



**REQUESTS FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)
AND TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)**

FOR

**SERVICES TO CONDUCT STUDY FOR 5G PUBLIC
CONSULTATION IN THE BAHAMAS**

RFP Issue Date: Friday, 29 July 2022

Extended Deadline for Proposals: Friday, 9 September 2022

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS AND TERMS OF REFERENCE

Request for Proposals (RFP) and Terms of Reference (TOR) for services to conduct study for 5G Public Consultation in The Bahamas

1. Introduction

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) is the independent regulator for the electronic communications sector (ECS) in The Bahamas comprising fixed and mobile telecommunications services, spectrum, numbering and broadcasting. URCA's powers and responsibilities for the ECS have been established under the Communications Act, 2009 (Comms Act), which charges URCA with the responsibility for implementing the ECS Policy and enforcing the competition provisions of the Comms Act.

One of the main policy objectives of the Comms Act¹ requires URCA to further the interests of consumers by promoting competition and in particular –

- (i) to enhance the efficiency of the Bahamian electronic communications sector and the productivity of the Bahamian economy;
- (ii) to promote investment and innovation in electronic communications networks and services; and
- (iii) to promote the optimal use of state assets, including radio spectrum.

The other main policy objective of the Comms Act requires URCA to further the interests of people in The Bahamas by promoting affordable access to high quality networks and carriage services in all regions of The Bahamas.

Amongst other things, the COVID-19 pandemic hastened the expansion of online learning, telehealth services, remote working, e-commerce, and other digital services. As the digital economy continues to develop, there is a real risk that those without reliable, affordable high-speed broadband connectivity will be excluded from participation.² The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) recently conducted an empirical study on the economic impact of broadband and found that broadband internet access in most small island developing states (SIDS), such as The Bahamas, is below the global average.³

URCA is also cognizant that advancements in technology are a catalyst for innovation and future development of The Bahamas and as such it is crucial that cutting edge technology such as the Fifth Generation of mobile broadband (5G) be available for consumption in The Bahamas where necessary. Broadband is an enabling technology that *“creates value and reduces costs by supporting applications in many different sectors such as agriculture, education, financial services, government, health and disaster management”*⁴. Therefore, it is critical that URCA identifies any existing broadband connectivity gaps and technological deficiencies in The Bahamas, and thereafter provide its

¹ Communications Act, 2009, s.4.

² The Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development Working Group Report on 21st Century Financing Models for Sustainable Broadband Development “21st Century Financing Models for Bridging Broadband Connectivity Gaps” (2021) accessed via https://broadbandcommission.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/2021/11/21st-Century-Financing-Models-Broadband-Commission.pdf ,at pg.1.

³ The International Telecommunications Union, “Economic impact of broadband in LDCs, LLDCs and SIDS: An empirical study” (2019) ITU Publications accessed via <https://www.itu.int/en/ITU-D/LDCs/Documents/2019/Economic-impact-of-broadband-in-LDCs,-LLDCs-and-SIDS.pdf> , at pg. iii.

⁴ See note 3 above at pg. v.

recommendations as to appropriate measures that may be taken to close such connectivity gaps to ensure that no person in The Bahamas is left behind.

2. Objective

For the purpose of fulfilling the ECS main policy objectives stated above, URCA seeks to engage with two categories of focus groups, by way of in-person meetings, to identify current gaps and technological deficiencies with respect to high-speed broadband connectivity in The Bahamas. The first category of focus groups will comprise representatives from key sectors and industries in The Bahamas (i.e., financial service providers, tourism and hospitality stakeholders, healthcare providers, central and local government, education providers, and the agriculture industry). The second category of focus groups will comprise members of the public, representative of various demographics (i.e., age, sex, socio-economic status, and family island residents).

3. Specific Terms of Reference for Consultancy Services

In light of the foregoing, this Request for Proposal and Terms of Reference (RFP and TOR) outlines the requirements for, and invites interested parties to submit quotations for consultancy services to solicit and engage with said focus groups and obtain and analyze data from said focus groups relative to gaps and demands for high-speed broadband connectivity in The Bahamas. The scope of work defined in this RFP and TOR requires the consultant ("Consultant") to carry out the following essential tasks:

- (i) Determine the appropriate research design and methodology;
- (ii) Develop suitable research instrument(s) for review by URCA's Director of Electronic Communications (DEC), the project leads and other team members;
- (iii) Determine the appropriate population and sample size for each of the said categories of focus groups;
- (iv) Develop strategies for engaging with each of the said categories of focus groups via in-person meetings;
- (v) Solicit required number of participants for each in-person focus group meeting;
- (vi) Engage with each of the said focus groups via in-person meetings and administer appropriate research instrument during said meeting in compliance with the accepted ethical considerations;
- (vii) Consolidate and analyze results from research instrument administered to each of the said categories of focus groups;
- (viii) Present and discuss results of the engagement and administering of research instrument to each of the said categories of focus groups to URCA, which should include the data collection results, descriptive analysis, analysis of results and summary of results; and
- (ix) Prepare final data analysis and report of results of the engagement and administering of research instrument to each of the said categories of focus groups, with raw data based on discussions and comments in the presentation.

