



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE
FOR
SURVEYS ON INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES FOR
PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES IN THE BAHAMAS**

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this Request for Proposals and Terms of Reference (“RFP and TOR”) is to identify a suitably qualified Consultant to conduct a statistically robust and representative survey to determine whether there is sufficient accessibility, affordability, awareness and availability of Information and Communication Technologies (“ICTs”) and electronic communication services for Persons With Disabilities (“PwDs”) in The Bahamas to enhance their social and economic development.

Overview of URCA

1.1 The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (“URCA”) is the independent regulatory authority with responsibility for the Electronic Communications Sector (“ECS”) and the Electricity Sector (“ES”) in The Bahamas.¹ The ECS comprises of fixed and mobile telephone services, internet services, spectrum and numbering, broadcasting including radio and pay television. The ECS has multiple stakeholder groups including, inter alia, the Government of The Bahamas (“GoB”), licensees and consumers of electronic communication services. .

1.2 The legislative framework and policy that govern URCA’s regulatory mandate include the Communications Act, 2009 (“Comms Act”), and its subsequent amendments, and the Electronic Communications Sector Policy (“ECS Policy”). The Comms Act sets out the laws that govern the regulation of the ECS and the ECS Policy sets out the Government’s policy objectives and vision for the ECS, including the regulatory imperatives for URCA.

¹ The scope of this RFP & TOR is limited and restricted to the ECS and any further reference in the document will be in relation to the ECS only.

2 Background

2.1 The overarching objective of the ECS Policy is to enhance the social and economic development of The Bahamas. The ECS Policy states that affordable access to ICTs and electronic communications enhance social and economic development.

2.2 URCA has observed that the social and economic contributions of PwDs has evoked considerable interest in policy and regulation circles. URCA is aware of national efforts such as the government's move to enact legislation in August 2014 captioned Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities) Act, 2014. Emanating from this Act was the establishment of the National Commission for PwDs. The national conversation on PwDs is also underpinned by the efforts of international bodies to improve accessibility of ICTs for PwDs.

2.3 Despite these efforts, URCA theorised that PwDs remain an unserved or underserved subset of consumer stakeholder group in The Bahamas. Therefore, in 2018, URCA commenced a project to address that gap under the caption "ICT for Person with Disabilities."

3. Significance of the Study

This study will examine and assess the level of accessibility, affordability, awareness and availability of ICTs and electronic communication services provided to four categories of PwDs in The Bahamas. The categories of PwDs included in the study are:

- Reduced dexterity or limited mobility
- Limited cognition
- Blind users and users with reduced vision
- Deaf or hard of hearing

For the purpose of this study, electronic communication services are considered and limited to the following:

- Broadcasting (Pay TV Services): URCA considers Pay TV as subscription-based television services, provided by both analogue, digital cable, and satellite television.
- Fixed Voice and Fixed Broadband
- Mobile Voice and Broadband Internet

The study is significant because it would:

- i. provide information on the current needs of persons with disabilities as it relates to ICTs (mobile devices, fixed products/services, assistive technologies, mobile applications) and electronic communication services in The Bahamas;
- ii. provide usage information on fixed and mobile telecommunication products/services and broadcasting Pay TV services that are available for PwDs across select inhabited islands in The Bahamas;
- iii. provide affordability information fixed and mobile telecommunication products/services and broadcasting Pay TV services that are available for persons with disabilities across select inhabited islands in The Bahamas;
- iv. provide accessibility information on fixed and mobile telecommunication products/services that are available for persons with disabilities across select inhabited islands in The Bahamas;
- v. provide availability information on fixed and mobile telecommunication products/services and broadcasting Pay TV services that are available for persons with disabilities across all inhabited islands in The Bahamas;
- vi. identify potential barriers to PwDs using ICTs and electronic communication services that relate to products, devices and services such as mobile devices, closed captioning, fixed line services, fixed broadband, emergency

communications, mobile retail outlets, customer service and complaint handling processes by broadband, mobile and fixed operators in The Bahamas; and

- vii. identify awareness level of broadcasting Pay TV, fixed and mobile services and products available to PwDs in The Bahamas.

The findings of the survey should allow URCA to address gaps in affordable access to ICTs and electronic communications and thus enhance social and economic development of PwDs in The Bahamas.

4. Scope of Work

A qualitative and quantitative research including surveys and focus groups would assist URCA with answering the research questions. URCA has identified four main research questions:

1. Is there sufficient accessibility of ICTs and related broadcasting², fixed and mobile electronic communication services for PwDs in The Bahamas to enhance their social and economic development?
2. Is there sufficient affordability of ICTs and related broadcasting, fixed and mobile electronic communication services for PwDs in The Bahamas to enhance their social and economic development?
3. Is there sufficient awareness of ICTs and related broadcasting, fixed and mobile electronic communication services for PwDs in The Bahamas to enhance their social and economic development?
4. Is there sufficient availability of ICTs and related broadcasting, fixed and mobile electronic communication services for PwDs in The Bahamas to enhance their social and economic development?

