

Questions and Answers USAID CSS RFP-2018-03
Facilitation of Export of Serbian Niche Products in Targeted International Markets

1. **Q:** In Paragraph 5.2. Eligible Offer you say Eligible Offerors include legally registered US and Serbian non-for-profit and for-profit organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Now I am/work for a German consulting firm. Can I/my firm apply anyway, and if I fulfill the requirements, may I/my firm be awarded an FSA, and respective Work Orders?

A: According to Paragraph 5.2. Eligible Offerors of RFP, only legally registered US and Serbian non-for-profit and for-profit organizations, and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are eligible entities that may apply to RFP and be awarded a contract.

2. **Q:** What is the way from FSA to actual jobs / work orders? Please specify shortly, WHAT needs to be done first, and which will be the subsequent steps until the first paid job will be issued, and which one that will actually be?

A: The purpose of RFP is to award one-year Framework Services Agreements (with the possibility of 1-year extension) to selected entities/successful offerors to support Cardno/the Project by delivering services specified in RFP Section: 1.3. Scope of Work/Technical Services to be provided. Successful offerors will be simultaneously awarded initial Work Order 1 to conduct activities/provide services specified in RFP Section 7: Work Order No.1. Please review the technical requirements outlined in sections 1.3.-1.5., and 7, to help you respond fully to RFP.

Offerors' proposals submitted in the form as outlined in RFP Section 5.5.: Requirement for the Proposal Format, will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria presented in Section 6: Evaluation Criteria and Award Process. Please review carefully the description of evaluation criteria to help you guide in the preparation and presentation of your bids.

Any subsequent Work Order with selected Framework Services Agreements (FSAs) holders will be initiated, decided on, and implemented at the later stage during the period of performance of FSAs.

3. **Q:** In which form do the competences of team members be proven? I.e. In form of a 1 page CV that lists relevant projects/jobs as per the RFP?

A: Please observe Section 1.5. Personnel Requirements: "The Offeror shall provide CVs of the proposed personnel and/or scope of work of their engagement, along with the recruiting plan" when preparing your proposal. Also, please refer to Section 5.5.2. Technical Proposal -Instructions for the preparation of the Technical Proposal.

4. **Q:** Can German consulting firms apply?

A: Please see Q&A 1.

5. **Q:** Did I understand correctly that a Consultant who is on the roster can subcontract work up to triple the value of his own work?

A: According to RFP (page 4): “The ceiling amount allocated to this multiple Framework Service Agreements (FSA) awards is \$ 500,000.00.” This ceiling is the maximum funding available to all Framework Service Agreements holders for the execution of all Work Orders issued to them within the validity period of their respective subcontracts. The maximum cumulative value of all Work Orders issued by Cardno/the Project to the individual Framework Service Agreement holder may not exceed \$150,000.00 within the period of performance of their respective subcontracts. Example: A company AB has been awarded a Framework Service Agreement subcontract for one-year. At the same time, they are tasked and subcontracted to provide services under the Work Order No.1, with the period of performance of one year and the total value of \$49,500.00. Within the period of validity of their Framework Service Agreement company AB may be tasked and awarded additional Work Orders (2, 3, 4), up to the total maximum value of \$150,000.00 cumulatively. All services performed under any awarded Work Order must be completed within the validity period of their Framework Agreement. Cardno/the Project shall initiate and decide on any and all Work Orders under Framework Service Agreements.

6. **Q:** If, for example, I (my organization) finds 10 Serbian companies that would like to go through the specific program I offered in this RFP, can they still hire me for certain tasks within the focus of the project, but that will not be covered by this project (such as actual translation/design work for packaging etc.)?

A: The successful Offerors will be required to sign Attachment 3A Declaration of Financial Stability and Conflict of Interest. We draw your attention to the section/line (6) where the Offerors warrants and confirms that they will “Not participate in business activities with firms that competes with or seeks business from Cardno and USAID Competitive Economy Project, or when it could adversely affect their ability to carry out their services and responsibilities in the subcontract.”

7. **Q:** We are a Serbian-owned consultancy, but also use our international network of experts for the benefit of our clients. For the purpose of this particular application and possible project execution: are we allowed to include international (in this case EU-based) consultants in our list of key personnel? If there are any limitations whatsoever (country of origin, expertise level etc.)?

A: According to the Authorized Geographic Code (937) Cardno/the Project and its low-tier contractors may engage US consultants, host country (Serbian) consultants, and EU-based consultants if needed only if the value of the subcontract does not exceed \$25,000. Otherwise, a waiver approval from USAID is required for engagement of non 937 country code source of origin and nationality. (937 geographic code is defined as the United States and the cooperating/recipient country -Serbia).

8. **Q:** Our company covers multiple markets within project’s geographical area of interest. How does this work – do we provide separate applications for each of the export markets? If not, how do we bid when we do not know which markets, we will be selected for?

