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THE DIGITAL MALAWI PROGRAM PHASE I: DIGITAL FOUNDATIONS PROJECT

CREDIT NUMBER: 60500MW

MINUTES OF PRE-BID MEETING FOR THE DESIGN, INSTALLATION AND COMMISSIONING OF A DATA CENTRE IN MALAWI

DATE OF THE MEETING: WEDNESDAY, 21ST OCTOBER 2020

VENUE: VIRTUAL THROUGH ZOOM PLATFORM

TIME: 10:00AM

PRESENT:

Name	Organization	Address
For the Client:		
Victor Funsani	The PPPC	Box 937, Blantyre
Chimwemwe Matemba	The PPPC	Box 937, Blantyre
Isaac Chimutu	The PPPC	Box 937, Blantyre
Prof. Jonas Amoapim	E-Government - Consultant	
Alice Gondwe	The PPPC	Box 937, Blantyre
For the Service Providers:		
Fred Weber		
Thameen	Netcon	
Kart M		

Sunilvarghese	
Yamikani Gogo Hauya	
Adelaida Piroi	
Alfred Kiteme	
Benert Machailwe	
Boikanyo	BCX
Chris	
David Pinto	
Enock Nkomba	
Frank	HUAWEI
Gayson Mwarire	
Gitonga John	
Godfrey	
Grobirij	
Hariharan	Netcon
Jay Naidoo	
Jerry Mahlangu	
Kamal Ranjee	
Karthikeyan Ravi	
Ken Rotich	
Lester Tandwe	ICT Networks
Limbikani	
Liushikana	
Miriam Nsonda	
Netcon Technologies	Uganda
Onorato Cordani	
Pempho Chapema	
Rex Wonga	Netcon Technologies Uganda
Sitiya Prabhu	
Sheilah Nabagala	
Sparc	
Steve Mwangi	
Thomas	HUAWEI
Titus Nnesa	ICT Malawi Limited
Zaine Bwanali	
Ziad Melhem	

Minute DC1/10/2020: Opening Remarks

The Chairperson welcomed the members to the Pre-Bid meeting. It was communicated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the bid document which was issued on 14th October 2020. Bidders were advised to fully participate and where necessary, ask for clarification. Bidders were advised to fully understand the assignment and prepare a bid that will respond to the requirements of the bid.

The Chairman requested the host to share the agenda. The agenda was shared on screen. He then invited for self-introductions

Minute DC2/10/2020: Self Introductions

Introductions were made as above.

Minute DC3/10/2020: Bidding Procedures

Bidders were informed of the need to focus on the major issues to focus on when preparing their bid. The need to adhere to procedures was emphasized. The bid document provided guidance on what to do and information to provide. Bidders were requested to raise any issue within the recommended time as stipulated in the bidding document. Bidders were then taken through the bidding document and the sections were summarized as follows:

a) Part 1: Bidding Procedures

The part comprised of six sections and bidders were advised to understand the sections. The sections were briefly analysed as follows:

1. **Section I: Instructions to Bidders**
The section instructs the bidders on the preparation of their bids. The section is more detailed, and bidders were advised to understand the instructions and follow them.
2. **Section II: Bid Data Sheet**
The section provides more information and clarifications on Section I. Bidders were advised to read Section II together with Section I
3. **Section III: Evaluation and Qualification Criteria**
The Section provides information on how they will be evaluated. Bidders were advised to understand the Section and provide necessary information that meet the requirements. Responsive bids will be accepted for further evaluation and comparison of prices

4. Section IV: Bidding Forms
Bidders were advised to complete the forms provided when preparing their bids.
 5. Section V: Eligible Countries
The Section provides eligible source countries. ITB 4.8 and ITB 5.1 provides more details
 6. Fraud and Corruption
Bidders were advised to take note of the section as any appearance of fraud and corruption will result in the disqualification of the bidder.
- b) Part II: Employers Requirements
Bidders were advised that the requirements of the proposed assignment were detailed in this Section. Bidders should prepare their bid in responding to the technical requirements presented in Part II.
- c) Part III: Conditions of the Contract and Contract Forms
Bidders were advised that this part provided General Conditions and Special Conditions of the Contract. The Special Conditions of the Contract should be read together with the General Conditions of the Contract. The Special Conditions will be finalized after identifying the successful bidder. Contract forms are also provided for the bidders' information.

Bidders were advised to focus on the dates indicated in the bidding document. It was also recommended that associations or joint ventures assist in enhancing the capacity of the bidder. Where necessary, bidders were advised to consider taking such an approach to enhance their capacities.

Minute DC4/10/2020: Technical Issues in the Bidding Document.

Bidders were reminded that the assignment require the designing, installation and commissioning of a Tier 3 Data Centre to be located in Lilongwe. The Secondary site shall be located in Blantyre. Bidders were advised that more information on the site in Blantyre shall be provided. The Data Centre shall also include a NOC for the team that will be managing the facility and the network. Most of the details regarding the Data Centre are provided in the bidding document.

It was also communicated that the document does not give any vendor specific. The requirements are generic so that it should not give any advantage to anybody. Bidders were then invited to ask questions.

Minute DC5/10/2020: Questions and Answers

Question 1

I understand that there is an existing building that needs to be redesigned to accommodate the Data Centre. Please confirm.

