UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

DATE: 03/12/2020

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST: EOI/2020/002

FOR THE SOLARIZATION OF UNHCR DEEP FIELD COMPOUNDS

CLOSING DATE AND TIME: 15/01/2021 – 23:59 hrs CET

1. Introduction to UNHCR

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established on December 14, 1950 by the United Nations General Assembly. UNHCR is a global organization dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, forcibly displaced communities and stateless people.

Every year, millions of men, women and children are forced to flee their homes to escape conflict and persecution. We are in over 135 countries, using our expertise to protect and care for millions of displaced people around the world. For further information on UNHCR, its mandate and operations please see: http://www.unhcr.org.

2. Purpose of this document

UNHCR seeks qualified companies for the provision of solar electricity as a service. The purpose of the present Expression of Interest (EOI) is to:

a. Obtain information on the experience, expertise, capability and financial resources of interested companies/consortia; and

b. Establish a shortlist of pre-qualified bidders for the next tender stage.

This tender will be run as a two-stage process and this first EOI stage will be followed by a Request for Proposal (RFP) for the pre-qualified bidders, which is expected to begin in the first quarter of 2021.

3. Project background

UNHCR is committed to improve its environmental performance, climate compatibility and resource efficiency by reducing its use of fossil fuels, purchasing green energy from reliable suppliers and undertaking other sustainability initiatives. However, the upfront investment needed to support such a transition to clean energy and sustainable infrastructure can be significant and for UNHCR to provide this, it would compete for limited resources with humanitarian priorities.

UNHCR's compounds, premises, and offices generate greenhouse gas emissions amounting to an estimated 97,136 tons of CO_2 annually. One major source of emissions is linked to the fact that UNHCR runs diesel generators, particularly in large field compounds in 'deep field' Africa operations. Converting these compounds to solar energy could have both a positive carbon impact and a positive financial impact, since solar energy is expected to be cheaper than existing diesel/fossil fuel generation in many geographies.

The compounds considered for solarization under this tender generally comprise offices hosting UNHCR's administrative, support and management services and, in certain locations, accommodation hosting UNHCR staff and/or partner organizations' premises. Although adjacent to or located near the operational sites managed by UNHCR, compounds are distinct from the actual sites hosting refugee communities.

In close collaboration with the German Cooperation (GIZ), UNHCR has conducted feasibility analysis on a first set of potential sites and has commenced legal and technical work with legal advisors and specialized consultants to prepare for a first round of competitive procurement of electricity from private sector independent power producers (IPPs).

Over the course of 2020, with support from the Swedish International Development Cooperation (Sida), UNHCR has designed and operationalized the internal governance and technical procedures for operating an internal "Green Fund". It is envisioned that the first use of the Green Fund will be to convert diesel-powered Africa operations to solar power.

4. The Green Fund

The Green Fund is an innovative financing mechanism that has been established and capitalized as a segregated fund under UNHCR's overall financial regulations. It is designed to allow UNHCR to contract clean energy as a service via multi-year Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs) or via other comparable arrangements such as leasing where local regulatory frameworks do not allow PPAs. Any of these contracts will have an indicative term of 10 years. Specifically, the Fund has been designed to provide risk mitigation and act as a guarantee mechanism to enhance the creditworthiness of the proposed project, in turn it is hoped leading to more competitive monthly capacity payments for the Buyer.

Payments under the PPA(s) will be made in hard currency, further reducing Seller's risk. The counterparty of the PPA(s) is expected to be the East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes regional office of UNHCR.

5. Geography

UNHCR is currently targeting implementation in an initial set of sites in Ethiopia, Kenya, and Uganda. The sites presently considered for this first tender are listed in the table below.

Country	Location	GPS coordinates (WGS 84)	
Ethiopia	Dimma	6.854722	35.310555
Ethiopia	Gambella	8.267392	34.568914
Ethiopia	Pugnido	7.647466	34.254228
Kenya	Kakuma	3.708750	34.853500
Uganda	Imvepi/Terego	3.259409	31.280574
Uganda	Pakele/Adjumani	3.358626	31.852467
Uganda	Palabek/Lamwo	3.430823	32.567578
Uganda	Palorinya/Obongi	3.508907	31.660993
Uganda	Yoro/Madi Okollo	3.089608	31.246459
Uganda	Yumbe/Yumbe	3.457551	31.223326

The above list is indicative. The final selection will be made once the feasibility studies and due diligence which are currently in process are completed. The list will be confirmed at the RFP stage.

Beyond this initial set of sites, the goal will be to allow the Green Fund to grow through further investment and reach additional operations more quickly. This first tender will thus be followed by further procurement rounds to continue the reduction in CO_2 emissions from UNHCR sites.

6. Consortia

In this document,

“Consortium” means an unincorporated association of natural or juridical persons bound by contract or law, formed by mutual written agreement for purposes of participation in this tender and, in case of award, to implement the projects eventually included in the RFP.

