



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

EXTERNAL AUDIT SERVICES

1. Introduction

The Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority (“URCA”) is a public authority established by the Utilities Regulation and Competition Authority Act, 2009, statute laws of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas (“URCA Act”). The annual accounts of URCA in respect of each financial year must be audited and presented annually as published by 30 April. URCA’s wishes to engage a suitably qualified firm to carry out external audit services.

2. Purpose/Objective

This request for proposal document (“RFP”) invites submissions from suitably qualified firms for the conduct of an annual audit of URCA’s financial statements for the years ending 31 December 2025 to 31 December 2027. Firms will be required to complete audit services no less than forty-five days ahead of the statutory period for publication (30 April). Interested firms should respond in accordance with this RFP outlining sufficient accounting, audit, and business experience to conduct the audit as mentioned.

3. Background

3.1. URCA was established on 1 August 2009, as a body corporate having perpetual succession, under 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.

3.2. By statute law, URCA is the regulator for the electronic communications sector (ECS), and Utilities and Energy Sector (UES). The UES includes responsibilities for the regulation of natural gas. URCA currently regulates the ECS through the provisions of the Communications Act, 2009 (as amended) and the UES through the Electricity Act, 2024 and the Natural Gas Act, 2024.

3.3. URCA’s responsibilities are prescribed by law and can be found in the URCA Act. Regulatory responsibilities are also outlined in the Communications Act 2009, Electricity Act 2024, and Natural Gas Act, 2024.

- 3.4. The offices of URCA are currently located at Frederick House, Frederick Street, New Providence.
- 3.5. URCA has a staff complement of approximately 40 people trained in the disciplines of Human Resources, Business Administration, Economics, Engineering, Accounting and Law. There are eight (8) areas within the organization that service the needs and statutory obligations of URCA. These areas are Administration, Audit, Consumer Relations, Data Governance and Information Management, Finance, Human Resources, Legal, Licensing and Enforcement and the Office of the Chief Executive Officer. There are two (2) sector regulating departments led by Directors. These departments are the Electronic Communications Sector (ECS) led by the Director of Electronic Communication and the Utilities and Energy Sector (UES) led by the Director of Utilities and Energy.
- 3.6. URCA is governed by a statutory Board consisting of seven members: four non-executive members (including the Chairperson), and three executive members comprising the CEO, Director of Electronic Communications and Director of Utilities and Energy.
- 3.7. The URCA Act provides for an Audit Committee. The Audit Committee is appointed by the Board and led by a chairperson who is not a member of the Board or staff of URCA. The URCA Act also provides for the establishment of a fund and provisions relative to the management of URCA's accounts.
- 3.8. URCA's internal audit services are currently supported by a Chief Internal Auditor and buttressed by an external audit firm.
- 3.9. For additional information regarding URCA please visit www.urcabahamas.bs.

4. Financial and Statutory Requirements for Completion of Audit

- 4.1 Section 39(4) of the URCA Act requires the annual accounts of URCA in respect of each financial year to be prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards and International Standards on Auditing. The accounts must be audited within four months after the expiry of URCA's financial year. URCA's financial calendar year end is 31 December each year. The audit must be completed no less than forty-five days ahead of the statutory period for publication (30 April) to meet statutory obligations.
- 4.2 URCA's financial statements are prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium-sized Entities (IFRS for SMEs) 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), required to be completed by 30 April of each year. The audit report will be published with the annual report.
- 4.3 The responsibility for all accounting and financial management systems of URCA is under the carriage of the Chief Financial Officer who reports directly to the Chief

Executive Officer. URCA prepares monthly financial statements which are presented to the Audit Committee and approved by the Board. Financial statements are prepared in accordance with IFRS for SMEs.

4.4 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 URCA Act, URCA is mandated to calculate fees annually, at a level necessary to recover the anticipated cost of operations.

4.5 URCA currently uses Sage ERP 2021 (Accpac) version 6.8 software to execute its accounting functions. The active modules include the General Ledger, Accounts Receivables, Purchasing, Accounts Payable and Payroll. Additionally, URCA uses Sage FAS 2021.1 Asset Accounting for Property, plant and equipment.

4.6 The last audited financial statements were prepared for the year ending 31 December 2024. The audit report was published in the annual report. A copy of the report can be found [here](#).

