Clarification Note
Q&A no. 1
Request for Information (RFI) for the Provision of School Connectivity Solutions

Date: 2 October 2024

#	Question	Answer
1	Could you kindly confirm whether Afghanistan is included in the scope of this RFI?	Kindly note the list of "countries or territories" of the Request for Information (RFI) was updated accordingly. Please refer to the updated list in the following link in **UNGM**.
2	As we are an Equipment Vendor of Wireless, Fixed and Switching solutions our WISP, SP, MNO customers who own networks and end user customers are better suited to respond to this RFI. My question therefore is can I provide WISP, SP and MNO contacts that deploy our equipment in the countries outlined in the capabilities by country tab of the excel sheet?	Please feel free to share the RFI information with any of your customers that could respond to the RFI.
3	We are requested by more information on the required connectivity as well as what kind of information and content our response to the RFI should contain.	Kindly note that all the relevant information is included in the RFI's documentation that can be found in the following link on **UNGM**. Please send any further questions by email before the deadlines listed in the same link.
4	We would like to seek a clarification – are we able to offer two options for this requirement – both are different solutions – for example solution A and its Excel and solution B with its Excel? or are we limited to only 1 option?	If the supplier is referring to two technical solutions delivered by the same company, the answer is yes, and the supplier can describe them both in the same excel file using the same cells or duplicating the relevant tabs. Please do not change the structure inside any of the tabs
5	We are currently reviewing the RFI document and will provide feedback as soon as possible. In the meantime, could you kindly share your contact number for further communication?	UNICEF is not providing additional contact information at this stage. All communications should go in writing via the indicated communication channel in the RFI documentation.
6	Contract Period: 1. What is the anticipated minimum contract period of UNICEF across the schools?	1. and 2. The length of the contract (maximum and minimum) will be decided if or when an RFP is launched. If suppliers have any recommendations regarding contract length, they should include that information as part of their RFI submission.

	2. What is the anticipated maximum contract period of UNICEF across the schools?	
7	GEO latency is noted to be around 550ms-650ms, whereas the RFI document ref [P-1.3] states latency < 500ms. Please confirm if this is correct?	One of the objectives of the RFI is to collect feedback from potential suppliers regarding the preliminary requirements listed in the tab "Draft Technical Requirements". Kindly use the space reserved for the answers to question 31 to recommend adding, removing, or adjusting any requirement based on your own experience. UNICEF considers GEO satellite solutions to be compliant with requirement [P-1.3] and will raise the latency limit to make this clear in future documents.
8	As the countries are in different time zones, could we get an indication of school time hours? What are the school hours in a day? 8 hrs – less or more?	Suppliers can consider schools hours to be 7am to 6pm local time.
9	School category: 1. Are the targeted schools, primary or secondary schools or both? 2. What are the selection criteria of bandwidth per school? [Discovery-20, Pathfinder-50 or Navigator-150], 3. Are there scenarios, where schools are allocated more than one i.e [School X – Discovery-20 + Pathfinder-50]? Please clarify?	1. All school types are targeted, including primary, secondary and tertiary education facilities. 2. The criteria to select schools into the different categories is not yet decided. Suppliers are encouraged to make suggestions in the space reserved for question 30. 3. It is expected that in most cases, schools located in the same premises will have one type of connection only. However, there might scenarios where connections of different categories might be needed.
10	Referencing [W-1.1], [W-2.1] & [W-3.1] for the administration area, is the preference an Internal AP or External AP?	Suppliers are encouraged to consider both possibilities and share their opinion on the best approach based on their experience.
11	**Sheet: Instructions:** Could we provide additional information in PDF instead of the geospatial format?	Geospatial format is strongly encouraged but other non-geospatial formats such as PDF are acceptable as well.
12	Questions 19) Is this question related to the VSAT Network/Connectivity or to the total product/solution?	Question 19 refers to the ownership of the physical telecommunications network used to deliver connectivity services, which can include wired and/or wireless network segments. This question does NOT refer to the