² Broadcasting is limited to Pay TV services for the purpose of this study.

4.1 Information Gathering

The Consultant will conduct a series of focus groups with relevant target groups across specified islands of The Bahamas³. Focus groups are aimed to carry out discussions to draw upon respondents' attitudes, feelings and experiences with regard to their needs as it relates to ICTs. The focus groups will also be used as an exercise to gather information through a survey instrument that will be designed by URCA and conducted by the Consultant. The objectives of the focus groups are outlined as follows:

- i. provide information on the current needs of persons with disabilities as it relates to telecommunication ICTs (mobile devices, fixed products/services, assistive technologies, mobile applications) and electronic communication services in The Bahamas;
- ii. provide usage information on broadcasting, fixed and mobile telecommunication products/services that are available for PWDs across select islands in The Bahamas;
- iii. provide affordability broadcasting information on fixed and mobile telecommunication products/services that are available for persons with disabilities across select islands in The Bahamas;
- iv. provide accessibility information on broadcasting, fixed and mobile telecommunication products/services that are available for persons with disabilities across select islands in The Bahamas;
- v. provide availability information on broadcasting, fixed and mobile telecommunication products/services that are available for persons with disabilities across select islands in The Bahamas;
- vi. identify potential barriers to PwDs using ICTs and electronic communication services that relate to products, devices and services such as mobile devices, closed captioning, fixed line services, fixed broadband, emergency communications, mobile retail outlets, customer service and complaint handling processes by broadband, mobile and fixed operators in The Bahamas; and
- vii. identify awareness level of broadcasting, fixed and mobile services and products available to PwDs in The Bahamas.

³ All inhabited islands include Abaco, Eleuthera, Exuma, Grand Bahama, Long Island and New Providence. These islands were selected through an analysis of the data collected from the 2010 Census Disability Report.

4.2 Focus group participant goals are outlined below:

- Feedback from 30 to 40 members across each category is required.
- At least four focus groups for each category should be hosted. (consultant can decide on split for New Providence and Family Islands)
- Focus groups will be used as an exercise to also gather information through survey instrument that will be designed by URCA and conducted by the Consultant

4.3 Survey instrument goals are outlined below:

Outside of focus groups, surveys should also be conducted until the target number from sample size is achieved.

To the end, the Consultant will:

- Co-design survey instrument
- Conduct the survey instrument and focus groups
- Determine the Target Population and Sample
- Collect and analyse the data from focus groups and survey

5. Deliverables

Working in close liaison with the URCA appointed team, the following key deliverables and outputs are expected from the Consultant:

- Submit Final Report that sets out the methodology and include, at a minimum:
 - Purpose of the Study
 - Research Questions
 - Research Design
 - Target Population and Sample
 - Procedure
 - Instrument
 - Ethical Considerations
 - Summary of results
 - Discussion and Conclusions Based on the Results

Process the data and submit analysed results

- Use in-house facilities to process the data and submit in a report.
- The analysis will be done on the structure of the population according to age, gender, income level, education level and island.
- Support all analysed data with graphs, tables and other illustrations as needed and provide necessary textual explanations supporting illustrations for each covered area.
- Participate in all meetings of the project team to discuss the relevance of produced findings.

6. Proposals & Qualifications

Proposals should contain the following sections:

- a. Company Background;
- b. Technical Proposal;
- c. Financial Proposal; and
- d. Work Plan.

6.1 Company Background

The company background information should include the following:

- a. Company name (and any other registered name, if different);
- b. Certificate of Incorporation;
- c. Certificate of Good Standing;
- d. Contact details for all correspondence (i.e. name, address, phone number, email address, etc.);
- e. Copy of current Business Licence;
- f. Copy of VAT Certificate of Registration;
- g. A brief description of the primary business activities of the company and an outline of recent experience on assignments of a similar nature and scope. Respondents should be prepared to substantiate claimed experiences and provide references in support, if requested by URCA; and

- h. Company's website address (if none, kindly state so).

6.2 Technical Proposal

The technical proposal should provide, at a minimum, the following:

- a. a detailed methodology and schedule of work to guide field-based efforts that the Respondent proposes to use towards achieving the deliverables;
- b. the methodology should also include indications of timelines, risk identification, mitigation measures and other aspects necessary;
- c. the schedule of work should be prepared against the deliverables and include timeline for all activities;
- d. a list of the proposed personnel by area of expertise, the position that would be assigned to each team member and their tasks; and
- e. CVs for each of the Respondent's proposed team members assigned to the project.

