

TERMS OF REFERENCES

LONG TERM ARRANGEMENT FOR TRANSCRIPTION SERVICES FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE

1. Overview

The Office of Internal Audit and Investigations (OIAI) of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) seeks the services of a vendor to be able to transcribe voice recorded investigation interviews into text format. The duration of the proposed Long-Term Arrangements (LTAs) is for 7 years with initial 3 year and option for extending 4 additional years (2 + 2) at the discretion of UNICEF and subject to satisfactory performance and delivery of the services as well as UNICEF's needs. As a result of the solicitation process (RFPS), UNICEF may issue one or more LTAs and split the awards.

The appointed vendor/s will be responsible for:

- Transcribing audio files into text format
- Providing a platform for transferring audio files and transcribed text files

The Investigations Service of OIAI at UNICEF undertakes global investigations in the multi-cultural environment of the United Nations. Investigations are conducted into the possible misconduct of UNICEF personnel, contractors, vendors and partners. The subject matter of investigations varies and can range from fraud and corruption perpetrated by UNICEF personnel to behavioral matters such as sexual harassment and abuse of authority.

Interviews are a critical part of all investigations. The interviews are deposition style and conducted by trained investigators, typically with one lead investigator asking questions and the interviewee responding. When these interviews are audio recorded, the recording must be reduced to writing for internal administrative action. This action includes preparation of reports that cite specific references in the transcription and use of both the report and transcription for internal hearings presided over by a judge.

1.1 Anticipated volume

- Between 100 and 200 interviews per year with average length of up to 3 hours per interview
- Transcribed interview record text files usually size in a range between 50-100 pages (US letter, double-spaced)

1.2 Types of interviews

- Two interviewers and one interviewee (> 90% of interviews)
- Two interviewers and one interviewee with third party interpreter (< 10% of interviews)
- English (70- 75% of interviews)
Other languages with English Interpretation (5-10% of interviews)

Expectations of Business Partner (BP) (Vendor)

OIAI strives to provide quality services to the Organization, therefore, it has high expectations of its business partners (vendors). It is expected that the vendor will provide quality products and services at the lowest price available in the market, but just as important is the expectations that the transcription services are provided in a manner, that exhibits the highest level of ethics and professionalism. The transcripts must be accurate, complete, and credible. Given the nature of the subject matter, confidentiality and discretion are paramount. The individuals responsible for transcribing and the systems for managing the documents/records must include appropriate, demonstrable controls, both legal and physical.

DESCRIPTION OF SERVICES

Transcription of English voice recorded investigation interviews into text format. It is expected that the Contractor provides transcription services in a manner that exhibits the highest level of ethics and professionalism. The transcripts must be accurate, complete and credible. Given the nature of the subject matter, confidentiality and discretion are paramount. The individuals responsible for transcribing and the systems for managing the documents/records must include appropriate, demonstrable controls, both legal and physical.

Qualifications:

- The vendor must have been providing the transcription services for at least five (5) years.
- The Business Partner (Vendor) shall be able to transcribe a minimum of 6 hours of audio recording per day, 5 days a week, ongoing throughout the contract period.
- The transcribers assigned to the project shall have minimum of three years of experience in transcription in English, French and/or Spanish language. This should also include clear roles and responsibilities of each team member and individuals currently retained/on call for transcription services, including management structure and all administrative and technical capacities. Vendors should indicate in their proposals how many people will be devoted to the UNICEF-OIAI projects.
- The vendor shall be able to provide transcription services in French and/or Spanish language when required. Other languages are optional.

2. Minimum Requirements

2.1 Place of Performance: All work shall be performed at Vendor's place of business.

2.2 Accessibility:

- Professionalism and Availability: Vendors shall maintain a professional relationship with the Investigations Service and requesting parties. Vendor's customer service shall be available (e.g. e-mail, online chat/online person/etc.) to respond to inquiries that may arise, including number of staff on call available to respond to after business hours and request for urgent tasks.