		infrastructure required to deliver application-layer services (e.g. application servers).
13	**Performance** 1. Are the requested services "Discovery 20, Pathfinder 50 and Navigator 150" related only to satellite connectivity or also to fiber and GSM? 2. What Connectivity type do you target with the Discovery 20 product? As GEO – Satellite connection should have a latency minimum of 550-600ms and not 500ms 3. Could we also provide the services for the service "Pathfinder 50 and Navigator 150" with latency of 550ms – 600ms for which GEO will be adequate? 4. What is the reason that the 3 school categories are described by 3 different latency values (P1.3, P2.3, P3.3)?	1. UNICEF's approach to school connectivity is technology agnostic and this RFI does not refer to any technology in particular. Suppliers of any type of connectivity technology are encouraged to submit their responses. 2. The RFI is technology agnostic. UNICEF considers GEO satellite solutions to be compliant with requirement [P-1.3] that is part of the Discovery-20 category. UNICEF will raise the latency limit to make this clear in future documents 3. One of the objectives of the RFI is to collect feedback from potential suppliers regarding the preliminary requirements listed in the tab "Draft Technical Requirements". Kindly use the space reserved for question 31 to recommend adding, removing, or adjusting any requirement based on your own experience. This includes any adjustments to latency requirements. Kindly substantiate your answers. 4. Requirements are increasingly stringent across multiple dimensions. Suppliers are invited to suggest changes to the requirements in question 31.
14	**Energy systems:** Is the solar energy generation for the off-grid school only intended for the communication system or is it also needed for other purposes?	The energy requirements are for communications systems only. However, suppliers are welcomed to describe solutions that extend beyond communications systems.
15	What are the possibilities of being granted a 1 week or 2 weeks extension to the submission date?	IMPORTANT: UNICEF is extending the period to submit questions by 1 week and to submit responses by 2 weeks. The new timelines are as follows: Deadline for questions: October 7, 2024 at 23:59 European Central Time. Deadline for submissions: October 29, 2024 at 23:59 European Central Time.
16	Who would be the awarding body for the Managed Service requirement for School Connectivity? Would the contracting body be UNICEF?	In accordance with this RFI instructions and purposes, the contracting parties in case of award will be defined during the RFP process. UNICEF

		will share more information about the awarding body at a later stage after this RFI. The contracting body may differ by country.
17	What would be the duration of contract?	Please refer to the above answer to question no.6
18	In order to respond to pricing models, we would need data on approximate number of sites and site locations in each country for Discovery-20, Pathfinder-50 and Navigator-150 plans. Can you please provide the same?	UNICEF is looking for a flexible volume discount model per country and across countries if applicable. The volume metric could be e.g. spend, number of sites (per plan or not), cumulative bandwidth, and/or any other metric that you should describe in your submission. Providing volumes of Discovery, Pathfinder or Navigator plans at this stage may be misleading: they will likely evolve with time and will depend on the outcome of this RFI and upcoming RFP, pricing, implementation planning and other dependencies inherent to such a large program.
19	Will the bidders be required to bid on some countries/sites and not just being required to bid on all countries/sites?	There is no restriction or minimum number of countries to cover in your RFI submission.
20	Will the bidder be required to provide their qualification on their managed services pedigree by global certifications orgs (like Gartner)?	UNICEF may consider requesting certifications at RFP stage.
21	Should we provide an open Wi-fi solution with no username and password, or it's a single simple shared password	UNICEF prefers solutions that can support three forms of accessing the WiFi network: 1) No username or password; 2) simple configurable password; 3) username/password authentication managed by an AAA system. For more information refer to the draft requirement [S-4] in the tab "Draft Technical Requirements".
22	Should we include end devices in our pricing models i.e. laptops, tablets?	No, this is not required.
23	Can we confirm 100% that the energy systems we will install will be to power network equipment only (CPE and access points)	Yes, the requirement is to power network equipment only. However, suppliers are welcomed to propose solutions that provide extra power to charge handheld devices such as smartphones or tablets (no PCs or laptops).
24	There's concerns that solar power may not be powerful enough to handle network equipment for schools that have zero electrification – please share your views on this point	Solar solutions exist to power the network equipment in scope. Please share any specific concerns you may have in your submission.

