



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SUPPORT SERVICES

OPS 02/2013

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UTILITIES REGULATION & COMPETITION AUTHORITY

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1. Introduction

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) issues this Request for Proposals (RFP) for Information Technology Support Services. It outlines the requirements and invites interested persons to submit quotations for providing Information Technology (IT) Support Services to URCA. The successful qualified vendor:

- (1) will provide necessary technical advice, services and (on request) equipment, which enables URCA to:
 - ensure that it has in place the necessary IT systems to support achieving its strategic objectives;
 - ensure the efficient operation of its IT networks and systems;
 - protect and secure URCA's IT networks and systems, and the information and data stored on those networks and systems;
 - strengthen URCA's quality of service for internal departments; and,
 - maximize value for money of URCA's information technology investment.
- (2) will provide the services according to standard and acceptable IT industry maintenance and support benchmarks.
- (3) will organise HELP DESK service calls efficiently and minimise IT network and system downtime, particularly during URCA's peak periods of use from 7:00AM to 7:00PM, Monday through Friday.
- (4) reports on the status of IT issues and communicates effectively with the assigned liaison department within URCA.

2. Background Information

URCA:

- is a statutory body created by legislation as the independent regulator of the Electronic Communications Sector in The Bahamas.

- has a Board comprising five persons; three non-executive members (one of whom is URCA's Chairperson) and two executive members, the Chief Executive Officer, and the Director of Policy and Regulation.
- has 21 employees with expertise in various disciplines including Economics, Engineering, Accounting and Law. All of URCA's staff work mainly from URCA's office at UBS Annex Building, East Bay Street, Nassau. URCA's executives and professional staff work as required by the demands of their responsibilities, which involves periodic work from home as well as occasional business-related travel.

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority does not have an internal IT Department and is using an external service that regularly provides maintenance and support on an "as needed" basis.

URCA uses five (5) servers of various memory and hard drive arrangements, each running Microsoft Windows Operating System, and each using backup tape devices. If requested, details about the servers' specifications are available for review. URCA assigns a personal desktop computer (PC) or laptop connected to certain centralised network functions to each employee. URCA also has several machines which others use as needed. The Service and Support Agreement with the successful vendor will cover twenty-eight 28 PCs and laptops currently in the organisation, all of which are the Dell brand. The IP addresses and locations are available on request. These PCs and laptops vary by age, specifications, software, and service pack versions. The prevalent operating systems used on these workstations are Windows XP Professional and Windows 7. URCA uses Symantec as its primary antivirus software and uses various versions of Windows software. A detailed inventory of the PCs and the software is available to all bidding parties on request.

3. Services Required

This section summarises the services the vendor will provide to URCA under this RFP. The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority is seeking to receive strategic IT advice, as well as a maintenance and support programme. The vendor should divide the Maintenance and Support programme of their proposal into the following two major categories: PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE and AS NEEDED MAINTENANCE.

URCA expects the vendor's proposal to define the vendor's detailed approach for providing each of the following services in stated categories (i.e., PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE and AS NEEDED MAINTENANCE). The proposal should also clearly identify the time and material costs for each service to simplify URCA's budget planning and reporting processes.

The successful provider shall be responsible for the following:

A. Assessment

On first engagement and then each year, according to IT industry best practices:

- review:
 - URCA's IT inventory to assess the network and system design,
 - relevance of hardware and software to assess life expectancy, durability and efficiency (including storage capacity, processing speed, and user-friendliness) and,
- as necessary, recommend replacements, upgrades or reconfigurations.

The vendor shall submit a report of its initial assessment to URCA one month after the award of the contract and then by March 1st in each year as long as the contract remains in force. In its response to this RFP, the provider should specify the process for review, comment, and acceptance of the assessment report by URCA and the provider.

