

Clarifications - RFP GVA26/002352 - Frame Agreement for Consultancy Services - Wathab

No.	Request for Clarification	Answer
	General note:	<i>Please consider Updated Annex B - Expert Daily Rate Schedule for your proposal submission</i> <i>- Expert: minimum 5 years of relevant professional experience in the discipline of the profile.</i> <i>- Senior Expert: minimum 10 years of relevant professional experience in the discipline of the profile, including demonstrated experience leading assignments of comparable scope, and/or experience in fragile or conflict-affected contexts.</i> <i>All rate lines in Annex B must be completed. Where a bidder does not currently have an expert at a given seniority level for a profile, the rate that would apply should such an expert be mobilised must nevertheless be quoted</i>
1	As the Framework Agreement is intended to support WatHab operations worldwide, may Framework Consultants accept or decline individual New Lot Requests (NLRs) based on their geographical expertise, operational capacity, security considerations, language capabilities, and resource availability, or is there an expectation to respond to all NLRs issued under the Framework Agreement?	Yes. Consultants may accept or decline individual NLRs based on geographical expertise, operational capacity, security considerations, language capabilities, and resource availability. It is understood that Consultants will have stronger capacity in certain regions. Consultants are expected to formally respond, accepting or declining.
2	Do the Key Personnel proposed at the Framework Agreement stage constitute a fixed resource pool for the duration of the agreement, or may additional experts be introduced in future NLR proposals, subject to ICRC's review and approval?	Additional experts may be added. See RfP: RPS 7 – Key personnel – Supporting Technical Staff: <i>"The experts proposed in the Framework Agreement proposal shall constitute the Consultant's core resource pool for the duration of the Agreement. When mobilised for any NLR assignment, the Consultant shall prioritise the deployment of these experts.</i> <i>Any substitution of proposed experts must be disclosed in the relevant NLR proposal. Replacement personnel must hold qualifications and experience equivalent to, or exceeding, those of the expert being replaced, subject to the Client's prior written approval"</i>
3	Where a future NLR requires specialized expertise or local implementation support, may Framework Consultants propose additional subcontractors or local partner organizations that were not identified in the initial Framework Agreement submission?	Yes

Clarifications - RFP GVA26/002352 - Frame Agreement for Consultancy Services - Wathab

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4	The RFP specifies Professional Indemnity Insurance with a minimum limit of CHF 5 million. Would ICRC consider equivalent professional liability arrangements or project-specific insurance solutions where consultants are able to obtain the required coverage upon award of specific assignments?	Equivalent professional liability arrangements or project-specific insurance solutions are acceptable, as long as they meet the RFP requirements in terms of the minimum insured amount (CHF 5 million), the scope of coverage, and the required duration of the insurance. The insurance policy must also be in place by the time the relevant agreement is signed so that coverage is effective from the start of the contractual engagement.
5	For firms that do not currently hold ISO 9001 certification, would a documented internal Quality Management System and established quality assurance procedures be considered an acceptable equivalent?	Yes. See RfP.
6	Are the expert daily rates submitted under Annex B expected to remain fixed throughout the entire Framework Agreement period (including any extensions), or may they be revised during Framework Agreement renewals or future NLRs?	Yes. Daily rates are expected to remain fixed throughout the entirety of the FA.
7	Should travel, accommodation, visas, security arrangements, and other field-related expenses be considered included within the submitted daily rates, or will these costs be budgeted and reimbursed separately under each individual NLR?	Travel and reimbursable costs shall be priced under individual NLR. See ToR.3.4.1 Field Missions: <i>"Outside the project country: The Consultant is responsible for all travel arrangements including transit, visas and pre-travel medical requirements. ICRC may provide invitation letters and advisory support. These costs will be defined in the offer for each NLR, based on the context and location of the project. ICRC provides War Risk Insurance, as per RFP - RETURNABLE PROPOSAL SCHEDULE 9 – Insurances."</i>
8	Does ICRC anticipate awarding the Framework Agreement to a predefined number of consultancy firms, or will the number of successful bidders depend solely on the outcome of the evaluation process?	There is no predefined number of consultancy firms.
9	Could you kindly provide an indication of how future NLRs will generally be awarded among Framework Agreement holders? For example, will they typically involve mini-competitions with technical and financial evaluations, direct selection based on expertise, or another procurement approach?	Award will be based on specific needs of NLR, including needs, context, and expertise of consultants. A mini-competition might be required and will be evaluated on a case by case basis.
10	Can consortium members, key personnel, and specialist subcontractors be adjusted for individual New Lot Requests provided that the required qualifications and overall consortium capacity are maintained?	Yes. Refer to RFP ToR.