In terms of the specifications, from a Data Centre point of view, the industry has different tiers of a Data Centre that can be implemented and depending on the various tiers it will determine outputs of the design. The specifications that can clarify whether the Client is looking for Tier 1 or 2 or 3 and Data Centre that is earmarked for Disaster Recovery Centre in Blantyre

Secondly, I understand hyper converged infrastructure will form a shared platform for e-Government Services, so it needs to be multi-tenanted for a security point of view

Thirdly, if you can clarify the Network Operating Centre (NOC), the understanding is that there will be a team to be trained and standard operating procedures must be provided to the team and outside the NOC migration services is not very clear if it is included or excluded from the scope.

Response 1

As indicated in the Bidding Document, the Client is looking for a Tier 3 Data Centre.

The migration requirements are in the bidding document. A team will be trained to perform operational and maintenance activities including future migration. The contractor should prepare to perform initial data migration services.

Question 2

Is part of the project to upgrade the Disaster Recovery Site in Blantyre to Tier 3?

Response 2

Bidders were advised that the selection of the site in Blantyre has not been finalised. The expectation is that vendors are going to propose the necessary equipment and the environment will be provided by the Government or owners of the site.

Question 3

Does the Project include Disaster Recovery Site in Blantyre?

Response 3

The document clearly indicates that there is a Disaster Recovery Site and there are seven (7) nodes for the primary site and seven (7) nodes for the secondary site. This means that the DRS is almost the same as the primary site except that we don't expect bidders to quote for passive equipment at the DRS

Question 4

Bidders observed that to complete a building that was built by somebody else years ago is often better to break down and start again. From your plan, is it going to be brick and mortar or containerised?

Response 4

The building will be refurbished by a civil works contractor. The recruitment of the contractor is in progress. Major works are expected to be done so that the building conforms to the standards of Tier 3 Data Centre

Question 5

The understanding of the bidders is that the local team will be managing the infrastructure once it is deployed. Are the resources certified considering that everybody will have a different solution? What are the plans that when the training and standard operating procedures are provided, they are going to effectively manage the system?

Response 5

The bidding document provides for training of five trainer of trainers. Bidders will be required to draw a training plan to demonstrate how they will execute the training.

Question 6

Still on the building, the understanding is that the building will be fully fledged and that the service providers will only be required to install the equipment and do the migration and configurations, or the service provider will be required to consider all the activities required for the normal data centre such as UPS?

Response 6

As earlier communicated, the building will conform to the normal data centre, so provisions for fire proof walls and other requirements will be made available by the civil works contractor. Service Providers shall have an opportunity to provide some inputs so that it operates in the normal environment.

Bidders will be required to quote for passive equipment as well in accordance to Tier 3 specification e.g. power, cooling etc.

Question 7

Bidders wanted to know if the Contractor has already been appointed so that they can be working together with the contractor.

Response 7

Bidders were informed that the Contractor will be appointed soon. The civil works contractor and the service provider will be appointed almost concurrently.

Question 8

Bidders wanted to know if the drawings of the building are available. The second question, having looked at the environmental control measures (operating parameters, temperature and humidity) are very tight that they will require a lot of energy. Is there any possibility of modifying them to meet the standards of the Data Centre? They also wanted to know if the NOC is going to be in the same building.

Response 8

Bidders were informed that the drawings for the primary site are available and a link will be provided for bidders to access. At the moment they are in the PDF format. The room for the NOC is also included meaning that the NOC will be in the same building. As communicated earlier, the site for the DR in Blantyre has not been identified.

Question 9

A follow up on the building, is the building shielded from the background radiation?

Response 9

That was not considered but bidders were encouraged to make a recommendation when developing their bid. It was communicated that it is only a two-storey building as such, it may not be exposed to too much electromagnetic radiation.

Question 10

Bidders wanted to know if the fiber between the Primary and DRS is existing, or it will be the responsibility of the service provider to install?

Response 10

Bidders were advised that the fiber cable is already available, the service provider will only be required to terminate at the buildings.

Question 11

Bidders wanted to know if the specifications are targeting any specific vendor?

Response 11

Bidders were advised that the specifications are open and bidders were encouraged to recommend their own solution.

Question 12

Bidders noted that the specifications for the firewall (security) are not included. They wanted to know how such an issue should be treated considering that the firewall is generally described on page 112?

Response 12

It was indeed noted that the specifications for the firewall were not provided. Bidders were encouraged to propose a solution that can best fit their proposed solution.

Question 13

Page 121, line number 3.4, it asks for a software defined network. There are two ways this is perceived in the technology world. You have a software defined network which is setup or set up an infrastructure that will support the network at a later stage. Is the feature needed at day one or at a later stage with necessary licenses?

Response 13

Bidders were reminded that the features for software defined network are required when the data centre is read for acceptance / service

Question 14

Page 113, line number 1.4, it asks for a network operating centre (NOC), can it be specific?

Response 14

Bidders were informed that it depends on the network management system they will propose. The NOC System should provide a network management for HCI as well as extending FCAPS to SDN

Question 15

Bidders wanted to know if the solar power backup is for the battery system or the entire building?

Response 15

Bidders were informed that the solar power backup is for the battery system, lighting in the equipment and NOC room and not entire building.

Minute DC6/10/2020: Closing Remarks.

The Chairperson thanked the bidders for their active participation and advised them to seek clarification where necessary. Bidders were advised to compile all the outstanding questions and send for clarifications. All the questions which were deferred will be clarified and bidders were advised to send all the outstanding questions.

Bidders were advised to visit the PPPC Website as most of the communications shall be posted on the Website including the minutes of pre-bid meeting.



Chimwemwe D. Matemba
Chairperson



Isaac Chimutu
Secretary