

February 15, 2012
RFP No. SCA52512R0006
Wireless Communication Services

U.S. Embassy
490 Sussex Drive
Ottawa, ON, K1N 1G8

Minutes from Pre-Proposal Conference of February 6, 2012

Attendees/prospective offerors:

Bob McDonald, Bell
Marco Dinardo, Telus
Ashton Sight, Telus
Michael St. Clair, US Embassy
Mirena Hine, US Embassy
Vince Lemesheff, US Embassy
Bill Bonnet, US Embassy
Jim Fieser, US Embassy
Amgad Milad, US Embassy

Introduction:

The Contracting Officer welcomed all attendees, introduced Contracting Officers, the members of the Technical Evaluation Panel, the Procurement Supervisor and Contracting Specialist.

The following questions were asked and addressed during conference:

1. Are all US Embassy users with one wireless service provider?
Answer: Most Embassy users are with one service provider and a very limited number of users employ alternative service providers.
2. Are the Embassy employees mandated to use one wireless service provider across Canada?
Answer: This is the intention and the vast majority of users are currently using one service provider. However, agencies with their own funding can choose whom to use. Price is the most important factor for everyone although coverage is sometimes a factor.
3. How important is the price? Is this the only determining factor or the quality of service is also important?
Answer: The contract will be awarded to the lowest priced technically acceptable offeror. The quality of services will be monitored and assessed based on the actual performance after the contract is awarded.
4. Is the amount of information limited to the amount of fields in the RFP or the prospective offerors can provide additional information?
Answer: The prospective offerors are welcome to include additional information; however, incomplete RFPs may be disqualified as technically unacceptable.
5. Wireless communication is a very dynamic industry and new technologies become available every year. The cost of services is declining while the quality is improving. Does the proposed

contract format allow for accepting new cost efficient technologies or it is locked to the scope of requirements currently included in RFP?

Answer: After contract award, pursuant to FAR clause 52.212-4, "Contract Terms and Conditions –Commercial Items, paragraph (c), Changes," the Government may request changes within the scope of the contract. These changes may be required to improve performance, or react to changes in technology.

6. Does the Government re-evaluate the cost of hardware and services throughout the term of the contract?

Yes. The Government is currently monitoring usage and costs using an online billing portal and performs market research and comparison(s) prior to exercising each option year of the contract. For the entire duration of the contract, the Contractor is expected to offer U.S. Mission Canada the option to take advantage of any promotional programs that it offers other customers and that are suited for USG use.

7. Can the performance work statement or technical requirements change during the term of the contract?

Answer: Yes. Paragraph 8 "Technological Refreshment" on page 20 of the RFP outlines when such changes may be required to improve performance or services under the contract or react to changes in technology.

As an example, a new requirement for the ability to host the Citrix application on wireless devices may become a mandatory feature, while using Blackberry devices hosted on USG servers may be phased out. The need is foreseen to become more "data centric" using various types of connectivity. The necessity for a transition from Blackberry devices to 'Smart' wireless devices is becoming more obvious, although this is not outlined as a requirement under the current RFP.

8. In the event that the contract is awarded to a new service provider, do you require having all devices ported to the new service provider?

Answer: The wireless devices currently used by the Government shall be either ported to the new service provider or replaced with new Department of State-approved devices at no additional cost to the Government.

9. What is going to happen to the wireless hardware electronically locked to a particular service provider in the event that the contract is awarded to an alternative contractor?

Answer: Locked wireless devices will need to be replaced with new approved devices.

10. Is the Government required to use any particular wireless communication standard (GSM, CDMA, LGE, 3G, 4G, etc.)?

Answer: No, the Government is not required to use any particular wireless communication standard. New devices shall be SIM-based and retroactively compatible with previous communication standards. Currently new data devices must communicate with the Blackberry Enterprise Server.

11. What are the steps that the Government will take when a wireless device goes down?

Answer: The appropriate USG IT department will conduct diagnostics, make an attempt to repair or recommend replacing defective device. If a device has been activated on the Department of State network it must be destroyed by the Government regardless of reasons.

12. What type and level of technical support is required for BES licenses?

Answer: The Embassy IT personnel require direct access to BES support engineers at no additional cost to the Government. BES technical support available 24/7 and free of charge is a normal industry practice.

13. How often is the BES support required?

Answer: Not often.

