

**Embassy of the United States of America
Pretoria, South Africa**

**Solicitation for Mobile Telephone Services to U.S. Embassy, Pretoria, South Africa as well as the U.S.
Consulates in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town**

Pre-Proposal Conference

**Wednesday, 27 June, 2012
09:00 - 11:00 HRS**

U.S. Embassy
Multipurpose Room
877 Pretorius St.
Arcadia, Pretoria 0001

MINUTES

ATTENDANCE

USG Employees Present:

Embassy: IT department: Manuel Dipre; Ntshembo Ngobeni; Mark Myelle
Embassy: Centers for Disease Control: Bryan O’Bra; Embassy
Procurement: Lezanda Prinsloo; Jenny Kriek; Ethel Mwanaumo; Ravi Srivastava

All attendees are as per scanned and attached .pdf register

Started the conference at 09:15

OPENING

Mr. Srivastava declared the meeting open and handed out (i) the agenda and (ii) the sign-in sheet to all attendees (both documents are attached in .pdf format).

All participants introduced themselves.

AGENDA

- I. Mr. Srivastava reviewed the entire solicitation, section by section, from page 1 through page 44. Much emphasis was placed on ensuring that potential offerors submit complete packages, with appropriate representations and certifications, technical and price proposal, signatures and such. Many questions were flagged during this portion of the meeting
- II. Manuel, Mark and Bryan covered all technical questions for IRM requirements. Much emphasis was placed on open and continuous communication between Embassy and the successful offeror at all times. That a 24 hours 7 day a week support from the successful offeror is critical and must be clearly addressed/stated in the proposals. The Embassy is a Regional Support post and therefore coverage throughout all of Africa is a very high priority. Training on the actual hardware will be required.

III. Proposal Evaluation:

Mr. Srivastava stated that the evaluation would first be on the technical merits of the proposal, and for those that were technically acceptable; the proposals would be evaluated on pricing. The process is to identify the lowest priced technically acceptable proposal that meets the Embassy's other criteria as well.

IV. Submittal details:

On numerous occasions Mr. Srivastava reiterated the need for potential offerors to complete all the relevant sections of the proposal, to sign it and submit it in a timely manner.

(2) Two hard copies hand delivered to the guard booth at 877 Pretorius Street, Arcadia before 4pm on Friday 27 July 2012.

QUESTIONS

1. Where is the BlackBerry Server that will be used? **Answer:** The U.S. Embassy owns the server that will be used. The network connection is very restrictive and not all services will be activated (such as the social networking WhatsApp and BBM etc.)
2. Does the U.S. Embassy currently have a particular application to help administer the program? **Answer:** No, currently there is no such application in use. The U.S. Embassy is working on getting something in place. As part of this solicitation the U.S. Embassy requires the service provider to provide such a portal. The U.S. Embassy requires direct activation or re-activation of SIM cards. Also require prompt notification about a SIM card that is taken out of the handset and replaced with another SIM card; or if a SIM card was cloned.
3. Will the Embassy provide a comprehensive list of all authorized persons to be point of contact? **Answer:** Yes. The Embassy will identify specific individuals with associated roles and authorities associated with this contract.
4. Does the Embassy prefer to receive SIM cards that are already pre-activated or SIM cards that need to be activated individually after the Embassy calls in? **Answer:** We require a set of SIMs delivered all at once and only to be activated when the Embassy calls each one in. Note that the vendor will be responsible to put all phones/SIM cards through the RICA process on behalf of the Embassy.
5. Should the vendor provide a portal, then will the Embassy have a dedicated administrator appointed to administer that usage, or does the service provider still do it on behalf of the Embassy? **Answer:** Yes, the Embassy will appoint an administrator to use the portal.
6. Regarding the subscription packages identified on page 4, what types of packages should be quoted on? Is there a specific package type that the Embassy has in mind?

Answer: The Embassy has identified a variety of packages that it will offer to its internal customers. An amendment has been made to the solicitation which incorporates these package requirements. Amendment One is attached and also made available to the public.

7. This contract is for 2012-2013, with an option for another year 2013-2014. Standard cell phone contracts in South Africa are awarded for a 24-month period to amortize the costs of the devices. Should we submit proposals for a 12 month amortization period?