- Equipment and Software: Vendor shall have the capability to play and adjust the volume of each audio file to accurately transcribe the records, including:
 - Equipment & Software – demonstrate that they have the equipment, software and systems needed to perform professional transcriptions from digital audio files, and:
 - They shall provide detailed description of process once file is uploaded in order to achieve transcription tasks, including systems and procedures for file transfer across different time zones. Description should cover the systems and procedures including security and workflow for timeliness.

Transmission of files through a platform for transferring audio files and transcript files provided by the vendor. Upon receipt of a transcript request the requisitioner shall email to the Vendor the following: Purchase Order Number, Background of the Case file and other applicable documents.

- MS Word and PDF text files of transcribed audio file should be accessible for at least 6 months. Older than that upon written request to vendor.

2.3 Delivery requirements

- UNICEF shall issue an Institutional Contracts to cover certain tasks and/or certain period of services using the terms and conditions agreed in the LTA and the agreed rate/fee stated in the LTA will be used to calculate the contract amount for the tasks required.
- Transcript Order Form: When the services are required by the Investigations Service, transcripts shall be ordered through a Transcript Order Form. OIAI will give as much notice as possible. This may range from a matter of weeks to a matter of hours.
 - urgent (48h) – This SLA will be applicable for a maximum audio duration of 4 hours for all Transcript Order Forms, on any given date.
 - normal (3-5 business days) - This SLA will be applicable for a maximum audio duration of 12 hours for all Transcript Order Forms, on any given date.

If the audio duration is more than the specified maximum limit of 4 or 12 hours, the following conditions will apply:

Urgent requests: Anything from 4 to 6 hours has to have a 72 hour turnaround. Above 6 hours the timeline will be discussed and agreed between both parties.

Normal requests: Anything 12 hours or more the timeline will be discussed and agreed between both parties.

- Transcripts Delivery to Requisitioner: Vendor shall deliver the original transcript to requisitioner within the delivery time specified in the Institutional Contracts. The time period for delivery of transcripts shall commence once an order has been received and audio files have been uploaded in vendor's secure website (e.g. File Transfer Protocol (FTP) site).

2.4 Monitoring and Reporting

The proposers shall describe in details their plan for tracking and monitoring the work. They shall also propose a methodology for record keeping.

3. FORMATTING STANDARDS

- 3.1 Formatting Standards: The vendor shall comply with the transcript format requirement provided by the Investigations Service, as required typing format (Appendix A).

4. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

4.1 Quality of Transcripts and Confidentiality

The proposer shall demonstrate that is able to provide good quality final transcripts and provide description of their system of revision and/or proofreading.

- Vendor shall be responsible for providing complete transcripts in the format prescribed by the Investigations Service, which accurately reflect the full and complete verbatim record of the audio files. Transcripts that require correction shall be done by the Vendor at no additional cost.
- The proposers shall describe established procedures to manage confidential information (certain level of encryption). They shall explain how the confidentiality of document management and transcription services can be verified.

4.2 Delinquent transcripts

Transcripts not provided within the required time shall be considered delinquent.

Transcripts provided are considered the product of the vendor, and OIAI will not be able to amend or correct transcripts. On occasion, OIAI may return a transcript to a vendor for corrections or amendments and subsequent reissuance.

5. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

This transcription price will be based on per hour from audio recordings. Minutes and seconds will be prorated.

STRUCTURE OF THE PROPOSAL

TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

The proposal should include the technical proposal detailing how the company meets the requirements as described above, the company's qualification and the approach to the required services. The proposal should include relevant documents in alignment with the evaluation criteria detailed below and company's profiles.

FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

Financial proposals are to be submitted using the template provided in Annex C. Failure to quote in USD will result in the disqualification of the proposal. Volume discounts, tiered pricing and other pricing variations are to be detailed in the Financial Proposal.

EVALUATION PROCESS AND ASSESSMENT OF BIDS

Proposals will be reviewed using a three-step process:

Step 1. An initial administrative check for completeness and compliance

Step 2. Technical evaluation (80 points)

Step 3. Evaluation of financial proposal (20 points)

A maximum of 80 points will be allocated to the technical aspects of the bids (Step 2), with a further 20 points for the price component (Step 3), for a maximum possible score of 100 points.