4.7 For further information about URCA you may visit www.urbahamas.bs.

5 Terms and Conditions

5.1 Interested firms intending to submit a proposal must review this RFP in its entirety including the requirements, terms, instructions, and specifications.

5.2 URCA shall incur no liability in the case of failure of a proposing firm to understand the contents of the RFP. It is the duty of the proposing firm to properly understand and examine the RFP and request any clarification or make any reasonable inquiry and satisfy itself as to the completeness and sufficiency of its response.

5.3 Bidder(s) are 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.

5.4 URCA, in its sole discretion, may modify the requirements, terms and conditions for this RFP.

5.5 All reports, communications, materials, information made or developed in connection with the performance of this assignment shall be promptly disclosed to and shall be the sole property of URCA.

6 Confidentiality

Data and information obtained during this RFP process will be treated as private and confidential by URCA and/or its agents.

7 Privacy

URCA acknowledges that proposals may include personal data. In the event that URCA receives personal data, the provisions of the Data Protection Act, 2006, Statute Laws of the Commonwealth of The Bahamas will apply.

8 Expectations of URCA

The successful bidder will be expected to submit a proposal that demonstrates the ability to:

- (a) Execute an efficient audit strategy having regard to the matters mentioned in paragraphs three (3) to six (6) above;
- (b) Actively engage with the client to ensure contract performance; and
- (c) Complete the audit as prescribed and support activities to ensure timely inclusion and publication in the Annual Report.

9 Scope of External Audit

- 9.1 The audits are to be performed in accordance with International Standards on Auditing. The term of the audit engagement is for three (3) years – reporting on the financial statements for the years ending 31 December 2025, 2026, and 2027.
- 9.2 The audit services provided must result in the standard deliverables, which include the following:
 - 9.2.1 Expression of an audit opinion on the fairness or otherwise of the annual financial statements of URCA stated in accordance with IFRS for SMEs.
 - 9.2.2 Disclosure of any irregularities and illegal acts that come to the attention of the auditors.
- 9.3 The Auditor will be required to present their findings and report to URCA's Audit Committee. The Auditor's clearance on final Draft Financial Statements will be required by 30 March of the reporting year for review and discussion by the URCA Audit Committee.

10 The Proposal

- 10.1 Bidders should respond to this RFP in proposal format. The proposal must include the following:

Firm Information and Qualifications

- 10.1.1 Details of the firm including legal and contact information. Supporting evidence should be provided.
- 10.1.2 Firm's experience in providing professional auditing services to public sector entities and to regulatory agencies.
- 10.1.3 Firm's expertise in the industries regulated by URCA.

Project Team

- 10.1.4 Evidence of the List of proposed personnel that will be assigned to the audit engagement and include their title/position and brief details of their qualifications and experience.

- 10.1.5 Sub-contracting details (if applicable) including names of the subcontractors and the portions of work the subcontractors will perform.

Audit Costs

- 10.1.6 Estimated hours and staff charge-out rates must be included. The estimated fees plus expenses and the basis for determining each one.

Audit Approach

- 10.1.7 Details of the firm's audit approach and execution strategy. These details should demonstrate how the firm intends to ensure that URCA meets its statutory deadline.

- 10.1.8 Details of how the firm intends to communicate with the client to ensure that deliverable time frames are met. Required frequency and availability should be clearly stated.

- 10.1.9 Details of the firm's consultation process for resolving any technical dispute or difficult accounting issue, including the use of any associate or affiliate firm.

Risk Approach

- 10.1.10 Details demonstrating how the firm will ensure continuity in the proposed audit team to avoid 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.

- 10.1.11 Details of strategies to avoid the risk of delay.

Independence and Conflict of Interest

- 10.1.12 Details of the firm's independence with respect to URCA including information on the nature of non-audit services provided to URCA, if any, and any implications of such services for any potential audit appointment.

- 10.1.13 The firm's monitoring policies to identify compliance with independence and conflicts of interest (actual or perceived) and fully disclose any such conflict of interest.

Disclosures

- 10.1.14 Bidders acknowledge that there is a continuing obligation to disclose any conflict of interest that exists or may arise during the RFP process. Bidders are required to disclose any actual or potential conflicts of interest that exists or may arise in connection with their participation in this Request for Proposal (RFP) process.