Clarifications - RFP GVA26/002352 - Frame Agreement for Consultancy Services - Wathab

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11	May firms propose additional specialist profiles not listed in Annex B if required by future assignments?	Annex B constitutes the complete list of profiles under this Framework and must be submitted as issued, without modification or additional rate lines. Bidders may, if they wish, describe additional specialist expertise available within their firm elsewhere in their technical proposal, for information. Where a future assignment requires expertise not covered by an Annex B profile, the applicable profile and rate will be agreed at NLR stage
12	Can one expert be proposed under multiple expert profiles if qualified?	Yes. For the FA, one qualified expert may be proposed under multiple profiles. but at NLR, offers received are expected to have a single role for each expert.
13	Can multiple experts be proposed for each position category?	Yes
14	Can additional specialist firms be added as subcontractors during future NLRs?	Yes
15	Does ICRC expect local partners to be identified during the Framework proposal, or may they be proposed on a project-by-project basis?	Project-by-project basis during NLR. Local partners don't need to be named at Framework stage. See ToR section 3.5
16	Which regions are expected to generate the highest volume of assignments?	As per ToR Section 2.1, the FA is not geographically limited and covers any country or region where ICRC operates, with a focus on fragile and conflict-affected states.
17	Scope of services: We understand that the objective of this FA is to provide project management, technical, design and O&M advisory support to the ICRC WatHab unit in their projects to ensure provision of essential services for populations affected by armed conflict and other situations of violence. We also understand that ICRC WatHab projects may target urban or rural areas, or more specifically health centres or places of detention. In this regard, could you please confirm the scope of projects that may be considered under the FA?	The Framework Agreement is intended to provide technical support to the ICRC Water and Habitat Unit across a broad range of projects and contexts. Assignments will be predominantly related to urban and rural water supply systems, sanitation, wastewater and other essential infrastructure relevant to the Water and Habitat mandate. The exact scope, objectives, deliverables, location, and required expertise for each assignment will be defined in the corresponding New Lot Request (NLR) issued under the Framework Agreement.
18	Core team: Could you please confirm if the same expert can be positioned under multiple profiles, assuming their qualifications and previous experience are adequate? Could you also confirm whether multiple experts can be proposed (as suggestions) for one profile, assuming the daily rate would remain the same?	For the FA, one qualified expert may be proposed under multiple profiles. But at NLR, offers received are expected to have a single role for each expert. Bidders may propose more than one expert for a given profile, provided that all proposed experts meet the qualification and experience requirements. The applicable daily rate shall remain the same for all experts proposed under that profile. The technical evaluation will consider the overall suitability and consistency of the experts proposed for each profile. Consider revised Annex B

Clarifications - RFP GVA26/002352 - Frame Agreement for Consultancy Services - Wathab

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19	Technical Evaluation Criteria: We understand that 21 profiles are required, for which 15 points are allocated. Could you please confirm how these points will be allocated across the evaluation of the 21 experts? We also understand that the proposed experts will be evaluated according to their relevant qualifications, experience, languages, multidisciplinary coverage and proposed allocation to assignments. Could you please provide more detail on how each of these criteria will be evaluated with regards to the 15 points allocated?	The 15 points allocated to the proposed experts will be awarded based on an overall assessment of the proposed core team and its suitability to support the anticipated assignments under the Framework Agreement. The evaluation will consider the overall relevance of the team's qualifications, professional experience, language capabilities, multidisciplinary coverage, and the appropriateness of the proposed experts for the expected scope of services. The assessment will not necessarily attribute an equal number of points to each individual profile but will consider the overall strength and suitability of the proposed team.
20	RPS 6: Within the scope of this proposal that relates to intellectual services, could you please confirm that "assets" refers to the personnel of our company, or what other assets should be included?	Assets should be understood broadly and is not limited to personnel. It includes any resources that contribute to the delivery of the services, such as technical equipment, software, methodologies, management systems, offices, laboratories, and other organizational resources available to support the execution of assignments.
21	RPS 8: Whilst our in-house experts cover many of the profiles required, our core team may include some independent consultants with whom we work regularly for some profiles. Could you please confirm if these independent consultants should be include in RPS 8?	If independent consultants are proposed as part of the core team and are expected to contribute to assignments under the Framework Agreement, they should be included in RPS 8, together with an indication of their role and contractual relationship with your organization. Additional profiles may be submitted at NLR
22	RPS 9-12: According to §32, these RPS are not be included in the proposal. Could you please confirm that they are, indeed, only to be returned by the selected bidders? Also, is it necessary to return Annex F (mentioned in RPS 12)?	RPS 9-12 to be provided only by selected bidders. Annex F is not for signature, only for acknowledgement, as it is integral part of the FA to be signed upon awarding
23	Financial proposal: Could you please confirm that our financial proposal should only be composed of Annex B (that is, the daily rates of our experts) and that mission-related costs for any field deployments will be assessed later for each NLR?	The financial proposal shall consist only of the completed Annex B, indicating the daily rates for the proposed profiles. Any assignment-specific costs will be requested, evaluated and agreed separately for each NLR issued under the Framework Agreement, in accordance with the contractual provisions. Please consider Revised Annex B
24	RPS 6 #4 Financial Details requests information on "cash at bank and in hand". Could you please provide more details about the document required and the type of information to include. Does the document need to be provided and signed by our bank? Or is it a statement from our company regarding the amount of money available on a specific date?	List of information regarding financial figures over the past three years and cash at bank and in hand, provided by Bidder is sufficient