25	Is UN open to doing business with Huawei (most of the countries we have operations in have outsourced their NOC to Huawei Managed Service	Vendors must not be in the list of suspended or debarred vendors by the Consolidated United Nations Security Council List (CUNSCL), World Bank's Listing of Ineligible Firms and Individuals and lists of sanctioned/suspended vendors maintained by UN organizations. Please note that large brands or conglomerates may consist of multiple companies, and restrictions may apply to some, but not all, of them. Suppliers are kindly requested to provide specific company details when seeking clarification regarding sanctions or restrictions.
26	Is a regional NOC mandatory – some of the countries have data sovereignty policy	A regional NOC is not mandatory. NOCs located in the same country of operations are also accepted. For countries where data sovereignty regulations demand a local NOC the requirement will be communicated a later stage.
27	Does 100GB, 3TB and unlimited data in the performance details below refer to mobile data or to Internet link. Kindly please clarity.	These numbers refer to the minimum amount of user-plane downlink data included each month in the cost of the subscription (before any fair-use policy is applied). The volume of data is measured at the entry point (CPE) of the school's connection (e.g. fibre ONT or satellite modem).

	Connections should support at least:	Connections should support at least:	Connections should support:
Performance	[P-1.1] 20 Mbps DL and 5 Mbps UL. [P-1.2] 100GB of data included. Reasonable fair-use policy thereafter. [P-1.3] Latency < 500 ms [P-1.4] Target	[P-2.1] 50 Mbps DL and 15 Mbps UL. [P-2.2] 3 TB of data included. Reasonable fair-use policy thereafter. [P-2.3] Latency < 150 ms [P-2.4] Target speeds	[P-3.1] Highest of: • 150 Mbps DL and 40 Mbps UL • 1 Mbps DL and 0.25 Mbps UL per student. [P-3.2] Unlimited data. No fair-use policy applied. [P-3.3] Latency < 100 ms [P-3.4] Target

		speeds achievable at least 80% of time during school hours	achievable at least 80% of time during school hours	speeds achievable at least 80% of time during school hours	
28	We have recently reviewed the RFQ and your email regarding the internet connectivity requirements for schools. We seek clarification on whether the services are intended for schools in Afghanistan or Africa.				The list of countries of interest for this RFI can be found in the UNGM platform or in the tab "capabilities by country" of the file "Questionnaire_RFI_School_Connectivity.xlsx" accompanying the RFI.
29	Which type of schools are considered in the RFI (high schools, elementary, primary, universities,…)?				All school types should be considered, including primary, secondary and tertiary education facilities.
30	Are there restrictions to be considered in terms of Internet equipment providers, supplier nationality, etc…?				Vendors must not be in the list of suspended or debarred vendors by the Consolidated United Nations Security Council List (CUNSCL), World Bank's Listing of Ineligible Firms and Individuals and lists of sanctioned/suspended vendors maintained by UN organizations.
31	Who is (are) planned to be the future (s) or(s)/ buyer(s) in a future tender from UNICEF (UNICEF itself, local Governments, …)?				Please refer to question 16.
32	In case a school is located in an area without Internet access, does the RFI consider the capacity of covering the whole area, school included , or the school only?				This RFI is for connecting schools only. However, suppliers are encouraged to propose innovative business models that ensure sustainability and lower the cost of the school's connection.
33	Can we use a combination of VSAT (GEO or MEO or LEO) and WiMax depending on the exact location of each school?				Yes. Suppliers are invited to describe multiple solutions that adapt to different types of school locations. These solutions can use a single technology or a mix of technologies.
34	Is it mandatory to have centralized AAA system or we can provide an alternative solution?				No requirement is mandatory at this RFI stage. Suppliers are invited to suggest alternative solutions and explain their approach.

35	Will this project be awarded to an individual supplier, or will it be broken down to a country-by-country basis with given suppliers in each one?	Awarding conditions will be defined at the RFP stage. However, given the number of countries involved in this program, having multiple suppliers is a more likely scenario. In accordance with this RFI instructions and purposes, the contracting parties in case of award will be defined during the RFP process.
36	Noted that there are 500,000 schools in sub–Saharan Africa that are lacking connectivity, what are your first-year targets for closing this gap?	UNICEF hasn't defined the first-year targets at this RFI stage.
37	There are around 49 countries listed under capabilities by country tab inside the spreadsheet. How many schools in each country?	UNICEF doesn't have consolidated estimates of the number of schools to be connected by country at this RFI stage.
38	Can we have school's layout, if possible, to determine how we can distribute the AP and local network design	This information is not available at this RFI stage. Please keep in mind that UNICEF is not asking for detailed quotes for this RFI.
39	Can we have the exact location of school? That will help us to provide the correct solution based on location	This information is not available at this RFI stage. Keep in mind that UNICEF is not asking for detailed quotes. If necessary to present their solutions, suppliers are invited to make assumptions and document them as part of their submission.