Accompanying Documents

10.1.15 Bidders should include supporting documentation where possible. At minimum, the following documents should be included:

- (a) Proof of adequate indemnity insurance*
- (b) Current Tax Compliance Certificate*
- (c) Evidence of a valid licence issued by Bahamas Institute of Chartered Accountants*
- (d) Firm's incorporation documents (where applicable). Where the firm may be a partnership, a copy of the partnership agreement.*

10.2 The submitted proposal must remain valid for a period of at least 60 days from the deadline for submissions.

11. Submission of Proposals

- 11.1 Bidders are responsible for ensuring that proposals are submitted prior to the deadline date and time.
- 11.2 The deadline for submission is 5:00 pm on **31 July 2025**. Bidders are encouraged to submit proposals in advance of the deadline.
- 11.3 Determination of submission will be based on the time stamp reflected in URCA's system.
- 11.4 Proposals must be submitted via email to procurement@urcabahamas.bs. Do not carbon copy or blind copy any URCA member, staff, contractor, or affiliate.
- 11.5 Submissions that do not adhere to 11.1 to 11.4 are disqualified evaluated and will not be disqualified.

12. Further Clarification

- 12.1 Questions about the RFP should be submitted to procurement@urcabahamas.bs no later than 4:00pm on 11 July 2025 the "Subject" line of the correspondence should state "Questions on RFP for External Audit Services."
- 12.2 URCA will conduct a virtual Q & A session on 14 July 2025 at 10:00am est. on MS Teams via the following link: <https://events.teams.microsoft.com/event/df3aa495-61ba-4d25-9392-b4e1aa5b60d1@c4e9ae2d-ad35-4caa-ac03-9c53166981f6> .
- 12.3 Questions submitted after the deadline stated or not raised during the pre-bid workshop will not receive a response.

13. Evaluation Criteria

- 13.1 Proposals will be evaluated by an Evaluation Committee selected by URCA's management team.

13.2 The Evaluation Committee will make a recommendation to the Audit Committee. The Audit Committee will make the final selection. The appointment will be subject to the Minister’s approval in accordance with section 39(4)(b) of the URCA Act.

13.3 The proposals will be evaluated as follows:

Qualifications and experience of project team.	25%
Firm’s experience serving public sector entities and regulatory agencies.	15%
Cost and Fees	25%
Audit approach and plan, including the firm’s ability to comply with statutory deadline(s).	25%
Risk Approach	10%

13.4 Only firms that meet the following mandatory criteria will be evaluated:

- (a) *Proof of adequate indemnity insurance*
- (b) *Current Tax Compliance Certificate*
- (c) *Evidence of a valid licence issued by Bahamas Institute of Chartered Accountants*
- (d) *Firm’s incorporation documents (where applicable). Where the firm may be a partnership, a copy of the partnership agreement.*

13.5 URCA has the right to accept or reject any proposal.

14. Evaluation Process

The following schedule includes key milestones and associated completion dates and is provided primarily for planning purposes.

Request for Proposal Published	30 June 2025
Deadline for Questions	11 July 2025
Q&A Session	14 July 2025
Deadline for Submission of Proposals	31 July 2025
Finalist Presentations	On or before 1 September 2025
Audit Firm Selection	On or before 5 September 2025
Audit Firm Informed	On or before 30 September 2025

15. Appendices and Attachments

15.1 The following items will be provided:

15.1.1 2023 Annual Report including the audited financial statements for the twelve-month period ended 31 December 2023.

15.1.2 2024 Annual Report including the audited financial statements for

the twelve-month period ended 31 December 2024.

15.1.3 Annual Plan for 2024.

15.1.4 Annual Plan for 2025.

15.2 The following items may be provided upon request:

15.2.1 Organization Chart

15.2.2 Unaudited management accounts for January 2025 to April 2025.

15.3 Unless publicly available, the documents and information provided to Bidders by URCA are provided **under strict confidence** and solely for use in the preparation of proposals responding to this RFP. Any use otherwise is deemed unlawful and URCA will take necessary legal action(s).

16. Contract

It is expected that services shall be performed on the basis of a contract to be agreed between URCA and the successful bidder. The contract will be based on the expectations set out in this RFP. In the event that agreement cannot be reached between the parties, URCA reserves the right to end negotiations and select an alternative bidder.