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25	Could you please provide further information on the maximum ceiling value of the Framework Agreement?	The Framework Agreement will not have a ceiling value (cap amount). The maximum agreement price is not fixed, as per the draft of the Annex D - Schedule 2: 1.1. In full consideration for the complete and satisfactory performance of the Services under this Contract, ICRC shall pay the Consultant a fixed contract price as per each Annex, signed for each New Lot Request. Payments will be milestone-based and linked to accepted deliverables. No advance payments will be made under this Framework Agreement. 1.2. The final contract price will be the sum of the value of those tasks to be completed as part of the framework agreement. The price of individual tasks to be completed under this framework agreement contract shall be agreed between the Employer and the Consultant in advance and shall be a ceiling costs based upon an estimated level of effort and the rates included in the schedule
26	For several expert positions, the Terms of Reference specify the required qualifications and experience but do not indicate a minimum number of years of professional experience. Would it be acceptable to nominate any expert who fully meets the stated qualification and experience requirements, regardless of the total years of experience? Or does ICRC recommend nominating only senior experts, for example with more than 5–10 years of relevant professional experience, whenever possible?	Please consider revised Annex B Expert: minimum 5 years of relevant professional experience in the discipline of the profile. Senior Expert: minimum 10 years of relevant professional experience in the discipline of the profile, including demonstrated experience leading assignments of comparable scope, and/or experience in fragile or conflict-affected contexts.
27	Would it be acceptable to nominate the same expert for more than one position, provided that the expert fully meets the requirements of each role and has sufficient availability to perform the responsibilities associated with all assigned positions?	Yes. For the FA, one qualified expert may be proposed under multiple profiles. but at NLR, offers received are expected to have a single role for each expert. Consider revised Annex B
28	Could ICRC please confirm whether any page limits apply to the technical proposal and the CVs of the proposed experts? If no page limits are prescribed, may bidders use their standard proposal and CV formats?	No page limits apply to the technical proposal or to expert CVs. Bidders may use their standard formats, provided that all Returnable Proposal Schedules and any prescribed templates are completed as required