“Consortium member” means any of the natural or juridical persons comprising a consortium, each having a definite interest in the common undertaking, jointly and severally liable in this tender and whose interest will be converted into an equivalent participation in the projects if the consortium is awarded a PPA through the RFP.

“Lead company” means a company which is member of a consortium which was duly authorized by other consortium members to legally represent and act on behalf of these. The lead company will notify its relationship to a parent company (if any).

Interested companies that intend to form or have formed a consortium for the purpose of this EOI shall, at the time of submission confirm in their joint submission that they have designated one party to act as lead company. This shall be evidenced by a letter of association among the consortium members.

This letter of association shall acknowledge that if the consortium successfully reaches the RFP phase, the designated party acting as lead company will be duly vested with authority to legally bind the members and that if they are awarded the contract, the lead company will enter into the contract with UNHCR, acting for and on behalf of all consortium members. If the consortium is pre-qualified through this EOI stage, the joint venture among the consortium members will be evidenced by a joint venture agreement, which will be submitted along with the proposal during the RFP stage.

The letter of association should also express that consortium members are fully aware that after RFP submission, the lead company identified to represent the consortium will not be altered without the prior written consent of UNHCR. If a consortium’s proposal is selected for award, the contract will be awarded to the joint venture, in the name of its designated lead company. The lead company will sign the contract for and on behalf of all other consortium members.

7. Requirements

This EOI is an invitation for specialized companies/consortia to express interest in providing solar electricity as a service through the:

a. Design;

b. Financing;

c. Engineering, procurement and construction (EPC);

d. Operations and maintenance (O&M); and

e. Asset ownership;

of the required energy infrastructure using a Build-Operate-Transfer model for up to ten (10) UNHCR sites located in Kenya, Ethiopia and Uganda.

It is anticipated that each new solar photovoltaic (PV) system will be installed in combination with storage/batteries and/or residual diesel generation, with an individual solar PV size ranging from 50kW to 500kW and an estimated total solar PV capacity of up to 1,800kW. All sites will include diesel backup.

The RFP will include energy audits and functional specifications for each site.

Firm qualification criteria apply.

The technical minimum requirements that must be met by interested companies/consortia are detailed in Annex A.

Interested companies/consortia are requested to complete the corresponding table in order to confirm they satisfy each requirement by responding 'yes' or 'no' in the dedicated column next to each item. The table shall be dated, signed and submitted along with the other information and documents listed in Section 9.2 below.

Provided that the minimum mandatory requirements as per this EOI are met, a maximum of eight (8) companies/consortia will be pre-qualified and invited to submit offers during the RFP stage.

Bidding companies/consortia will be expected to bid on all the sites eventually selected for the RFP.

If a company/consortium is successful in its bid at the RFP stage, the contract for all the sites included in the RFP will be awarded to this successful bidder.

8. Evaluation

UNHCR will first determine the completeness of the submission.

In line with Section 7 above, UNHCR will then verify that the company/consortium meets the minimum requirements of the EOI.

The experience, expertise, capability and financial resources of all compliant companies/consortia will then be assessed. An evaluation score will be determined through a weighted approach and a final ranking will be established.

The eight (8) companies/consortia with the highest evaluation score will be pre-qualified for the RFP stage.

For the purpose of this evaluation, interested companies/consortia are requested to complete the evaluation form enclosed in Annex B. A maximum of ten (10) reference projects should be listed in the form in order to:

a. Demonstrate that the company/consortium complies with the technical minimum requirements detailed in Annex A; and

b. Present additional relevant experience that will form part of the evaluation process.

For each reference project presented in the evaluation form, interested companies/consortia are requested to attach all necessary supporting documents to provide verifiable evidence of the said project's current status, and of the nature of the company/consortium members' involvement.

9. Instructions

9.1 Registration with UNHCR

If not already registered with UNHCR as vendors, interested companies/consortia are requested to complete the UNHCR vendor registration form enclosed in Annex C.

IMPORTANT Only the companies pre-qualified through this EOI, meeting UNHCR registration criteria and whose services have been approved by UNHCR will be invited to participate in the RFP.

9.2 Content of submission

Interested companies/consortia should submit the following pre-qualification documents as part of their EOI submission:

1. Company/consortium profile of maximum four (4) pages including:
    a. Brief company/consortium members history
    b. Description of relevant capability
        i. Capabilities in project development/design
        ii. Financing capabilities
        iii. EPC capabilities
        iv. O&M capabilities
        v. Asset management capabilities
        vi. Track record in Kenya, Uganda and Ethiopia
        vii. Track record in other East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes countries[1]
        viii. Capacity to operate in remote locations and off grid settings
    c. Key directors
    d. Structure of ownership/shareholding and details of parent company if the applicant is part of a group of companies
    e. Major clients, partners and suppliers
    f. Technical certifications and accreditations
2. Audited financial statements of the company/lead company for the last three (3) complete fiscal years
    a. For a company, financial statements of parent company may be included if the parent company will guarantee the obligations of the applicant
    b. For a consortium, financial statements of parent company may be included if the parent company of the lead company will guarantee the obligations of the applicant
3. Duly filled and signed technical minimum requirements table enclosed in Annex A
4. Duly filled evaluation form enclosed in Annex B, including all necessary supporting documents
    a. Examples of acceptable supporting documents include completion documents; letter of award; cover, preamble and signature pages of financing documents, PPAs, EPC/O&M contracts, or other key project agreements
    b. Projects for which appropriate supporting documents are not provided will not be taken into consideration to determine the company/consortium's evaluation score
5. Duly filled and signed UNHCR vendor registration form enclosed in Annex C and associated supporting documents (if not already registered with UNHCR as a vendor)

[1] East and Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes countries: Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda.