B. Desktop Application Support and Network Administration Services

- Performing all necessary maintenance and support works on URCA's IT networks, equipment and systems, including setting up PCs, laptops, printers and peripherals such as switches, firewalls, routers, and other security devices;
- Installation, analysis, routine configuration changes, updating and maintenance of all software (including operating systems and other required applications) including installation of patches and upgrades;
- Diagnosis and correction of software-related issues;
- Installation, analysis, configuration (including routine configuration changes where necessary) and maintenance of PCs, laptops, printers, scanners and network devices, including installation of patches and upgrades;
- installation of minor (not to include breaking of walls or entrance into ceiling spaces) cabling where required; alert warnings in case of failure of equipment;
- Identification and correction of user hardware problems, with advanced troubleshooting as needed;

- Proactive real-time monitoring of network equipment; network performance and capacity management; network troubleshooting and maintenance of documentation for daily, weekly, and monthly services provided, including performance indicators to report on threshold limits;
- Maintenance and provision to URCA on request of an up-to-date inventory of all IT hardware; and
- Implementation of a HELP DESK.

C. Server and Workstation Administrative Services

- Management of networks and computer systems, including complex applications, databases, messaging, servers and associated hardware, software, communications, and operating systems necessary for performance, security, reliability, and recoverability of the systems.
- Scheduling of preventive maintenance for equipment in the areas of coverage is properly and quickly performed; development of operations and quality assurance to ensure compliance with backup plans and procedures.
- Configuration management, including maintaining changes, upgrades, patches, etc.; documenting management of user login's and password security; support of software products for servers and workstations; and, timely responses to repair and maintenance work for the user.

D. Email, Security and Backup

The provider shall be responsible for email, security and backup services to include:

- Maintenance of URCA's email accounts using URCA's domain, adding, changing, and/or deleting URCA's employee accounts as requested;
- Maintenance of virus detection programs on URCA's servers, user computers and laptops;
- Performance of periodic security audits, including warning of suspected breaches of security;
- Configuration of URCA's systems to enable remote access in a secure environment;

- Formulation and implementation of a data backup policy, with procedures in place to handle daily, weekly, and monthly backup of the computer, data and information, email, etc.;
- Formulation and implementation of a program to restore systems and data in the event of a system failure.

E. Planning

The successful provider shall advise URCA on the following:

- Planning and design services for major system improvements and/or upgrades to existing systems; recommendations for future purchasing and technology needs, when requested or necessary.
- Installation of new equipment and software when acquired, and transferring existing data to this equipment.

F. Excluded Services

The successful vendor should not obligate URCA to buy or lease computer equipment, hardware devices, cabling, licenses, replacement parts and software under any Service and Support Agreement. The scope of the contract also does not include computer equipment and networks not owned by URCA.

4. Submission Requirements

URCA requires the submitted proposal to specifically address each of the services listed in Section 3 above. URCA is seeking comprehensive content, clearly organised proposals, and solution-orientated procedures. The goal is a secure, smoothly operating, efficient process, and effective IT system. Each proposal shall contain the following content, organised as follows:

Letter of Transmittal:

The letter of transmittal must contain the following statements and information:

- i. company name, mailing and physical address, telephone number(s), fax number(s) and website address;
- ii. name, title, email address and telephone number of the person(s) to contact who are authorised to represent the firm and to whom correspondence should be directed;

- iii. a brief statement of the vendor's understanding of the services to be performed under the contract and make a positive commitment to provide the named services;
- iv. corporate officer or person authorised to bind the vendor to the proposal must sign the letter and cost schedule; and
- v. a statement stating the proposal and cost schedule will be valid and binding for at least ninety (90) days following the proposal due date, and will become part of the contract negotiated with URCA.

Profile:

Provide a short profile of the firm including at a minimum:

- i. Number of years in business;
- ii. Number of years the vendor has provided the proposed services;
- iii. Number and type of clients;
- iv. Number of full-time employees and their areas of involvement: Technical Support, Programming, Consulting, Sales Support, Administrative Support; and
- v. Location of firm's business office from which they will service URCA's account.

