduct mini/secondary competitions among the LTA vendors. Appointed LTA vendors will then provide their technical proposal and pricing according to that specific need. If the specific need requires the same items or services as requested by UNICEF and offered by the bidders under the Appendix 5, the appointed LTA vendor should use the same Unit Rates offered during this tender/RFP.</p>
11.	<p>If I got you clearly on the scope of works, assuming we are in the West and Central Africa Block, we only need to use one facility in one country for the scenario based pricing and technical requirements?</p> <p>Also, please confirm if we need to add both Appendix 10A and B to the price proposal. Are we allowed to send proposals for both pricing options? That is, both LOTs in a particular region?</p>	<p>Bidders are welcome to submit one or more LOTs depending on their ability to provide the required services within that specific region and for the specific type of commercial modalities (leasing or other Solar PVC alternative financial option). At this point, we are not limiting how many countries Bidders will be able to provide the services to. During the evaluation process, this will be taken into considerations. Bidders are encouraged to provide detail lists of countries or areas that they can cover with their service.</p> <p>We are expecting to have several LTAs be issued for each LOT, so we could have several LTAs for one or many regions.</p> <p>On the Financial Proposal, Bidders are expected to provide two financial proposals for each LOT that they are offering:</p> <p>1) Appendix 5 (Price Schedule (Fixed-Rate Cost for the LTA). Bidders are requested to use the relevant Appendix 5A-P form depending on which LOT they are offering.</p> <p>2) Appendix 10 (Scenario-Based Price Proposal) Bidders are requested to use the relevant Appendix 10A-B form depending on which LOT they are offering.</p>
12.	<p>How many number of bidders are you planning to select either per LOT or as a whole?</p>	<p>It will depend on the outcome of the process whether how many bidders will be technically and financially qualified and competitive as we want to ensure to cover all the offices that are in different regions.</p>

13.	As a company that manufactures components for the PVC systems, is it possible for us to bid through more than one company or one partner for different geographical region.	We would want to get more partnership because we are located in many offices (almost 410 offices) and sometimes it's hard to get one company to cover all these offices, so no limitations on bidding through many partners. However, there will be one leading company will be submitting the proposal and the same company will be signing the LTA in case they were recommended for the award of the LTA. Detail information on the partnerships, including roles and responsibilities, as well as supporting document need to be provided in the technical proposal for UNICEF review during the evaluation process.
14.	In Annex B, Page 17 and appendix 4, table A 4.1, it is mentioned that there some requirements from your side on the evaluation of responsiveness and eligible criteria, so in order to be eligible are we required to submit all the required documents?	Yes, that's correct.
15.	Is there an average power per premises like 20, 50 or 100 KW for the PVC system?	No, there are no such requirement because every system is individual depending on available area and location of UNICEF country office.
16.	Are there any performance penalties because the RFP documents indicates that performance ratio should not be less than 80% and annual production of KW hours should be matching the actual annual KW hours that the system actually produces e.g. there are differences between simulation performance and actual PVC system performances. Are there any penalties that will be imposed?	<p>No, because every system is different. We have simulation and we have reality. We have different values and we don't know at this time what are the exact condition of one particular site. In terms of simulation, you may have a good performance ratio while in reality, you may have shadings, different obstacles and losses that may affect the real performance of your equipment.</p> <p>We want to have a performance that is traceable, so if you present a proposal that is in a difficult location and is 85% of performance of ratio, then we will see that the numbers are very optimistic. Lower numbers might be considered more positively. It all depends on how you present your technical justification of your calculation.</p> <p>Although there is no penalty, the appointed LTA vendors' performance will be monitored and contract issuance as well as extension of the LTA will depend on the previous performance.</p>
17.	Are the requirements in Appendix 7 applicable for the phase that we need to submit appendix 9?	It depends on how you address and what are the standard of your designs. We indicated in the TOR that the "standards that are common in the industry".
18.	Just an observation. Some these LOTs are very broad and theses LOTs cover areas that have different tax provisions, exonerations, importations fees and other logistical aspects that can affect the price	Yes. But please also note that during the LTA implementation, there will be a mini/secondary competition to ensure value for money.

