

USTDA Feasibility Study: Telecommunications Backbone Program

Presolicitation Notice

Reference Number: 0380025A

Classification Code: B – Special studies and analysis – not R&D

Contracting Office Address

United States Trade and Development Agency, TDA, USTDA, Ministry of
Communications of Afghanistan, C/O US TDA 1000 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1600,
Arlington, VA, 22209-3901

Description

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PLEASE DO NOT CONTACT CONTRACTS OFFICE

Proposal Submission Place:

Afghan Ministry of Communications
c/o U.S. Trade and Development Agency
1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1600
Arlington, VA 22209

Attention: Telecommunications Backbone Program - Afghanistan.

The Ministry of Communications of Afghanistan (MoC) invites submission of proposals from interested U.S. firms that are qualified on the basis of experience and capability to conduct a feasibility study for a Telecommunications Backbone Program for the country of Afghanistan.

Afghanistan has recognized the importance of telecommunications to achieving the nation's development and reconstruction goals. An effective communications infrastructure would help stimulate economic growth, raise living standards and restore a sense of community and common purpose to the Afghan people. A modern communications network would play a vital role in narrowing the physical distances that separate villages and towns and dramatically improve access to government services, educational opportunities and humanitarian relief efforts. Moreover, modern communications support and enable all other sectors upon which the reconstruction efforts depend. Today Afghanistan has one of the weakest telecommunications systems in the world. Statistically, only one out of every 625 Afghans has access to telephone service, yielding a teledensity of 0.16 telephone lines for every 100 people. This level is far below the developing country average of 2.6 lines per 100, and well below the World

Bank's targets for effectively stimulating economic growth. All telephone users are concentrated in the main cities of Kabul, Herat, Mazar e Sharif, Jalalabad and Kandahar. Practically speaking, telephone service is effectively non-existent in most areas of the country. There is no functioning terrestrial telecom network and communications between provinces is restricted to limited satellite services. Internet and data services have only recently begun in Kabul. Government operations and the management of civil affairs are hampered by the absence of reliable communications services. After 23 years of conflict and stalled investment, the entire sector needs to be rebuilt from the ground up. A critical project for restoring the productive capacity of the telecom sector is to establish a national high-speed backbone network utilizing funding from the international donor community.

The MoC proposes to build a 3300km backbone ring linking many of the principal cities of Afghanistan. These include Kabul, Maidansher, Ghazni, Kandahar, Herat, Qala e Naw, Maimana, Shiberghan, Mazar e Sharif, Aibak, Polikhomree and Charikar. Additionally, the backbone will provide connectivity to international cable facilities: from Herat to Iran and Turkmenistan; from Kandahar to Pakistan; from Mazar-e-Sharif to Uzbekistan; and from Kunduz to Tajikistan. It is envisioned that, wherever possible, the fiber route will parallel the national roadway network that is also currently being reconstructed. Due to the mountainous terrain of the countryside, an estimated 85% of the route will be covered by buried fiber optic cable and the remaining 15% will be high-speed microwave.

The U.S. firm selected to conduct this feasibility study will be paid in U.S. dollars from a \$280,081 grant to the MoC from the U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA). The Grant Agreement is expected to be signed soon.

A detailed Request for Proposals (RFP) is available from USTDA, at 1000 Wilson Blvd., Suite 1600, Arlington, VA 22209. Requests for the RFP should be faxed to the IRC, USTDA at 703-875-4009. In the fax, please include your firm's name, contact person, address, and telephone number. Some firms have found that RFP materials sent by U.S. mail do not reach them in time for preparation of an adequate response. Firms that want USTDA to use an overnight delivery service should include the name of the delivery service and your firm's account number in the request for the RFP. Firms that want to send a courier to USTDA to retrieve the RFP should allow one hour after faxing the request to USTDA before scheduling a pick-up. Please note that no telephone requests for the RFP will be honored. Please check your internal fax verification receipt. Because of the large number of RFP requests, USTDA cannot respond to requests for fax verification. Requests for RFPs received before 4:00 PM will be mailed the same day. Requests received after 4:00 PM will be mailed the following day. Please check with your courier and/or mailroom before calling USTDA.

Only U.S. firms and individuals may bid on this USTDA financed activity. Interested firms, their subcontractors and employees of all participants must qualify under USTDA's nationality requirements as of the due date for submission of qualifications and proposals and, if selected to carry out the USTDA-financed activity, must continue to meet such requirements throughout the duration of the USTDA-financed activity. All

goods and services to be provided by the selected firm shall have their nationality, source and origin in the U.S. or host country. The U.S. firm may use subcontractors from the host country for up to 20 percent of the USTDA grant amount. Details of USTDA's nationality requirements and mandatory contract clauses are also included in the RFP.

Interested U.S. firms should submit their Proposal to Ministry of Communications of Afghanistan c/o USTDA **by 4:00 P.M. March 5, 2003**, at the above address. Evaluation criteria for the Proposal are included in the RFP. Price will not be a factor in contractor selection, and therefore, cost proposals should NOT be submitted. MoC reserves the right to reject any and/or all Proposals. MoC also reserves the right to contract with the selected firm for subsequent work related to the project. MoC is not bound to pay for any costs associated with the preparation and submission of Proposals.

Original Point of Contact

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This information is also available on <http://www.fedbizopps.gov>.