Proposal

The vendor should submit a detailed proposal for the services including, at a minimum, the following information organised in sections numbered as set out below:

- Executive Summary of the Proposal, including why the firm is submitting its proposal and what uniquely qualifies it to perform the services.
- Description of vendor's proposed approach to providing the services to URCA and how the vendor is positioned within the IT sector to provide the services. This should include details of the vendor's experience in providing similar IT services to those sought by URCA.
- Provide the name and contact details of at least three references. The references should all be clients for whom the vendor currently provides, or has provided, similar services to those sought in the RFP within the last three years. Include details of the specific services provided, the number of users, and the period the vendor has provided services to each of the three references.

- Provide details of staff members and other personnel proposed to provide services to URCA, including:
 - Names of specific personnel, identifying those that will perform as primary contacts and secondary or alternative contacts.
 - Details of each person’s relevant experience and expertise.
 - Details of the local availability of the named personnel. Vendors should note that all (or almost all) trained personnel must be available in The Bahamas.
 - Proposed role and responsibilities of each team member.
- Details of support services to be provided, including:
 - description of the HELP DESK services;
 - support availability (days of week and time of day);
 - itemisation of the vendor’s charges for support services;
 - steps the vendor will take for escalating resolution of technical problems;
 - final authority within the vendor to resolve technical problems;
 - response time(s) and goals for resolving problems.
- Details of the vendor’s proposed reporting procedures. The vendor must, at a minimum, commit to submitting quarterly service reports to URCA, summarising all service and IT policy issues. The vendor’s key contacts must be available to meet with URCA’s personnel to review quarterly reports and discuss relevant issues.
- Disclose any instance of termination for default of a contract for IT services provided by the vendor to a client within the past five years. Termination for default means notice from a client to stop services for non-performance or poor performance, including any litigation or dispute resolution of the issue. If termination for default has occurred within the past five years, the vendor should list the name, address, and telephone number of that party. URCA will evaluate the facts, and may, at its sole discretion, reject the vendor’s proposal. If no such termination for default has occurred within the past five years, the vendor should provide a declaration to that effect.

- Provide details of any additional services, beyond the scope of this RFP, that the firm provides which may be of interest to URCA.

Draft Contract

The vendor shall submit a draft contract for URCA's consideration, which must be consistent with the terms of service contained in the submitted proposal.

Cost of Services

URCA requests that the vendor submit a FIXED FEE service contract for a twelve month period, with an option to renew for a further twelve months. Each twelve month period must be shown separately. Payment schedules should also be included (i.e., monthly, quarterly). Providers must specifically list any services which would not be covered in the proposal price. The vendor shall indicate the impact, if any, of changes in URCA's IT infrastructure (number of servers and PCs) on the fixed fee. Identify the following for those services that are not under the fixed fee:

- A fee schedule containing the vendor's hourly rate.
- A description of how fees for services outside of the fixed fee contract will be billed.
- A description and the amounts of any additional charges, as in out-of-pocket expenses for travel, subsistence, etc.

5. Evaluation Criteria

An URCA-appointed selection committee will review all proposals based on the criteria listed below, and make a recommendation to URCA's Chief Executive Officer:

- A. Approach and Methodology;
- B. Experience of the Firm;
- C. Project Staffing and Experience;
- D. Satisfaction of Clients/End Users; and
- E. Pricing.

URCA will use a rating system based on pre-defined points and percentages to evaluate the proposals. The award of the contract will be made to the firm whose proposal receives a favourable evaluation, recommendation of the selection committee, and approval by URCA's

Board. However, URCA shall not be bound to accept the highest scoring or any proposal submitted.

6. Miscellaneous

URCA reserves the right:

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

This RFP creates no obligation on the part of URCA to award a contract or to compensate the Bidder 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. Providers should not rely upon the opportunity to alter their qualifications during any discussions.

