

## **Minutes of the Pre-Proposal Conference**

**Abril 19, 2016**

**At the U.S. Embassy Lisbon, Portugal**

The meeting was called to order at 10:30 am. The Contracting Officer, Shelly Kadlec, welcomed all attendees and introduced Embassy staff participating in this meeting: William Nguyen, Information Management Officer (IMO), Julio Castro, Information Program Officer, Sérgio Caneca, Telecommunications Specialist, Adelia Monteiro, Procurement Supervisor (PS), José Gregorio, Procurement Assistant and Note taker and José Freitas (Procurement Clerk).

The following prospective offerors attended the meeting:

- Noémia Antunes, Nuno Santos, Luís Pinto (PT Negócios)
- Milena Simões, Rui Martins (Vodafone)
- Nuno Sousa, João Almeida (NOS)

The Contracting Officer (CO) explained briefly the conference parameters and that all complex questions would have to be submitted in writing and would be answered subsequently. She also indicated that any changes to the solicitation would be done in the form of written amendments and will be sent to the prospective offerors and must be acknowledged in writing.

The CO informed all present that all the information regarding this solicitation will be available to all equally. It was also indicated that the solicitation and the whole contracting process is in accordance with United States Government regulations, i.e. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), Department of State Acquisition Regulations (DOSAR) and the Office of the Procurement Executive.

All the questions and the Embassy's official answers will be on a separate document entitled "Questions and Answers" will be posted on the Embassy's website.

CO indicated that on the SF-1449 (cover page of the solicitation) blocks 17, 24 and 30a. and 30.b would have to be filled out by offeror. Information required on Block 19-24 will be provided in Section 1 – The Schedule – III. Pricing.

The CO referred to Section I of the Solicitation and emphasized that the current solicitation is for one-year contract, being the base period of performance, plus one option year.

Sérgio Caneca, Telecommunications Specialist and Contracting Officer Representative (COR) began his intervention by reviewing the Statement of Work (SOW) in detail and pointed out the following:

“The essence of this solicitation is for virtual private network and mobile phone services, the Embassy uses 30 lines for official purposes.

The contractor shall provide fix and mobile services with virtual private network (VPN) for the U.S. Embassy in Lisbon Portugal.

Services provided shall include interface equipment with operator and Embassy telephone switch. And E1 cannot be exit in the current Portugal Telecom cable line as it is an alternate route. We require a solution that it is not installed on the existing cable.

We require a VPN created within our cell phone network. We require mobile phone equipment to be able to make phone calls within Portugal and internationally with roaming capabilities, SMS messaging, voicemail, rental cell phones, rented with or without *sim* cards.

We also require a 24/7 customer service, electronic paperless invoice; data Blackberry and iPhone 6 and iPad data services and 4G internet broadband services. The contractor must ensure that the quality of the connections is the best technically possible, uninterrupted, clear and without statics. Network problems should be remediated immediately and the COR must be notified accordingly...equipment basic package shall include a mobile phone, lithium battery, recharger, safety and certificate brochure”.

The contracting Officer (CO) continued the meeting by referring to Section 2- Contract Clauses (Federal Acquisition Regulation FAR and Department of State Acquisition Regulation DOSAR) and how they are mandatory on the Federal Government contracting solicitations, such as the present one. Some Cclauses are inserted by reference and other are in full on the solicitation. The clauses may be found online, at the Office of the Procurement Executive web page for additional information.

<http://a.m.state.sbu/sites/OPE/default.aspx>

CO referred to Section 3 – Solicitation Provisions which refers to the documents that need to be provided with the proposal. Failure to submitt these documents may result in disqualification. In the event of a minor documentation being omitted in your proposal we may contact you to request you to present those documents. CO stated that the contractor should review the checklist, before submission.

CO referred to Section 4 – Evaluation factors. This section is related to those factors that will be addressed by a Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP). Aspects such as the technicality and acceptability of your proposals will be taken in consideration by the TEP. TEP members are not aware of the pricing part of the quotation; they evaluate the proposals from the technical point of view only. Award will be made based on technically accepted lowest priced quotations.