Interested consortia are requested to provide the following additional information:

6. Letter of association signed among the consortium members

Prices or commercial offers are not required at this stage.

UNHCR reserves the right to verify all information submitted by the company/consortium.

9.3 Request for clarifications

Interested companies/consortia are required to submit any request for clarification in respect of this EOI by email to Istvan Martha, Senior Supply Associate at martha@unhcr.com and to copy the address HQQuery@unhcr.org on all correspondence.

UNHCR plans to reply to questions shortly after they are received. All the clarification questions and answers will be disclosed and publicly available on the UNGM and UNHCR websites.

IMPORTANT
Please note that EOI submissions are **not** to be sent to the email addresses above.

The deadline for receipt of questions is 23:59 hrs CET on 08/01/2021.

9.4 Submission of EOI

The EOI should be submitted by file **(only in PDF)** upload to eTenderBox, the online bid registration tool of UNHCR.

The eTenderBox can be accessed via the following URL: https://etenderbox.unhcr.org

In order to use the eTenderBox, registration on the website is required. This registration is exclusively for eTenderBox and does not replace UNHCR vendor registration, in line with Section 9.1 above.

A company/consortium should have only one registered email account in the system and use only one eTenderBox account for managing its offers to UNHCR.

In case of forgotten password, the user will no longer be able to use its account, and a new registration is required. Registration Guide and User Manual are available at the above URL.

Uploaded files can be amended by the company/consortium while the EOI is open. The selected files for upload are submitted when the 'Save & Submit' button is clicked on. Therefore, this button must be clicked before the deadline expires. If that's done, the selected files will be submitted and uploaded successfully even if the deadline expires during the file upload. It is the company/consortium's responsibility to ensure that all required files are submitted by the EOI expiration date.

Once the deadline for submission is expired, the EOI will be automatically closed. After that, the uploaded files can be viewed but options for additional uploads or deletion of previously uploaded files are no longer available. In order to ensure safe and complete submission, it is recommended to have all files uploaded well before the EOI deadline.

IMPORTANT
Please note that the deadline displayed on eTenderBox is always adjusted to the user's local time zone. Therefore, no further time difference calculation is needed in order to confirm the deadline of this EOI. Please always consider the above before submitting your offer and ensure that all documents are uploaded and submitted well before the EOI deadline.

This EOI does not constitute a solicitation.

UNHCR reserves the right to change or cancel the requirements of this EOI at any time during or after the EOI, and to require compliance with additional conditions as and when issuing a formal solicitation.

Submitting a reply to this EOI does not guarantee participation in the RFP when issued.

The cost of responding to this EOI shall be entirely borne by the interested companies/consortia, regardless of the results of this pre-qualification stage and any subsequent invitation to participate in the RFP.

Closing date and time for receipt of EOI: 15/01/2021 23:59 hrs CET

10. Additional contract information

The RFP will include a Power Purchase Agreement (PPA) which will detail the responsibilities and obligations of both Buyer and Seller, set out the allocation of risk between the parties in line with industry norms, including the credit enhancement and risk mitigation offered by the Green Fund, and give protection to the Buyer from material changes in ownership or control of the Seller.

To prevent any conflict with UNHCR's core mandate and policies, the PPA will seek to minimize deviations from UNHCR's established procurement rules. Interested companies/consortia shall expect the PPA to include *inter alia* provisions related to the following matters.

Privileges and Immunities

Nothing in or relating to the contract shall be deemed a waiver, express or implied, of any of the privileges and immunities of the United Nations, including its subsidiary organs or of UNHCR (as a subsidiary organ of the United Nations).

Arbitration

Any dispute, controversy, or claim between the parties arising out of the contract or the breach, termination, or invalidity thereof, will be subject to binding arbitration in accordance with the UNCITRAL arbitration rules then obtaining. The parties shall be bound by any arbitration award rendered as a result of such arbitration as the final adjudication of any such dispute, controversy, or claim.

Project rights

The company/consortium will maintain control of the projects at least until commissioning of all the projects. After commissioning, ownership may be changed subject to UNHCR's and other approvals as per applicable regulation.

11. Annexes

Annex A – Technical minimum requirements

Annex B – Evaluation form

Annex C – UNHCR vendor registration form

Martine Israel
Head of Unit
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