



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

INDIVIDUAL CONSULTANT

TO PROVIDE INTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

1. Introduction

This request for proposal seeks to identify and appoint an independent consultant to provide internal audit service to maintain and support an effective internal control function. The proposed consultancy services will be provided for a three-year period, commencing 1 January 2024.

2. Organization

2.1. The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (URCA) was established on 1 August 2009, as a corporate body, under the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority Act, 2009 (the 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 converged regulator for the electronic communications sector (ECS) covering radio and television broadcasting, radio spectrum, internet and data, pay-TV and voice telephony services and the energy sector (ES) governing the generation, transmission, distribution and supply of electricity. URCA currently regulates the ECS through the provisions of the Communications Act, 2009 (Comms Act) and the ES pursuant to the Electricity Act, 2015.

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

2.4. URCA currently employs 38 people who are trained in the disciplines of Human Resources, Business Administration, Economics, Engineering, Accounting and Law.

2.5. URCA is governed by a Board consisting of seven members: four non-executive members (including the Chairperson), and the CEO, Director of Utilities and Energy, and Director of Electronic Communications as executive members of the Board. The Act also 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 internal audit function is under the control and direction of the Audit Committee, and has unrestricted access to URCA's records, premises, and personnel pursuant to fulfilling its duties and responsibilities; subject to accountability, confidentiality and safeguarding of records and information.

2.6. URCA, in its effort to be an effective regulator, has ensured that the requisite finances are available to provide stakeholders with the best possible service and value for money. Under the Act, URCA is mandated to calculate fees annually at a level necessary to recover the anticipated cost of operations.

2.7. URCA currently uses Sage ERP (Accpac) version 6.8 software to execute its accounting functions. The active modules include the General Ledger, Accounts Receivables, Purchasing, Accounts Payable, Fixed Assets and Payroll.

3. Role and Objectives of Internal Audit

URCA desires to have an effective internal audit function which complies with best practices and adherence to *International Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing* as promulgated by the Institute of Internal Auditors. Among the objectives/standards are:

3.1. To assist URCA in accomplishing its objectives by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluating and improving the effectiveness of risk management, internal control and governance processes.

3.2. To review:

3.2.1. i) the reliability and integrity of information

3.2.2. ii) compliance with policies, regulations and contracts

3.2.3. iii) the safeguarding of assets

3.2.4. iv) the economical and efficient use of resources, and

3.2.5. v) established operational goals and objectives.

3.3. Primarily to assist the Board and management in the effective discharge of their responsibilities, furnishing them with analyses, audit reports, recommendations, counsel and information concerning the activities reviewed.

3.4. The internal audit function will remain free from interference, maintaining independence in mind and appearance.

4. Scope of Internal Audit

In addition to maintaining an internal audit function, URCA also employs a results-based management approach through the collection of key performance indicators. Legislation also requires URCA to submit annual value for money audits. Toward this end, specific measures have been identified and data will be collected. URCA's intent is to have all of these data collection and tracking processes inter-related to avoid duplication of effort. Similarly, the internal audit function should take full advantage of the data being collected under these other initiatives.

The scope of the Internal Audit function includes the following:

4.1. Examine, evaluate and report on the adequacy and effectiveness of URCA's governance, risk management and system of internal controls;

4.2. Improve management processes by highlighting risk areas that impact performance.

4.3. Evaluate the relevance, reliability and integrity of management, financial and operating data and reports;

4.4. Review the systems established to ensure compliance with those policies, plans, procedures, statutory requirements and regulations which could have a significant impact on operations;

- 4.5. Review the means of safeguarding assets and, as appropriate, verify the existence of such assets;
- 4.6. Evaluate the economy, efficiency and effectiveness with which resources are employed;
- 4.7. Review operations or programs to ascertain whether results are consistent with URCA's established objectives and goals, and whether the operations or programs are carried out as planned;
- 4.8. Assess the adequacy of established systems and procedures;
- 4.9. Assist the Audit Committee in developing its Annual Report, including evaluation of URCA's performance against its Annual Plan and its deliverance of value for money;
- 4.10. Review URCA's exposure to, and plans to mitigate, risk associated with IT governance and cyber security; and
- 4.11. Conduct special assignments and investigations on behalf of the Audit Committee into any matter or activity affecting the interests and operational efficiency of URCA.

5. The Proposal

The proposal should include amongst others:

- 5.1. A proposed plan of action to achieve the objectives of the internal audit function. Such a plan should cover short and medium-term steps to manage the internal audit function;
- 5.2. A list of references of previous and/or current internal audit appointments;
- 5.3. The resume of the individual who will perform the internal audit activity;
- 5.4. An undertaking to ensure continuity of staff on the project;
- 5.5. In so far as is possible, a comprehensive budget, showing the service activities proposed, with charge-out rates and budgeted hours per activity, detailing all assumptions made in arriving at a

proposed budget, including all costs factors. Preference will be given to proposals which show ingenuity in executing the work.

5.6. Note the following submission requirements:

5.6.1. Any contact with URCA during this proposal process should be exclusively with:
Faith Johnson, Chief Finance Officer (telephone 242-396-5223 and e-mail address fajohnson@urcabahamas.bs).

5.6.2. Proposals are to be submitted in sealed envelopes, marked "Proposal for Internal Audit Consultant" addressed to:

**Mr. J. Carlton Smith, CEO
Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority
Frederick House
New Providence
Bahamas**

5.6.3. Copies required: one (1) original and three (3) hard copies. An electronic copy **may be** requested at a later date. All proposals, in hard copy, should be submitted no later than 3 p.m. on 3 November 2023.

6. Evaluation Criteria

6.1. Proposals will be evaluated by a committee selected from URCA's management team.

6.2. The Evaluation Committee will make a recommendation to the Audit Committee who will make the final decision.

6.3. The proposals will be evaluated based on price (40%) and technical/functionality (60%)

6.4. Technical/functionality criteria consist of:

6.4.1. The relevant perceived strengths and weaknesses of the proposer in the field of internal audit including the ability to identify, evaluate and facilitate the minimization of URCA's exposure to risks associated with inadequate and ineffective internal controls.

6.4.2. Demonstrated ability to carry out specialized audits e.g. information system, fraud limitation and performance auditing.

6.4.3. A proposed plan of action to achieve the objectives of the outsourced internal audit function. This plan should cover short-, medium- and long-term objectives.

6.4.4. Public sector experience in the field of internal auditing.

6.4.5. The qualification and experience of the individual proposed to provide the service.

6.5. URCA has the right to accept and reject any proposal.

7. Appointment, Commencement and Duration

7.1. The consultant is expected to be available for commencing the project from 8 January 2024 or an established date by mutual agreement.

7.2. The parties shall, upon appointment of the consultant, sign a business agreement to govern their business relationship.

8. Appendices and Attachments

8.1 The following documents are available upon request:

8.1.1. Organization Chart.

8.1.2. Annual Report and 2023 Annual Plan including the audited financial statements for year ended December 31, 2022.

8.1.3. Unaudited management accounts for period ended 31 July 2023.

8.2. 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 you be selected as the Consultant.