14. Is 24/7 technical support required?
Answer: No, only to a reasonable extent, for example during regular working hours.
15. Does the Government anticipate increasing number of users on the account?
Answer: The number of users may increase, but no increase is guaranteed under this contract.
16. What types of online ordering and billing portal functionalities are required?
Answer: The key functionalities shall include departmental billing structure, raw data reports in Excel format, and two types of access: Administrator and Read-only access.
17. Does the Government consider using Pay-As-You-Go wireless service?
Answer: No.
18. Would the Government consider accepting some complementary additional services included into the price of standard services?
Answer: The Government welcomes cost saving options and solutions.
19. How many users travel to the United States and how often?
Answer: Not many. The number of travelers increases during weekends and is relatively low during the work week.
20. Shall the end users be able to modify the level of their services?
Answer: No. Only a procurement professional can modify the level of services if pricing is involved.
21. Shall the Contracting Officer Representative have access to all information about all wireless users or do some limitations need to be enforced?
Answer: The Contracting Officer Representative(s) shall have complete access to all users and all US Embassy accounts.
22. How long shall the invoices remain available on the online portal?
Answer: The invoices shall be retroactively available for the period of 24 months or for the period of hardware term commitment (if any). New Contracting Officer Representatives shall have retroactive access to all invoices under all US Embassy accounts.
23. Who shall have the authority to place orders or modify level of services?
Answer: Only properly designated procurement professionals operating under delegated authority from a warranted Contracting Officer may place orders or make modifications to US Mission Canada accounts.
24. How many Telus users exist in US Mission Canada?
Answer: Only a few users on the West coast.
25. Question to offerors: Can the Government keep limited number of pre-configured spare data devices on board with active SIM cards and services being suspended without being charged a full monthly cost?
Answer: Possibly yes.
26. Can additional questions be submitted after the RFP Submission deadline?
Answer: Yes. Additional questions can be submitted in writing by e-mail to Michael St Clair, Mirena Hine and Vincent Lemesheff. It is recommended to submit questions 7 days prior to RFP submission deadline due to internal approval process involved in preparation of answers.

The following questions were submitted in writing after the pre-proposal conference:

27. Would the Government accept a proposal that is in a different format than requested in the RFP, the rate plan will cover everything you are requesting in the proposal, however the billing model differs from what you are requesting.
Answer: Incomplete offers will be disqualified as technically unacceptable. The contractor may submit additional information in the form of an addendum to their proposal and in a format

which may be different from what is requested in the RFP, however, it is the responsibility of the offeror to address all questions in the RFP for fair comparison of offers received from various sources.

28. Can you confirm if this contract is only guaranteed for 1 year? The standard contract is 3 years if you are requesting termination fees for an existing provider as well as free hardware. Is the contract length negotiable?

Answer: The Government's obligation for performance of this contract beyond September 30th of each calendar year is contingent upon the availability of funds appropriated by the US Congress. The contract will be for a one-year period from the date of the contract award, with two (2) one-year options to renew. The hardware term commitment is a significant cost saving solution for the Government. The Contracting Officer may make such commitments when the termination charges are defined and budgeted for in advance.

29. Can you provide us with the average amount of minutes and data that each device currently uses?

Answer: The average amount of minutes ranges from 200 to 250 minutes. The Embassy is not incurring additional charges for voice communication due to the voice minutes pooling amongst all users across Canada.

30. Is there a fresh list of Devices that are approved by the US Department of State? Some of these devices are carrier specific only to US carriers.

Answer: The list of devices provided on page 15 of the RFP is the complete list of devices approved by the Department of State to date.

31. Has there been any site analysis performed for all the US offices outlined in this RFP? (HSPA, LTE, 4G, 3G,GSM)

Answer: All current users are on the GSM 3G network. The Government is not restricted from using alternative networks as long as devices and features are retroactively compatible.

32. Equipment Return/Defective Policy: Please clarify this clause as to when/how the device will be destroyed.

Answer: Defective data devices configured and activated on the Department of State network will not be returned to the service provider or manufacturer.

33. On page 16, the RFP states, "Prospective Contractor shall absorb all cancellation fees associated with hardware commitments in the event that the U.S. Government shall port currently used numbers to an alternative network or service provider." Is this a requirement to absorb the termination penalties from your current carrier, or a requirement that the new contract include no penalties for early termination?

Answer: The requirement under current RFP is to absorb termination penalties from the current carrier.

Conclusion

The conference concluded and attendees were thanked for their presence and expression of interest in providing services to the U.S. Government. The meeting was adjourned.

Sincerely,

//signed//

Michael St Clair
Contracting Officer
U.S. Embassy, Ottawa