6.3 Financial Proposal

URCA will require two separate financial proposals for focus groups & survey instrument for the select islands. These proposals should comply with the following conditions:

- a. The financial proposal should specify a total sum amount quoted in BSD and amount per deliverables.
- b. The financial proposal must state all costs associated with the services to be provided, including remuneration/rate sheet for each proposed team member assigned to the project.
- c. The prospective Consultant will be expected to provide a fixed price financial proposal of the Consultant's fees and estimated expenses for consideration by URCA. The proposals should take into account the work expected to be involved in the completion of each

deliverable and provide for phased payment by URCA within no less than thirty (30) business days of its acceptance of each deliverable. Activities and items described in the proposal but not priced will be assumed to be included in the cost.

6.4 Work Plan

The Respondent would be expected to develop and submit a comprehensive work plan that sets out milestones in anticipation of 31 August 2021 as the completion date for the project. The work plan must provide comments on the approach and methodology to the scope of work to be performed, including suggestions that may improve the quality/effectiveness of the project.

URCA considers it important to note that its processes require Board review of key project deliverables, such as Data Analysis and Final Reports, of no less than seven (7) calendar days. This must be considered in relation to timelines for completion of the project.

7. Reporting and Accounting

The Consultant will report directly to URCA's Acting Director of Electronic Communications. URCA will indicate the primary point of contact and project lead for the Consultant regarding the day-to-day activities.

The Consultant will regularly interact with and advise URCA's Acting Director of Electronic Communications and project lead on the progress of the work conducted. The Consultant will produce written status reports/updates as required by the Chief Executive Officer and/or the Acting Director of Electronic Communications. Deliverables and outputs will be monitored and evaluated by URCA's Director of Electronic Communications and project lead.

8. Conflict of Interest

The company must disclose to URCA any potential or perceived conflict of interest issues within its Proposal document. Any potential or perceived conflict of interest that arises at any time following submission of the Proposal should be disclosed to URCA as soon as it arises.

9. Evaluation of Proposals

Only proposals in possession of URCA by the indicated date and time for submission shall be considered. Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated to determine whether it satisfies the submittal requirements contained within this RFP and TOR. Failure to satisfy the submittal requirements may be cause for rejection of the proposal. The proposals will be ranked based on the following maximum allocation of points for specific elements of each proposal:

Technical Capabilities		Score Weight	Maximum Score
1.	Firm's expertise and experience in completing projects of similar nature and scope	20%	40%
2.	Proposal & methodological approach/ indicators	10%	
3.	Qualification/experience of personnel and leader proposed for assignment	10%	

Financial Proposals		Score Weight	Maximum Score
1.	The lowest financial proposal submitted by a technically qualified party will score the highest.	35%	35%

Work Plan		Score Weight	Maximum Score
1.	Methodology to the scope of work to be performed.	15%	25%
2.	Timetable for prompt completion of the project.	10%	

10. Timing

It is anticipated that the contract will commence on **1 July, 2021** and be completed no later than **9 August 2021**.

11. Contract

It is expected that the services to be carried out shall be performed based on a contract. The prospective Consultant shall submit a draft contract for URCA’s consideration, which must be consistent with the Terms of Reference and Deliverables contained in the submitted proposal. URCA will review the contract and the final terms and conditions of the contract will be subject to URCA’s approval.

12. Submission of Proposals

URCA advises that time is of the essence with the completion of this project. Therefore, interested persons are requested to submit a proposal to URCA for the work to be carried out in accordance with this RFP and TOR.

1. Respondents may deliver their proposals to URCA’s Director of Electronic Communications either:

- by hand, to URCA’s office at Frederick House, Frederick Street, Nassau, Bahamas; or
- by mail, to P. O. Box N-4860, Nassau, Bahamas; or

- by fax, to (242)-393-0237; or
- by email, to info@urcabahamas.bs.

2. Complete proposals must be received by no later than 4:00 p.m. on the response deadline date of **14 June 2021**. Late proposals will not be accepted.

13. Miscellaneous

URCA reserves the right to:

- a. reject any or all proposals for failure to meet the requirements contained herein or for any other reason which in URCA's sole discretion renders the proposal unsuitable;
- b. waive any technicalities; and
- c. select the proposal which in URCA's sole discretion, best meets URCA's requirements.

This RFP and TOR creates no obligation (legal or otherwise) on the part of URCA to award a contract or to compensate the respondent for any costs incurred during proposal presentation, response, submission, presentation, or oral interviews. URCA also reserves the right to negotiate further with any respondent to the RFP and TOR. Respondents should not rely upon the opportunity to alter their qualifications during any discussions.