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29	Reference: ToR (Annex A), Section 3.3.3 (Conditional Tranche) and Section 4 (Category C); RPS 6, Financial Proposal instructions. Section 3.3.3 of the Terms of Reference defines a single Conditional Tranche mechanism, priced at NLR issuance against BoQ rates. Section 4 and the Returnable Proposal Schedule 6 financial-proposal instructions, however, refer to “Type 1 CT” and “Type 2 CT” without defining either term. Could ICRC clarify the distinction between CT Type 1 and CT Type 2, and confirm how this relates to the general definition given in Section 3.3.3?	This distinction is a mistake. There is only one type of CT, as clarified by section 3.3.3.
30	Reference: ToR Section 1.3; Section 3.2 (NLR process); Section 4, Category E (M18). Could ICRC confirm whether an expedited or simplified activation route is envisaged for (a) Category E (M18) punctual advisory input, and/or (b) New Lot Requests below a defined size or duration threshold, or whether the standard NLR process set out in Section 3.2 applies uniformly in all cases?	The standard NLR process (Section 3.2) applies as the default. ICRC may apply a simplified activation proportionate to the size, duration or advisory nature of an assignment, as specified in the relevant NLR.
31	Reference: ToR Section 4, Category A (M01–M06). For projects spanning more than one successive New Lot Request (for example, a feasibility-stage NLR followed by a design-support NLR), should Category A missions be re-activated within each new NLR, or are they intended to run continuously under an initial NLR spanning the project's duration?	Category A missions are activated per NLR. In cases where continuity could improve efficiency, ICRC may instead issue a single NLR covering multiple stages. The applicable arrangement is specified in each NLR
32	Reference: ToR Section 3.7 (Exclusion Clause). Could ICRC confirm the intended scope of the Exclusion Clause, specifically, whether it applies only to (a) bidding for the execution of physical works or a works-supervision-engineer role on a project the Consultant has designed or specified, or whether it also extends to (b) subsequent consultancy New Lot Requests on the same project?	The Exclusion Clause is intended to prevent a Consultant that has designed or specified a project from subsequently bidding for or undertaking the execution of the physical works (in the capacity of contractor) on that same project. It does not exclude the Consultant from providing works-supervision services on that project, nor from subsequent consultancy New Lot Requests on the same project.

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33	Reference: ToR Section 3.5 (Sub-Contracting & Local Partners). Given the unlimited geographic scope of the Framework Agreement, could ICRC confirm that local partners for geographies not identified at framework-proposal stage may be disclosed at the relevant New Lot Request proposal stage, with NLR award constituting ICRC's approval for that engagement?	Confirmed.
34	Reference: ToR Section 3.4.1 (Travel); RFP Section 6.2 (Rate Application). Could ICRC confirm the intended basis for quoting field mission costs that vary by security context and location, specifically, whether such costs should be quoted per NLR as (a) reimbursable at-cost items, (b) fixed lump sums per mission, or (c) at the bidder's discretion, subject to the specific NLR's instructions?	Such costs are quoted per NLR at the bidder's discretion, subject to the specific instructions of the relevant NLR.
35	Reference: Returnable Proposal Schedule 9, Sections 1.2 and 2.2 (Insured Parties). Returnable Proposal Schedule 9 requires Professional Indemnity and Public Liability insurance extending to the Consultant's sub-contractors. As the Consultant's local-partner roster may evolve as new NLR geographies arise over the term of the Framework Agreement, could ICRC confirm whether each newly engaged local partner must be individually named on the Consultant's policy, or whether a policy extending cover to sub-contractors generally is sufficient?	The Consultant is responsible for ensuring that any subcontractors engaged under the Framework Agreement are covered by the required insurance. Whether this is done by specifically naming each subcontractor in the policy or through a policy that provides coverage for subcontractors more generally depends on the terms of the insurance policy. In either case, it is the Consultant's responsibility to ensure that all subcontractors carrying out work under the Framework Agreement are appropriately insured in line with the RFP requirements.
36	Reference: ToR Section 3.5 – "ICRC may provide a list of previously vetted local firms as a reference." Could ICRC confirm whether this list is available to bidders at proposal stage, or whether it is shared only following contract award and/or on a New Lot Request basis as relevant geographies arise?	This would be provided at NLR.

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37	Reference: Returnable Proposal Schedule 7 – Key Personnel – Supporting Technical Staff; Annex B – Expert Daily Rate Schedule. Returnable Proposal Schedule 7 provides a table of 8 numbered entries for Key Personnel, whereas Annex B – Expert Daily Rate Schedule lists 19 distinct expert profiles (Ref. 1.1 to 3.11) plus one further profile under reference NKP-1, each requiring a daily rate. Could ICRC confirm whether bidders are expected to submit a CV for each profile listed in Annex B, and whether all such profiles are to be considered Key Personnel for the purposes of Returnable Proposal Schedule 7, or whether only a subset (for example, the 8 entries provided for in the RPS 7 table) is required at proposal stage, with the remaining profiles held as the Consultant's wider resource pool to be mobilised as specific New Lot Requests require?	Please consider Updated Annex B, with rates for experts and senior experts.
38	Reference: Annex B – Expert Daily Rate Schedule, reference NKP-1. As the countries and locations in which New Lot Requests will be issued are not known at proposal stage, could ICRC clarify what is meant by the reference “NKP” in Annex B, and which category or categories of local or national staff this reference is intended to cover, so that bidders can price and resource this line consistently?	NKP=NON KEY PERSONEL