A: Offerors are required to describe in technical proposals their overall capacities and capabilities to provide the full range of services required by this RFP (Section 1.3. Scope of Work) regardless of the fact where those experiences have been acquired. When responding to the Work Order No.1 (see Section 7.) Offerors may propose one or more markets to focus its activities on in response to RFP requirements, deriving from in-depth knowledge, experience or past track record working in those markets.

9. **Q:** Volume of our services and the financial part of the bid depends on the number of Serbian companies that will participate in various export support activities. How many Serbian manufacturers should we base our calculations on?

A: Offerors are entitled to propose the estimated number of companies and markets they plan to work with and base their costs on the pertaining activities. All costs must be broken down as per Attachment No. 3C- Cost Proposal Work Order No.1 . The upper threshold limit per Work Order No.1 is \$50,000.00

10. **Q:** Export market visits are likely to be part of the suggested methodology. How will participants' travel costs be covered? Should we add those to our bid?

A: Yes, the proposed budget must reflect all proposed activities relevant to the Work Order No.1, including travel costs.

11. **Q:** What is RFWOP and how it relates to this Request for Proposals?

A: RFWOP stands for Request for Work Order Proposal. Such requests may be issued to the subcontractors / Framework Service Agreement holders within the period of performance of Framework Service Agreement.

12. **Q:** What does the complete selection procedure consist of? There appears to be additional steps following this application, but we are uncertain how will this work in practice.?

A: Please see the Q&A 2

13. **Q:** Page 10: reads that the payment will be “within thirty (15) business days”. What are the payment terms?

A: Due to discrepancy of written and numerical number of days earmarked for payment, please observe the corrected version: “For all properly submitted and approved invoices, and upon acceptance by Cardno / the Project of the required deliverables, Cardno / the Project will pay the Contractor within fifteen (15) business days after receipt and approval of the Vendor’s contract deliverables and invoice.”

14. **Q:** It reads that the final invoice should be provided “no later than ninety (30) calendar days”. What is the deadline for the final invoice?

A: Due to discrepancy of written and numerical number of days earmarked for submission of final invoice, please observe the corrected version: “Contractor is required to submit its

final invoice, appropriately marked as such, under this subcontract no later than thirty (30) calendar days after completion of the subcontract, or any longer period as may be mutually agreed between the parties.”

15. Q: Should bids be sent by e-mail only, or both by e-mail and post?

A: Please see revised RFP Section 5.4. Submission/Delivery Instructions

The deadline for the submission of proposals is December 11, 2018 by 4 p.m. CET via email to konkursi@konkurentno.rs and in hard copy by post or hand delivered. Late proposals will not be considered. The email subject line item must contain the reference number of the RFP.

All Proposals in response to this RFP shall be prepared in two separate parts: The Technical Proposal shall address technical aspects related to the Scope of Work/Technical services to be provided under Section 1.3. and address related issues such as past performance and experience, with detailed methodology and expertise for Work Order No.1. The Cost Proposal shall present firm fixed daily rates for the proposed personnel and the price of the services under Work Order 1. Proposals must be signed by an official who is authorized to bind the entire organization.

The Technical Proposal and Cost Proposal must be kept separate from each other. Technical Proposals must not make reference to pricing data in order that the technical evaluation may be made strictly on the basis of technical merit.

The Offerors must submit the proposal both in hard copy and electronically.

Instructions for hard copy submission:

The Technical and Cost Proposals must be delivered in TWO SEPARATE envelopes enclosed in an OUTER envelope to the address below:

Predstavništvo Cardno Emerging Markets USA Ltd. /USAID Competitive Economy Project

10L Bulevar Mihajla Pupina VIII floor

11070 Belgrade, Serbia

Reference No. USAID CSS RFP-2018-03 PROPOSAL

Separate envelopes must be marked:

USAID CSS RFP-2018-03 Technical Proposal and

USAID CSS RFP-2018-03 Cost Proposal

Name of the Offeror must be stated on all envelopes.

Instructions for electronic submission:

Technical and Cost Proposals must be submitted in two separate files, one with the RFP reference number marked Technical Proposal and the other with the RFP reference number marked Cost Proposal, with all required and relevant attachments (10 MB limit per email) compatible with MX Word, MS Excel, readable format, or Adobe Portable Document

(PDF) format in a Microsoft XP environment. Those pages requiring original manual signatures should be scanned and sent in PDF format as an email attachment.

16. Q: What is “firm fixed price task order”?

A: The term firm fixed price task order refers to the order/request for performing services which results in awarding a firm-fixed-price subcontract. This type of subcontract provides for an all- inclusive price that is not subject to any adjustment based on the contractor's cost experience in performing the contract, unless mutually agreed by contracting parties.