Quotations are due for submission on May 9, 2016 on or before 4pm. No late submissions will be accepted. we will then alter the submission due date in case of unforeseen circumstances.

CO mentioned that statements made at the pre-proposal conference do not change the solicitation, as stated earlier in the meeting, everything has to be done in writing, if there are any additional questions please make sure that they are put in writing and submitted by May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2016, the answers will also be in writing and will be posted on the Embassy website.

Payment clause – please note that once we sign the contract, we cannot deviate, the CO stated. As part of the necessary documentation, you will be required to submit proof of insurance. Any of your employees coming in to work at the Embassy, for any given reason, will be subjected to preliminary security scrutiny at the entrances. The winning contractor will be responsible for all security measures for their staff and for the provision safety equipment whenever necessary.

The CO focused the importance placed by Department of State on issues related to Combating Human Traffic (FAR 52.222-50).

The Procurement Supervisor (PS) addressed the meeting by calling everyone's attention to Section 3, regarding the importance of registering in the SAM ([www.sam.gov](http://www.sam.gov) System Award Management) registration which has become mandatory for all contractors engaging in business with the US Government for contracts above twenty five thousand US dollars.

The CO stated that the contract the duration of the contract is for consists of one base year and one option year. The short period of the contract is related to the fact that changes in communication technology happen very fast and "we intend to avoid being locked in" with a lengthy contract.

The COR made additional remarks to the meeting on pricing scheduled referred on page 4 of the solicitation. He referred that under the VPN the Embassy is expected an average of 200 cell phones on the network. Also on the solicitation, the packages of minutes are referred to as Alternate 1, Alternate 2 and Alternate 3, meaning that we require prices for 8000, 10,000 and 12,000 minutes, which will be shared between the total cell phones that we have on the network. Rates per minutes are required once the aforementioned packages are exceeded. Exceeding rates for those packages of minutes need to be indicated on the proposal. Regarding roaming option, the Embassy also require prices for all roaming options currently available in the market. Blackberry and iPhone services; on Alternate 1, Alternate 2 and Alternate 3 (packages), the quote should include 5Gb of data per month. Exceeding rates should also be mentioned on the proposal.

Question: Why do you differentiate the data packages for Blackberry and iPhone?

Answer: We differentiate those packages within the Embassy. Only certain phones may have email capability where others cannot, that is why we separate data for smartphones, even though it would be exactly the same, however, internally need to have them differentiated.

Question: Do you have a specific VPN for data server for Blackberry and iPhones?

Answer: We have servers and other solutions, also in other offices in Washington; basically what we require is data.

Question: Could you let us know which version of the Blackberry do you use?

Answer: We have various restrictions on smart phone models that are officially approved by the Department of State.

The COR referred to temporary additional services (page 6) usually utilized in VIP visits, *sim* cards for voice and data services (III.B).

The Embassy requests, a fixed price for monthly cell phone services that will include 100 mobile phones or equivalent credit allow for complete replacement of cellphones/smartphones . every two years (III.A (2)).

Question: Do have any restrictions on cell phone models?

Answer: For cell phones we are authorized to use various brands and specifications. Restrictions do not apply to all smartphones, only on equipment approved for use on *state.gov* emails on Blackberry and iPhones.

Question: Regarding the E1 the primary fixed line, is this your main entry point?

Answer: For redundancy fail over this E1 circuit has to be on a different path from the circuit that services our primary telecommunication lines, but we need to have always different route interface connections.

The CO, in her final remarks to the meeting attendees reminded everyone of the proposals due date (May 9, 2016 at 4pm.) and that any questions can be done in writing to [LisbonProcure@state.gov](mailto:LisbonProcure@state.gov) and will be answered in writing.

The CO thanked all present and their interest in serving the U.S. Government. The meeting was adjourned at 11.20am.