7. The RFP and Selection Processes

7.1 Submission Requirements

Respondents must submit their response and all associated documents in accordance with the following guidelines **ONLY**:

1. **Four (4) PRINTED COPIES** of the Response, placed in sealed, opaque packages marked:

PROPOSAL FOR IT SUPPORT SERVICES

Chief Executive Officer
Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority
UBS Annex Building
East Bay Street
P.O. Box N-4860
Nassau, The Bahamas

2. **COMPLETE PROPOSALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY NO LATER THAN 3:00 PM, BAHAMAS TIME, ON THE RESPONSE DEADLINE DATE OF 22 FEBRUARY, 2013. LATE RESPONSES OR SUBMISSIONS SHALL NOT BE ACCEPTED.**

Only physical submissions will be accepted and only according to Section 7.1. In no circumstances should a Respondent submit its proposal or any part of it to any person at URCA via email, fax, or any other method of submission whether in addition to or instead of the above.

The contractual and licensing arrangements between URCA and the Service Provider will incorporate the contents of the Proposal. URCA underlines the importance of receiving honest, true and full answers to all areas of the RFP.

Failure to comply with all the submission requirements above (including packaging) may result in rejection or disqualification of the application.

7.2 URCA Contact Details for Clarifications, Questions and Additional Information

Persons wanting clarification or additional information on any matter involving this RFP or the process (other than submission of proposals) in writing by email, fax or mail to the “Project Manager – RFP for Information Technology Support Services” at the following addresses:

Project Manager – RFP for Information Technology Support Services
Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority
UBS Annex Building
East Bay Street
P.O. Box N-4860
Nassau, The Bahamas

Email: info@urcabahamas.bs

Fax: 242.393.0153

with the subject "**RFP for Information Technology Support Service question**". Questions must include full contact details (mailing address, email address and fax number) of the enquirer. Please state if the question is general in nature or if it involves a specific issue in the RFP and if so which one.

URCA will acknowledge receiving such questions and answer them **by email** as soon as practicable. URCA will inform if it cannot answer a question within five (5) working days of receipt or at the latest seven (7) days before the Submission Deadline.

Responses that URCA decides to be of general interest to all prospective RFP Respondents will be uploaded to URCA'S website at www.urcabahamas.bs as an addendum no later than 5:00 p.m. on 15 February, 2013.

URCA will not accept requests for further information or clarification after 12 February, 2013.

7.3 Expenses

Each Respondent shall remain liable for all costs it may incur in this RFP process and URCA shall not accept or bear any responsibility to compensate any Respondent.

7.4 Selection Procedure and Criteria

Based on compliance and satisfaction of the matters set out in this RFP, URCA will evaluate the proposals based on the submission and any specifically requested presentations only. URCA will consider all facets of the proposal, including the price and commercial terms and conditions, based on the following weightings:

Service Delivery Proposal	30 %
Commercial proposal, including price and all terms and conditions	40 %
Respondent's experience and expertise	30 %

URCA reserves the right to choose freely among Respondents, selecting any or none - or to use the quotation as a basis for a further dialogue with any or all Respondents. Respondents shall not consider the commencement of negotiations with URCA as a commitment by URCA to enter into a contract with the Respondent.

7.5 Time Schedule

7.5.1 Issue of RFP

URCA issued this RFP on 1 February, 2013 and interested persons may download it from URCA's website at www.urbahamas.bs.

7.5.2 Deadline for Submission of Proposals

URCA MUST RECEIVE COMPLETE PROPOSALS BY NO LATER THAN 3:00 PM, BAHAMAS TIME, ON THE RESPONSE DEADLINE DATE OF 22 FEBRUARY, 2013. URCA WILL NOT ACCEPT AND IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR LATE RESPONSES OR SUBMISSIONS.

URCA will only accept physical submissions that comply with Section 7.1 above.

7.5.3 Selection of and Negotiation with Service Provider

URCA will conduct its final evaluation and select its preferred Service Provider. The selection shall at this stage remain subject to successful commercial negotiation of the terms and conditions of a contract. In the event that URCA is unable to agree terms and conditions with the preferred Service Provider that are to URCA's satisfaction, URCA reserves the right to commence negotiations with the next best qualified bidder, and so on until a satisfactory agreement has been concluded.