Step 1: Administrative check

Proposals will first be reviewed for their completeness in terms of the information requested in the RFPs and their compliance with its requirements. Only proposals that successfully pass the administrative check will be subject to technical evaluation.

Step 2: Technical evaluation (80 points)

The technical evaluation will consist of two parts:

A. Technical evaluation (maximum possible score = 80 points): proposals will be evaluated on the criteria outlined under technical evaluation criteria below. Only proposals that score a minimum of **40 points** will be considered technically compliant. *(All other proposals will be disqualified for further evaluation.)*

Technical evaluation criteria and scoring method.

Table 1:

	Company profile and methodology	Points obtainable
1.1	Background and capacity	15
1.2	Methodology, project management	20
	Quality assurance procedures and risk mitigation	10
	Organizational resources and expertise	10
2.1	Resources and assignment of tasks	10
2.2	Curricula vitae – Qualifications, competencies and specialized knowledge areas of proposed personnel	20
	Curricula vitae – Experience with similar texts. Experience transcribing for UNICEF or similar UN agencies/ IGOs	10
	Experience and client references	10
3.1	Clients/projects in health and nutrition, education, human rights, gender equality, water and sanitation, migration and refugees, equity, other sustainable development fields	5
3.2	Client references	10
	TOTAL POINTS OBTAINABLE	80

Step 3: Financial evaluation (20 points)

The proposers should ensure that all pricing information is provided in accordance with Annex C of this RFPS. The financial evaluation of all technically compliant proposals will be conducted. A proposal offering the lowest average cost will be awarded 20 points, all other price proposals will receive scores in inverse proportion per the following formula:

Score for price proposal X = (Maximum score for price proposal (e.g. 20) * Average of lowest priced proposal) / Average Price of proposal X

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

UNICEF shall, unless otherwise specified in the contract, make payment within 30 days of invoice receipt.

Awards

UNICEF will make multiple awards to bidder(s) who submitted technically compliant proposals. The awards will be made starting from the highest-scoring proposal as a result of the combined technical and financial evaluation. The overall number of awards may vary depending on several criteria, including the needs of UNICEF, prices offered and what provided the best value for money, and is in the best interests of UNICEF. The resultant contracts shall have concrete deliverables, outputs and timeframes against which payments are made. This will be defined by UNICEF requisitioning offices committing funds through binding contracts that reference the services, personnel profiles and pre-negotiated rates as well as any cost calculation methodologies referenced within the LTAS.

APPENDIX A

Transcript Format & Specifications

- MS Word and PDF files
- File name the same as the audio file name provided
- Arial 12-point or equivalent
- Margin one-inch top, bottom, right, and left margins
- Each line of transcript sequentially number from beginning of transcription to end
- All text to begin at the left-hand margin (no indents)
- Entire document shall be left justified
- Each page should be numbered (footer) and the name of the audio file should be included in the header.
- Last name of interviewer and interviewer specific designation shall be assigned to each person transcribed – such as Smith, Jones, etc. to precede every statement attributed to that person.
- The transcripts should provide an accurate record of words spoken in the course of the interview.
- All grammatical errors, changes of thought, contractions, misstatements, and poorly constructed sentences should be transcribed as spoken. Verbatim transcription including any nonverbal or including, false starts, stutters, and other verbal tics - use of filler words - e.g. hm, huh, mm, mhm, uh huh, um, mkay, yeah, yuhuh, nah huh, ugh, whoa, uh oh, ah, and ahah should also be included.
- background sounds (e.g., laughter, sighs, coughs, claps, snaps fingers, pen clicking, and car horn) or pages turning should not be included;
- Inaudible Information portions of audio should state “inaudible segment” in square brackets with
time for period of for information that could not be transcribed

- Overlapping speech that cannot be transcribed should state “cross talk” in square brackets immediately after the last identifiable speaker’s text and pick up with the next audible speaker
- Brief pauses of up to 5 seconds identified by three ellipses. Substantial pauses of more than 5 seconds use “long pause” in parentheses.
- Uncertain transcription placed inside parentheses and a question mark placed in front of the open parenthesis and behind the close parenthesis.

For audio files with English Translation, transcriber shall mention (in brackets) the original language in the transcribed document since the transcription has been made only to the English translation.