

U.S. Embassy Cairo
Solicitation SEG30015Q0009
Pre-Bid Questions & Answers

Question 1: Do you need dedicated (Egypt Telecom) fiber cabinets?

Answer: **Yes; ISP must use the Fiber Cabinet provided by Egypt Telecom.**

Q2: Do you need a direct wireless connection from the embassy to the Central Office?

A: Max of 2 Hubs to the Central Office (CO).

Q3: What if we need a site survey prior to bidding?

A: A site survey can be arranged to all parties in one day (per site). We are currently planning the site visit(s) for the week of July 5; please email CairoContracts@state.gov to sign up.

Q4: Will you accept pre-wimax?

A: No.

Q5: The rumor is that fiber will be available in Garden City in September. What should we bid?

A: We're assuming that Telecom Egypt will complete the installation on time; they are waiting on the cabinets.

Q6: Who owns the fiber?

A: Telecom Egypt

Q7: How do we get the fiber?

A: That is between the ISP and Telecom Egypt.

Q8: What if microwave isn't available?

A: For the connections to the embassy, microwave would be the only alternative. Each site is listed with its possible connection types within the solicitation.

Q9: Does the embassy provide the connection from the cabinet to the embassy?

A: Yes.

Q10: What about local loops?

A: You can use local loops as backup, but only until the fiber is available.

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Q11: Will this be a phased or simultaneous activation?

A: Startup could be phased across the various sites in the contract, but the transition would need to be completed in less than two months.

Q12: Could both the main and the backup connection be microwave?

A: Yes.

Q13: What do the 99.97% and 100% references in the quality of service (QoS) sections refer to?

A: The Internet Service Provider (ISP) must provide excellent Service Level Agreement (SLA) for the connection. The connection must have the highest possible Quality of Service (QOS) or precedence to ensure the actual bandwidth is at minimum 99.97% of purchased bandwidth and the Service uptime must be at minimum of 99.97% per year. In the event of an outage on either the main connection or the backup, the alternate path must come online to ensure almost no downtime.

Q14: How should the switch between the main and backup connections be configured?

A: The change should happen automatically in the event of a failure or outage; provide two links and a router.

Q15: Is hot standby router protocol (HSRP) okay?

A: Yes.

Q16: Do you want to know the DIN path?

A: Yes; all possible routes, including gateways.

Q17: You state that hardware cannot be Russian or Chinese. Do you care whether upstream providers are Chinese or Russian?

A: We are looking for the most direct path from Cairo to the U.S.; the most direct path is not through Russia or China and thus won't be accepted.

Q18: How should the connection between sites work?

A: Microwave should be from the remote site to the CO to the embassy; it does not need to be direct.

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Q20: Can the connections share physical devices?

A: No.

Q21: For VPN, should we expect microwave and fiber?

A: They are separate; the connections are point-to-point.

Q22: Are there access limitations for the embassy and other sites?

A: Yes. The backup connection should ensure service in an outage despite any delay in getting support personnel on-site. We have technical staff who can do work on the compound, and we can and will schedule regular maintenance visits with the provider. Provider personnel must receive embassy security clearance before working on embassy property.

Q23: Is availability measured to the Ethernet or the serial port?

A: To the Ethernet.

Q24: Service may suffer if we cannot access our on-site equipment.

A: See the answer to Q22.

Q25. Can the main and backup connections terminate at the same PAS?

A: Yes, but we recommend against that. Also keep in mind that the closest CO is often unavailable during demonstrations. If it happens that both Main and Backup connections terminate at the same PAS, it cannot be at the Bab El Louk CO.

Q26: Are the base and option year terms the same?

A: The contract terms are the same; bidders are able to provide specific bid information (pricing) for each year.

Q27: Do we have to specify pricing for the option years now?

A: Yes.

Q28: What do you want to see relating to internet route paths? Only the U.S. to Europe and then upstream providers?

A: You need to show us the most direct path.

Q29: Submission date is 18th June, what's the award date?

A: The submission date has been postponed until July 26, 2015 at 14:00 local time. The award date will depend on the negotiation process with the bidders.

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Q30: Is there will be Round 2 for the best and final offers or only one round?

A: We could have a second round if we decide it is necessary, but we can also award based on the first bids.

Q31: VPN through internet: does it mean just providing internet and you will have your own VPN, or do you want us to provide VPN and Internet?

A: Yes, just the Internet

Q32: In US Embassy premises in Garden City, you need 3 Internet services:

- VPN Through Internet (30Mbps)
- Dedicated Internet (16Mbps)
- Dedicated Internet (6Mbps)

Do you need each service in a separate Microwave (3 Microwaves) or to have two microwaves (main and backup)?

A: We require three different microwaves

Q33: Do you want the Media to be: main as Microwave and backup is local loop/fiber (upon availability) or having Microwave as main and backup will be acceptable?

A: Two Microwave connections would be accepted, but it is preferable to have one Microwave and one local/fiber (upon availability). Either Microwave or fiber can be primary; the copper local loop must be secondary if provided.

Q34: Microwave would require a site survey; will you share with us the schedule for it one week before it and give us a minimum of 2-3 weeks to arrange the offer? Can the submission date be changed accordingly?

A: A site survey can be scheduled for each site; we will inform ISPs a week before. We are currently planning the site visit for the week of July 5, 2015.

Q35: Currently Telecom Egypt is giving license of the new fiber to only one provider, so the backup of local loops to be changed to fiber will only be suitable for one provider. How will you consider this in evaluation if it's not a fair playing field?

A: NTRA allowed fiber usage for most ISPs, not just one vendor.

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Q36: Lead time is mentioned as 60 days from the award letter; is it calendar days or working days? What if implementation takes more time due to sites' termination at Telecom Egypt?

A: The lead time should 60 working days.

Q36: Will you provide us with the tax exemption letter?

A: Yes, one time only, and all tax should be exempted.

Q37: Will payment be through the U.S. Embassy for all links or each entity will pay for its link? Are they all tax exempted?

A: All payments will be from the U.S. Embassy.

Q38: In Section 2: Contract clauses: we haven't had enough time for our legal department to review it. If we have any further questions or concerns, how will you consider it?

A: We extended the due date for receiving offers until July 26, 2015 and will accept another round of questions after the site survey.

Q38: Normally we have our own contract template, but you have your own terms and regulations. Will you share with us a draft template to review to save time?

A: The contract is Sections 1 & 2 from this solicitation.

Q39: Registration at SAM: We are a global company; do you accept the registration of the Group, or do you want a new registration for Vodafone Egypt?

A: Bidders must present proof of corporate registration in Egypt.

Q40: Do we need to provide documentation related to Microwave use?

A: Bidders should provide written proof that the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (NTRA) has authorized them to provide/offer/sell Microwave services/capability.

Q41: What is the phone number for each location?

A: The phone numbers are as follows:

- Embassy: 2796-0685
- ESSA: 2521-8436 , 2516-2568
- USAID: 2521-8436

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Q42: The coordinates in the solicitation do not reflect the addresses corresponding to them. Please review and advise.

A: The coordinates provided are accurate; they are:

Embassy in Garden City

- Longitude: 31 14 1.2
- Latitude: 30 02 27.6

ESSA warehouse – Zahraa El Maadi

- Longitude: 31 19 06.1
- Latitude: 29 57 37.5

USAID in Maadi

- Longitude: 31 17 09.8
- Latitude: 29 58 18.4