Answer: The Embassy will fund its contract on a year-by-year basis and has the choice but not the obligation to exercise the 2nd year of the contract. The amortization issue is for the vendor to sort out as part of their proposal.

8. Are there additional requirements from the Embassy side for short term rentals?

Answer: Yes, that will be requested and administered separately on individual purchase orders and not as part of this contract.

9. The service provider's commercial agreement has legal terms and conditions, all based on a 24-month contract. If the Embassy contract is for 12 month, will the service provider's terms and conditions be taken into consideration? Would it be advisable for the service provider to propose both options...12 month and 24 month pricing?

Answer: There will be only one legal agreement between the service provider and the Embassy and that will be this contract. The service provider's commercial agreement contains a number of provisions, for example provisions regarding the jurisdiction of South African courts and the applicability of the South African laws, which provisions cannot be accepted by the U.S. Government contract. [see also Q7]

10. About the Billing, should the visibility be only for the Embassy or at the Consulates as well? **Answer:** The Embassy has only one Dedicated Billing Office (DBO) here in Pretoria and all payments will be processed through the Embassy only. Billing and invoices must be provided on CD (two copies of CDs). The solicitation amendment reflects the change from 1 CD to 2 CDs. Amendment One is attached and also made available to the public.

11. Does the Embassy require split billing? **Answer:** Yes we will provide a list of split account names that should be identified separately and also billed separately.

12. Will e-mail authorization be accepted? **Answer:** Yes, the Embassy will provide a list of people who are authorized to correspond and instruct the service provider. Authorizations are to be on letterhead, signed by authorized personnel. Also open and

clear communications are very important. The Embassy must be given adequate and timely notice prior to any service termination or any expected service interruptions.

13. What are your requirements for data services (as listed per page 8 of the solicitation package)? In the terms of reference we are only reading voice: are we required to provide data on device or data on speed stick (modem)? **Answer:** Data services are required for blackberry (or equivalent) devices. No modems are being requested under this contract; separate purchase orders will be issued for such devices and services.
14. Will you inform the losing offerors? **Answer:** Yes, an official letter will be mailed to all unsuccessful offerors.
15. Do you require a short list of companies to come do a presentation? **Answer:** No we do not. It is imperative that the proposals be comprehensive and contains all of the information that the offeror wishes for the Embassy to consider. There will be post-award meetings with the successful offeror.
16. We understand that September 2012 is the target date for the contract. Will there be an immediate rollout of all 2,000 devices or will it be spread out over the period of the contract? **Answer:** It is important to understand that this is an indefinite delivery indefinite quantity (IDIQ) type of contract. Under the contract terms, the Embassy is required to purchase a minimum of 10 such subscriptions per 12 month contract period. As the Embassy's internal customers identify mobile device and service needs, subscriptions and other services will be requested through task orders against this contract. Also noteworthy is that there is currently a contract in place for 550 subscriptions (already maxed out) that is in its first year 2011-2012, with the 2nd year being from 2012-2013. As that contract progresses, the Embassy anticipates that those devices could be rolled over into this proposed contract. The 2,000 subscriptions is a maximum---a ceiling---for the contract over its life of 12 months for a base year plus 12 months for option year 1.
17. If the contract is for 12 months and for example if devices are activated in the 6th month, then will they be active for 24 months after activation, as our commercial terms and conditions require? **Answer:** No. The Embassy contract is for 12 months, with the option for another 12 months. The Embassy may activate subscriptions at any time during the contract period but, unlike the off-the-shelf packages in South Africa, the Embassy is not required under the contract to extend that subscription for a 24-month period from the date the subscription was activated. When the contract ends, that is when all subscriptions also terminate.

18. Should the contract not include a provision for early termination? The commercial contract for cell phones in South Africa does have early termination clauses and penalties. **Answer:** The Embassy's contract terms (see Q 17 above) will prevail. There are no such early termination penalties or constraints in this contract. The offeror should take the contract terms into consideration as it prepares its proposal.
19. Will the Embassy require possible porting of current cell phone numbers that are in use already? **Answer:** Yes, this is very important! It is stated in the solicitation as well.

CLOSURE

Mr. Srivastava reiterated the need for complete packages that are timely submitted. The meeting was closed at 10:40 with no more matters to be discussed.