



# **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES**

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## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

### **EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES**

### **YEARS ENDING 31 DECEMBER 2016, 2017 AND 2018**

#### **1. Introduction**

This request for proposals is for the annual audit of the financial statements of the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) for the years ending 31 December 2016, 2017 and 2018.

#### **2. Organisational Background**

2.1. URCA was established on 1 August 2009, as a public authority and a body corporate, under the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority Act, 2009 (the URCA Act). It is the successor to the Public Utilities Commission established under The Public Utilities Commission Act, 1993 which ceased to operate when URCA came into being.

2.2. URCA is the regulatory authority with responsibility for the electronic communications sector (ECS) and the electricity sector (ES) in The Bahamas. The ECS comprises fixed and mobile telecommunications services, spectrum and numbering, broadcasting including pay television and internet services. The ES comprises the sector of the economy related to the supply of electricity throughout The Bahamas. URCA currently regulates the ECS and ES through the Communications Act, 2009 (as amended) and the Electricity Act, 2015 respectively, although URCA may regulate other sectors over time if given specific responsibilities to do so under other sector specific legislation.

2.3. The offices of the Authority are currently located at Frederick House, Frederick Street, New Providence, Bahamas.

- 2.4. URCA currently employs 24 persons who are trained in the disciplines of Human Resources, Economics, Engineering, Accounting and Law.
- 2.5. URCA is governed by a Board consisting of five members: three non-executive members (including the Chairperson), the Chief Executive Officer and Director of Policy and Regulation. The Communications Act established an Audit Committee comprising the non-executive members and chaired by an accounting professional who is not a member of the Board or a member of the executive. The Audit Committee selects the auditors with the approval of the Minister responsible for relations with URCA in accordance with section 39(4)(b) of the URCA Act.
- 2.6. URCA, in its effort to be an effective regulator, has ensured that the requisite finances are available to ensure that stakeholders are provided with the best possible service and value for money. Under the URCA Act, URCA is mandated to annually calculate fees at a level necessary to recover the anticipated cost of operations. For the current period of operation (1 January to 31 December 2016), URCA's ECS approved operating and capital budgets are \$6,399,323 and \$385,000, respectively, and ES approved operating and capital budgets are \$993,250 and \$68,700 respectively. The financial statements are prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) and are an integral part of URCA's Annual Report. The financial statements and Annual Report are, by statute (sections 39(4)(b) and 41(1)(b) of the URCA Act, respectively) to be completed by 30 April of each year. URCA's fiscal year-end is 31 December.
- 2.7. URCA currently uses Accpac version 6.2 software for its accounting. The active modules include the General Ledger, Accounts Receivables, Purchasing, Accounts Payable and Payroll. Additionally, URCA uses Sage FAS 2015.1 Asset Accounting for Property, plant and equipment.

### **3. Scope of Work**

- 3.1. The term of the audit engagement is for three (3) years – reporting on the financial statements for the years ending 31 December 2016, 2017 and 2018.
- 3.2. The audit services are to result in the following deliverables:

- 3.2.1. Expression of an audit opinion on the fairness or otherwise of the annual financial statements of URCA stated in accordance with IFRS.
- 3.2.2. A management letter indicating deficiencies or opportunities for accounting and reporting improvements, specifically identifying any reportable condition or material weakness.
- 3.2.3. Disclosure of any irregularities and illegal acts that come to the attention of the auditors.
- 3.2.4. Recommending any continuing education training that will assist with financial reporting and the financial reporting closing process.
- 3.3. The audits are to be performed in accordance with International Standards on Auditing.
- 3.4. In order to meet the April 30 publishing date of the Audited Financial Statements, draft Financial Statements are to be completed and submitted by Auditors for review and discussion at the March meeting of the Audit Committee.