4. Deliverables and outputs

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

- Prepare final research instrument(s);

- Determine appropriate population and sample size for each of the said categories of focus groups and develop strategies for engagement with and administering research instrument to said focus groups;
- Develop appropriate marketing and communication tools for attracting desired candidates for both categories of focus groups;
- Ensure the desired number of persons participate in the in-person focus group meetings as determined by the agreed upon sample size;
- Engage with and administer research instrument to each of the said categories of focus groups via in-person meetings;
- Analyse results from research instrument administered to each of the said categories of focus groups; and
- Submit Final Report to URCA which must include, at a minimum, the framework and methodology used; tabulation of all calls and/or contacts made as part of the engagement with each of the said categories of focus groups and the administering of the research instrument to said focus groups; tabulation of research instrument results; key findings and conclusions; and recommendations.

5. Reporting and Accounting

The Consultant will report directly to URCA's appointed Project Leads. The primary point of contact and project leads for the consultant regarding the day-to-day activities will be the Regulatory Officer - Legal and Regulatory Advisor – Technical from the URCA team.

The consultant will advise URCA's DEC on the progress of the work that is being conducted and will produce written status reports/updates as required by the DEC. Deliverables and outputs will be monitored and evaluated by URCA's Project Leads.

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

1. **Three (3) PRINTED COPIES** of the proposal, placed in sealed, opaque packages marked:

PROPOSAL FOR SERVICES TO CONDUCT STUDY FOR 5G PUBLIC CONSULTATION

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
 UTILITIES REGULATION AND COMPETITION AUTHORITY
 FREDERICK HOUSE
 FREDERICK STREET
 P.O. BOX N-4860
 NASSAU, THE BAHAMAS

2. COMPLETE PROPOSALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY NO LATER THAN 4:00 P.M. ON THE RESPONSE DEADLINE DATE OF 9 September 2022. LATE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.

Only physical submissions will be accepted and only in accordance with the above. 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 whether in addition to or instead of the above. URCA reserves the right to select any or to cancel this process and the proposed works.

Proposals should contain the following information:

- a) Prospective Consultant's Background Information;
- b) Technical Capability;
- c) Work Plan; and
- d) Financial Proposal.

Background Information

The proposal must provide, at a minimum, the following information:

- a) The prospective Consultant's name (and legal registered name if different);
- b) Certificate of Good Standing (if the prospective consultant is a company);
- c) Contact details for all correspondence (i.e., name, physical address, phone number, and email address);
- d) A copy of the current Business License;
- e) A copy of the current Certificate of Registration for VAT;
- f) A brief description of the primary business activities of the prospective Consultant; and
- g) The address of the prospective Consultant's website (if the prospective consultant does not have a website, then state the same.)

Technical Capability

The technical proposal must provide, at a minimum, the following information:

- a) A brief description of the Respondent's firm/organization 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;
- b) A description of the proposed research design methodology;

- c) A list of the proposed personnel by area of expertise, the position that would be assigned to each team member and their tasks; and
- d) CVs for each of the Respondent's proposed team members assigned to the project.

Work Plan

The Respondent would be expected to develop and submit a comprehensive work plan that sets out milestones in anticipation of 14 November 2022 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.

Financial Proposal

The financial proposal must include:

- a) A fixed price financial proposal of the Consultant's fees containing fee estimates and estimated expenses for consideration by URCA;
- b) An estimate of expenses, including airfares and hotels for travel to family islands to conduct in-person focus group meetings etc.;
- c) 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.
- d) The remuneration/rate sheet separately for each proposed team member assigned to the project and the number of days each will devote to the project; and
- e) All fees and expenses denominated in Bahamian Dollars.

Please note that any activities and items described in the proposal but not priced will be assumed to be included in the cost.

7. Conflicts of Interest

The prospective Consultant must disclose to URCA any potential or perceived conflict of interest within its proposal. 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.

8. Evaluation of Proposals

Each proposal will be reviewed and evaluated to determine whether it satisfies the submission requirements contained within this RFP and TOR. Failure to satisfy the submission requirements may be cause for rejection of the

proposal. The respective proposals will be ranked based on the following maximum allocation of points for specific elements of each proposal:

CRITERIA	MAXIMUM SCORE
Technical Evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Firm’s experience in completing projects of similar nature and scope – 15% • Qualification/experience of personnel proposed for assignment to the project (i.e., qualifications) – 10% • Completeness of response – 10% 	35%
Work Plan: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approach and methodology to performing the work in response to the Terms of Reference and Deliverables – 25% • Timetable for prompt completion of the project – 10% 	35%
Financial Evaluation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lowest financial proposal submitted by a technically qualified part will receive the highest score – 30% 	30%
TOTAL	100%

9. Timing

It is anticipated that the contract will commence on 5 September 2022 and submit the Final Report no later than 14 November 2022.

10. 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.

11. 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.