17. Q: What is project’s VAT status? Some costs will inevitably carry VAT?

A: The Project is VAT exempted, therefore each proforma invoice submitted by the subcontractor will be subsequently VAT exempted through obtaining VAT Exemption Certificate from the respective Tax Authority of the Republic of Serbia. The subcontractor is responsible for VAT payment to their suppliers.

18. Q: Do you offer trainings on how to complete this type of bids? If yes, when and where?

A: Consultancy to the Offerors in a form of training is not available. However, the Project is organizing a Pre-proposal Questions and Answers Session for interested Offerors on November 30, 2018 from 2 pm to 3 pm at the Project address:
Predstavnstvo Cardno Emerging Markets USA Ltd. /USAID Competitive Economy Project
10L Bulevar Mihajla Pupina VIII floor
11070 Belgrade, Serbia

19. Q: How are technical and financial parts of the bid to be kept separate if both should be sent to the same e-mail address?

A: Technical Proposals must not make reference to pricing data in order that the technical evaluation may be conducted strictly on the basis of technical merit. Please see Q&A15.

20. Q: Is this application for 3 years contract or for the preparation and execution of a separate event

A: This Request for Proposals is expected to result with one-year Framework Service Agreement to several awardees, with the possibility of one-year extension. Simultaneously, as stated in the Request for Proposals document, the Project invited the Offerors to submit their proposals for specific Work Order 1, as a part of the Framework Service Agreement. This implies that the Offerors compete, at the same time, for award of a Framework Service Agreement and for a specific Work Order 1.

21. Q: Budget form (attachment 3C): Under row 5 (cost share) Kindly elaborate on cost share between parties.

A: Offerors shall submit their proposals by filling the required Attachment 3C for Work Order No.1. Offerors should read carefully the Budget Instruction part of the Attachment

No.3, fill in the Budget Form and provide Justification by items. Cost share mentioned in the budget form is filled only when specifically required in the request for proposal.

22. Q: In absence of financial reports for the past 3 years what other documents the company can provide?

A: According to the RFP Section 5.5. Requirements for the Proposal Format, Sub-Section 5.5.6. Supporting documents, if the offeror cannot provide financial reports for the previous three-year period, in order to demonstrate its financial capability to perform the work outlined in the request for proposal (RFP), the Offeror should provide other corroborating evidence of its financial capabilities, such as:

- ✓ Bank Statements for the prior 12 months to demonstrate current cash on hand;
- ✓ Proof of an approval or pre-approval for a bank line of credit (at least the availability for the amount of the contract);
- ✓ Tax filings for the last 2 years (individual if new);
- ✓ References stating that the Offeror is financially capable of doing the work and paying its expenses (see also Cost Proposal Attachment No.3 – 3A Declaration on Financial Stability and Conflict of Interest).

23. Q: If the Project is referring to EU market, is it possible to select only one EU member state to implement activities in?

A: Yes, it is possible to base your proposal on single European country/market if it is in line with the overall requirements set forth in the RFP. Offerors can propose the methodology which, in their opinion, represents the best technical approach to achieving goals and objectives of the Scope of Work and Work Order No1.

24. Q: Is prior experience e.g. in transport (logistic, shipping), opening new markets, adequate in terms of experience requirement relevant to this Project?

A: Please review the technical requirements outlined in sections 1.3.-1.5., and 7, to help you respond fully to RFP.

Offerors' bids submitted in the form as outlined in RFP Section 5.5.: Requirement for the Proposal Format, will be evaluated against the evaluation criteria presented in Section 6: Evaluation Criteria and Award Process. Please review carefully the description of evaluation criteria to help you guide in the preparation and presentation of your bids.

25. Q: Please explain what is DUNS number?

A: DUNS number is a unique nine-character number used to identify your organization/company. The successful Offerors must registry for obtaining this number prior to signing any subcontract. The Project will issue detailed instructions on registration to awarded entities which do not have this number.

26. Q: Will the on-going activities related to the Project be considered when submitting documentation in response to this RFP call?

A: Ongoing similar activities may be considered as a part of organizational experience within the Technical Proposal; however, in terms of funding, activities already funded by third parties must not be proposed in the budget, as this may be considered double funding.

27. Q: Please explain the term fixed daily rate when it comes to forming a price with parties included in Project?

A: Fixed daily rate stands for the total gross (all taxes and social benefits included) amount payable for the day of consultants' engagement. Such rate serves to determine cost reasonableness when evaluating Offerors' cost proposals and serves as a basis for Work Orders awards. Once fixed, such daily rate remains valid throughout FSA implementation period.

28. Q: Is it sufficient to submit bank statement showing balance on the account i.e. cash amount available?

A: Please see Q&A No. 23 above for the supporting documents demonstrating Offerors' financial capability.