#### **4. Proposal Content and Submission Requirements**

- 4.1. The proposal should respond to the following requirements and parameters:
  - 4.1.1. The identities of the persons who will be assigned to the engagement with details of their qualifications and experience.
  - 4.1.2. The firm must demonstrate how it will ensure continuity in the proposed audit team so as to avoid or minimize the risk of frequent and/or unnecessary changes to the engagement team. In the event such changes become necessary, then the firm must detail in its proposal that it has sufficient depth in technical resources to provide a similarly qualified and competent substitute to the member of staff that is leaving the engagement team.
  - 4.1.3. The firm's experience in providing professional auditing services to public sector entities and to regulatory agencies.
  - 4.1.4. The firm's expertise in the industries regulated by URCA.
  - 4.1.5. The firm's audit approach and how it will ensure compliance with the statutory deadline for completion of the audit. Also, explain the firm's consultation process for resolving any technical dispute or difficult accounting issue.

- 4.1.6. The firm's independence with respect to URCA. Indicate the nature of any non-audit services provided to URCA, if any, and any implications of such services for any potential audit appointment.
  - 4.1.7. The firm's monitoring policies to identify compliance with independence and potential (actual or perceived) conflicts of interest.
  - 4.1.8. The estimated fees plus expenses and the basis for determining each one.
  - 4.1.9. The proposal shall remain valid for a period of at least 60 days from the deadline for submissions.
- 4.2. Note the following submission requirements:
- 4.2.1. ***Any contact with URCA during this proposal process should be with: Ms. Faith Johnson, Finance Officer, telephone – 397-5223 and e-mail address – [fajohnson@urcabahamas.bs](mailto:fajohnson@urcabahamas.bs).***
  - 4.2.2. All questions/inquiries must be submitted in writing addressed to Ms. Faith Johnson via email and received no later than 3:00 PM on July 25, 2016. The "Subject" line of the correspondence should state "Questions on RFP for External Audit Services."
  - 4.2.3. Questions submitted after the inquiries/questions deadline will not receive a response. Responses to inquiries/questions deemed by URCA to materially affect the RFP process will be posted on URCA's website no later than August 2, 2016, by 5:00 p.m. in the form of an Addendum to the RFP.
  - 4.2.4. Each bidder shall remain liable for all costs and expenses it may incur in this RFP process. URCA shall not accept nor bear any responsibility to reimburse any bidders.
  - 4.2.5. Proposals are to be submitted in sealed envelopes, marked "Proposal for Audit Services" addressed to Mrs. Kathleen Riviere-Smith, Chief Executive Officer, Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority, Frederick House, Frederick Street, New Providence, Bahamas.

- 4.2.6. Copies required: one original and six hard copies; and an electronic copy **may be** requested at a later date. All proposals, in hard copy, should be submitted no later than 4 p.m. on 8 August 2016.

## **5. Evaluation Criteria**

- 5.1. Proposals will be evaluated by a committee selected by URCA's management.
- 5.2. The Evaluation Committee will make a recommendation to the Audit Committee which will make the final decision.
- 5.3. The proposals will be evaluated based on the following specific elements and weights:
- 5.3.1. Qualifications and experience of audit team - 25%
  - 5.3.2. Audit approach and plan, including the firm's ability to comply with statutory deadline - 25%
  - 5.3.3. Fees - 25%
  - 5.3.4. Firm's experience serving public sector entities and regulatory agencies - 15%
  - 5.3.5. Firm's expertise in industries regulated by URCA - 10%
- 5.4. The firm selected will be notified by **9 September 2016**. However, the appointment will be subject to the Minister's approval in accordance with section 39(4)(b) of the URCA Act.
- 5.5. **URCA has the right to accept and reject any proposal.**

## **6. Appendices and Attachments**

- 6.1. The following items are provided:
- 6.1.1. Organisation Chart.
  - 6.1.2. 2015 Annual Report including the audited financial statements for the twelve month period ended 31 December 2015.  
[www.urbahamas.bs/download/090938200.pdf](http://www.urbahamas.bs/download/090938200.pdf).
  - 6.1.3. Three Year Strategy and Annual Plan for 2016.
  - 6.1.4. Unaudited management accounts for period ended 30 April 2016 will be provided upon request.

**6.2. The documents and information contained therein are given in strict confidence and are for use in the preparation of the proposal and in executing the audit services should the firm be chosen.**

**7. Form of Agreement**

7.1 It is expected that services shall be performed on the basis of a contract to be agreed between URCA and the successful bidder based on the successful bidder's proposal. In the event that agreement cannot be reached between the parties, URCA reserves the right to end negotiations and select an alternative bidder.