	significantly. Hence this broadness will drive these reference prices up.	<p>At this point, Bidders are requested to use the relevant Appendix 5A-P form depending on which LOT they are offering. Bidders are requested to provide Unit Prices based on quantities for parts and pieces on the areas mentioned in the Price Schedules. The rates will be used later during the LTA implementation as a basis to create and calculate the costs to undertake specific assignments based on a specific Terms of References (TOR). Rates should be fixed for the initial 3 years period of the LTA as proposed by the bidder during the RFPS stage where subsequent extension would be reviewed by UNICEF and subject to UNICEF approval. In case of reduction in the market price, the discounts shall be passed on to UNICEF.</p> <p>While those Unit Prices that are location and requirement specifics are not expected to be provided by the bidders at this point using the Appendix 5. As the outcome of this RFP process, UNICEF intends to issue several LTAs for each LOT and when specific needs arise, UNICEF will request specific technical and financial offers/quotations (from those appointed LTA vendors), for furnishing the specific UNICEF facilities with solar PV systems. At that time, UNICEF shall provide specific requirements and time frames for each task for specific UNICEF Facilities and conduct mini/secondary competitions among the LTA vendors. Appointed LTA vendors will then provide their technical proposal and pricing according to that specific need. If the specific need requires the same items or services as requested by UNICEF and offered by the bidders under the Appendix 5, the appointed LTA vendor should use the same Unit Rates offered during this tender/RFP.</p>
19.	It was noticed that we are required to provide Met stations, communication, and security systems for the technical requirements. Are these also going to be included in the quotation/Pricing proposal? (Ref: Appendix 7-Technical Requirements, Page 14).	<p>Yes, this is something that part of the system because we are requesting a scenario-based proposal.</p> <p>Regarding Appendix 10, which is scenario-based proposal, we expect the bidders to provide those elements i.e. pricing.</p> <p>For Appendix 5, bidders have to put the details that are required for Appendix 5 while other appendices are scenario-based appendices.</p>
20.	Regarding the eligibility criteria in case a bidder fails in one or more of these criteria's, will they still be considered for the further process or not?	Eligibility criteria means that bidders should meet all the required criteria's.

21.	<p>Does ITEM 1 refer to kWp (0-100 kWp) or to quantities of modules (0-100 pieces Modules of 400Wp)? The same Question applies to the Inverters kW or Units?</p> <p>In item no.1, it mentions kWp and then for solar modules 0-100, does this refer to 0-100 Solar Modules (Size defined by us) or to 0-100kWp</p>	<p>Item 1 refers to kWp.</p> <p>The modules composing those kWp of capacity can be either of 400 Wp or of any other capacity you may recommend. The size of the modules is up to the contractors.</p> <p>The same response and concept apply to the inverters. These are just quantities.</p>
22.	<p>Regarding mounting structure, since we do not know the sites where these systems will be installed, how do we know the kind of mounting system to offer since they are site specific.</p>	<p>On one side this is correct as we don't know the site, but we also indicated some references in the technical specification of the type of system and the mounting structure that should be quoted. In this case bidders that are offering a certain type of mountain structure should be close as much as possible to the references that are required and also to explain whether what type of structure support they are offering.</p>
23.	<p>In appendix 9, the renewable penetration rate expected is 100% , is this right? or do you want us to present various options; for the overall bidding, can we propose a consortium to respond to this RFP or do you prefer we bid as a single company?</p>	<p>On the technical part, you are welcomed to propose other options while on the consortium, as mentioned earlier, there should be one leading company who will be the submitter of the bid and the same company will then sign the LTA in case they were recommended for the award of LTA. Detail information on the relations, including roles and responsibilities, as well as supporting document need to be provided in the technical proposal for UNICEF review during the evaluation process.</p>
24.	<p>Hope local content issues is catered for since vendor can apply for other regions?</p> <p>I am in Western and Central Africa. Is it an issue in your technical and financial qualification that provide me in central Africa, or any country can take precedence on what I do here?</p>	<p>The related RFP is open for every one to provide their offer depending on the locations where they can provide the requested services as well as have the required documentations such as network and business corporations providing that they are perform services in that region or location. The proposals submitted will be evaluated according to the Revised Appendix 4 - Evaluation Criteria (Dated 7 September 2021).</p>
25.	<p>Would it be possible to get the fuel price for the scenario-based case? This info can help us to provide various options with various renewable penetration rates.</p>	<p>We have put scenarios as much as we could, but there could be more details that different bidders will need. So, bidders are welcome to send us those questions to lshirzad@unicef.org and kdalimunthe@unicef.org and we will provide the additional information based on the responses from the country offices.</p>