

February 28, 2017

Responses to request for clarification during the Pre-bid Meeting

Subject: Invitation to Bid for the Rehabilitation and Construction of Gravel Roads in northern Afghanistan under Rural Access Improvement Project (RAIP-IV)

Case reference: Minor Work ITB: Sida-RAIP-IV-NTH-BAL-003-C2-001
Minor Work ITB: Sida-RAIP-IV-NTH-JWN-004-C2-001
Minor Work ITB: Sida-RAIP-IV-NTH-JWN-004-C2-002
Minor Work ITB: Sida-RAIP-IV-NTH-SMN-001-C2-002
Minor Work ITB: Sida-RAIP-IV-NTH-SRL-002-C2-001
Minor Work ITB: Sida-RAIP-IV-NTH-SMN-001-C2-001
Short Form ITB: Sida-RAIP-IV-NTH-BAL-003-C2-002
Short Form ITB: Sida-RAIP-IV-NTH-SRL-002-C2-002

The pre-bid meeting for the above referenced Invitation to Bid was held in UNOPS Kabul, Afghanistan office (Chawk Conference room) on February 28, 2017 between 10:30am to 12:00pm, Kabul local time.

UNOPS was represented by:

1. Mr. Mahbobulhaq Faizi, Procurement Officer, UNOPS RAIP-IV Project;
2. Mr. Mehrabudin Khalidy, Procurement Associate, UNOPS TSP; and
3. Mr. Noorullah HAKIMY, Sr. Engineer, UNOPS RAIP-IV Project;

The pre-bid meeting was attended by the representatives of 16 (Sixteen) companies. The following subjects were comprehensively covered during the pre-bid meeting:

1. Overview of the ITBs document, contents, attachments and reference documents;
2. Eligibility and qualification criteria;
3. Evaluation methodology and all criteria;
4. How to submit the proposal, when and where to submit the proposal, and;
5. Requirement of each Returnable Forms was thoroughly explained including the explanation of consequences of not submitting any of the Returnable Form and or submitting wrongly filled or incomplete documentation.

During the meeting, the below questions were asked and responded during the pre-bid conference.

Q1: UNOPS requests Bid validity for 90 days, whilst the Bid Security is requested for 120 days which is 30 days more than the Bid validity period. Can we get bid security 90 days for only for minor works contracts/ITBs?

A1: No. UNOPS internal policies and agreements did not allow us to decrease the Bid Security period. This is a risk mitigation procedure and in case there is an unforeseen delay of more than 90 days for Bid Evaluation, UNOPS reserves the right to maintain the Bid Security for at least 30 days more than the bidder's bid. This is a form of risk mitigation in case the bidder withdraws its bid or not willing to fulfill its contractual obligations.

Q2: Banks are usually insisting to issue Bid Securities on their own formats. Is this acceptable to UNOPS?

A2: No. All UNOPS Bid Securities, Performance Securities must be issued on UNOPS templates. This is stipulated and further enforced by International Chamber of Commerce and international accepted under UNICITRAL Rules and Regulations.

Q3: Under all 8 (Eight) Inter-related ITBs, it I mentioned that UNOPS will only award up to 3 Contracts under RAIP-IV project during 2017. Can the companies bid for other UNOPS projects during 2017?

A3: If companies bid for all 8 ITBs, they will only be awarded for maximum 3 Lots. The winning bidders can submit their bids to other UNOPS projects but not to RAIP-IV, if they already won 3 lots.

Q4: Can we submit one bid security for all eight ITBs? If yes, we will mention each project number on our Bid Security and the amount will cover all 8 ITBs? Will this be acceptable to UNOPS?

A4: No. It is not acceptable. Since all 8 (Eight) cases will be evaluated separately, therefore for each case a separate Original Bid Security is required.

Q5: We have constructed vertical structure like Military Training Camps. Part of our Contract, there was Gravel Roads inside the same compound. Will it be considered as similar experience?

A5: Our technical evaluation committee will assess and see the nature of your executed contract and the volume and scope of the constructed road. If it meets the requirement of our similar requested project, then it will be considered. If it did not meet the minimum requirement of our similar experience, then it will not be considered as similar project.

Q6: In case of a JV, can one company submit the bid security and other company meets the other requirements like similar experience, liquid asset etc.?

A6: Yes. It is acceptable and the main purpose of a JV Bid is to reinforce the Contract and the strong company should support the weak company in order to make a combination of a stronger workforce to implement complex projects successfully. One company must be lead partner and the other as secondary partner.

Q7: Can asphalt roads be considered as similar project?

A7: Yes. We all understand that asphalt roads are more complicated than gravel roads, and of course it is acceptable.

Q8: Some material mentioned in BoQ like river gravel in Jawzjan and Samangan are not near to the project site. Can we use gravel stone from nearby mountains?

A8: Yes. As we all know, the mountain stones on nearby locations are more suitable and can be used. This is subject to our engineers approval before using the gravels from any source. It is also highly recommended to conduct a site inspection and make yourselves familiar with the site and come up with realistic bids meeting our requirement with current market prices.

Q9: Can we submit our Bid only for one ITB?

A9: Yes. It is open national/Regional Competitions and bidders are having freedom of choice to bid for one ITB or all ITBs.

Q10: We have previous experience with US Corps of Engineering. They were selecting and recommending laboratory companies to conduct the tests for our construction materials. Will UNOPS refer us to any laboratory which you have contract with or it is companies responsibilities?

A10: UNOPS doesn't have any Contract with Laboratories for testing of construction materials. It is sole responsibility of our Contractors to conduct the test on any laboratories they identify.

Q11: Will UNOPS has any percentage for financial evaluation to accept or reject bids i.e. +/- 30% or 20%?

A11: No. We have removed the +/-20% threshold in our financial evaluation. Any bidders whose bids envisage as lowest price substantially compliant will be the winner.

Q12: Who will be responsible for handling community problems and issue which cause delays in case of land acquisition or other social and community issues on project sites?

A12: UNOPS had already coordinated with government counterparts and our provincial clients i.e. department of public works, local community levels (Shuras) and rural people living close to project sites. If any issues arise during project implementation and we encounter any delays or work hindrance, we will instruct our contractors to continue work on other parts of the project until the issue resolves.

Q13: Who will be responsible for security of each project?

A13: Security is our Contractor's sole responsibility and this should have already been covered under your insurance policy coverage which is part of your Contract and it is already stipulated on each ITB.

Q14: How UNOPS will process our payments?

A14: Once the company reaches 5% of their works, they can submit their invoice to UNOPS office in Mazar-e-Sharif. Although, our Contractors can also submit their invoices on monthly basis. UNOPS site engineers will conduct inspection of the project site and upon verification and certification of the executed works, the invoice will be submitted to our Mazar office for payment process.

Q15: How long will it take to process our invoices?

A15: UNOPS standard payment terms are 30 days. However, once you have submitted your invoice, this will normally takes one or max two weeks to be transferred to your bank account.

At the end of the pre-bid meeting, all the prospective offerors were appreciated for their participation and they were further encouraged to read the entire ITB and were also encouraged to send their questions via e-mail to the procurement official of the case until March 07, 2017 in order to provide a comprehensive submission.

****The meeting was concluded at 12:00PM****