**Millennium Challenge Account – Georgia (MCA-Georgia)**

**Questions and Answers for RFP on**

**“Industry-led Skills and Workforce Development Project Manager”**

**PP04/ ISWD/CS/QCBS/01**

TO ALL CONSULTANTS:

###### Subject: Answers to Clarification Questions Part 3

DATE: 11th of June, 2014

1. **Question**

**FORM TECH 2**:

In this form bidders are requested to fill in the data relevant to the balance sheets of the last 3 years.

For balance sheets produced in currencies other than US$, is there a specific exchange rate to be adopted or referred to a specific date?

**Answer:** *The bidder must use the exchange rate applicable at the time of each financial statement. For example, a balance sheet dated December 31, 2012, would require the exchange rate between the local currency and the USD on that date from an acceptable entity, such as the Central Bank of that country.*

1. **Question**

In case of proposals submitted by an association among partners, are we requested to submit under Form TECH-1 the association internal agreement or could it be submitted at a later stage?

If the agreement has to be provided at this stage, is this a commitment letter from the partners to jointly submit the bid?

**Answer:** *In TECH-1 it needs to be noted that the consultant is submitting the proposal in association with other partner/partners. In such case the TECH-1 needs to be accompanied by an Annex - a Joint Venture or Association Agreements (****but without showing any Financial Proposal information****). Association Agreement in this case is a signed letter from the partner/partners, stating that they have entered into the association agreement with the leading consultant.*

1. **Question**

At page 115, under the “Required expertise and staffing” it is stated among others that preference will be given to projects implemented in Eastern Europe, the South Caucasus or post-Soviet countries. Will on-going projects be considered as eligible?

**Answer:** *Yes, ongoing projects will be considered as eligible for regional experience.*

1. **Question**

Under Criterion A (i), at least two contracts are required supporting modern workforce development. Does the term “contract” also include grants or cooperative agreements?

**Answer:** *Grants and Cooperative Agreements will qualify as “Contract” under this Criterion.*

1. **Question**

Is there a preference or Expectation that Key Staff will be direct-hire employees of the prime consultant or may they be employees of a sub-consultant or individual contract employees?

**Answer:** *There is no preference as to how the Key Staff are contracted. It is up to the consultant to decide who will hire the Key Staff and how they will be contracted.*

1. **Question**

On P. 98, it states that one or more best practice examples should be adopted by at least 24 institutions, while on Page 104 it states that up to 24 best practices should be taken up by 24 providers. Is this the case? Is there confusion? Can you explain?

**Answer:** The information on page 98 **is correct**, the discrepancies on page 104 shall be neglected.

1. **Question**

Please clarify the evaluation factors for the oral presentation. How does the oral presentation evaluation factors figure into the factors for the technical (.70) and financial (.30) proposals overall?

**Answer:** *The Oral Presentation is a complementary factor for better understanding of the Technical Proposal and therefore it is evaluated in response to the prescribed Evaluation Criteria and within 70 points.*

1. **Question**

How much notice will be given to the bidders for scheduling of the oral presentation? For instance, we plan to travel from the United States to Georgia to present the oral presentation in person.

**Answer:** *As RFP says, “Proposal should be accompanied by an oral presentation in person (or by Skype or similar and supported method) to a technical evaluation panel and representatives of MCA-Georgia, MCC, and the GoG in Tbilisi between June 24 to 27, 2014”. Every evaluated consultant that is not disqualified will be invited for the presentations. Specific invitations stating time and venue of the presentation will be sent out on June 23, Monday morning, local time.*

1. **Question**

If mobilization is anticipated for August and part of September 2014, with the based period to commence in September and be completed by the end of 2014, does this mean that the mobilization is not considered as part of the base period?

**Answer:**  *Mobilization is part of the base period. The date for* ***base period*** *is not anticipated to be later than September 1, 2014.*

1. **Question**

If mobilization is not part of the base period, how does MCA-Georgia define “mobilization” as generally mobilization would include office start-up and start-up personnel, and those costs would be included in the budget? How does MCA-Georgia anticipate that the Project Manager would recover these costs?

**Answer:** *The consultant should build in its mobilization and associated costs to its financial proposal. Payment will be made according to the payment schedule as indicated in the RFP.*

1. **Question**

It was indicated that some grants of up to $10,000 may be issued under Task 2. As grants under Task 1 are anticipated to be between $300,000 and $3,000,000, should the Project Manager set aside some of the funding from the $11.5 – 12.5 million pool for the Task 2 grants? How does MCA envision this to work?

**Answer:** *RFP says on Page 103, under paragraph: Task 2: Strengthening TVET Provider Practice*

*Mechanism(s) to fund the activity that may include, but is not restricted to, grants of up to $10,000; if grants are used, they will be the part of the overall funding available for the competitive grants program.*

*It is not mandatory to propose small scale grant disbursement as a pathway to fulfill Task 2.*

*The Grant Manager could propose their different view/approach, but in that case the $11.5 – 12.5 million pool is also considered the source for the Task 2 grants****.***

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1. **Question**

How will task-orders for Task 3 technical assistance be awarded? How would MCA-Georgia recommend that bidders budget for this task?

**Answer:** *Technical assistance should be priced by calculating the total budget for expert advisors for 48 person months.*

1. **Question**

Is it possible for a Georgian company to take part in the proposal?

**Answer:** *Yes. Georgian companies can take part in this procurement process.*

1. **Question**

If the consortium of two or more companies is admissible?

**Answer:** *Yes. The Consortium of two or more Companies is admissible.*

1. **Question**

Is it mandatory that all members of the consortium to be the Georgians? / Whether it is mandatory, then in the case of foreign companies it need to be the European Union or United States?

**Answer:** *It is NOT mandatory for the consortium members to be Georgians. The Request for Proposal (RFP) is open to all eligible entities (“Consultants”) who wish to respond.*  *In case of foreign companies, there is no limitation toonly EU or USA companies.*

1. **Question**

The paragraph in the RFP that references the oral presentation on p.26 suggests that consultants should submit to MCA-Georgia additional materials to support the presentation. Can you provide more specification regarding the additional materials that MCA-Georgia is expecting?

**Answer:** *Presentation handouts shall be submitted together with the technical proposal in hard and electronic formats.* ***No financial information shall be disclosed during the presentations.***

1. **Question**

Will MCA-Georgia publish the full list of participants who attended the pre-proposal conference?

**Answer:** *No. MCA-Georgia does not disclose the information regarding the registered consultants.*

1. **Question**

Regarding the oral presentations - we would like for our core team to attend in person, in order to present our approach and answer MCA-Georgia’s questions as thoroughly as possible. With that in mind, and in order to facilitate travel planning, will MCA-Georgia provide more concrete information regarding the exact date for the presentations?

**Answer:** *See Response to Question 8.*

1. **Question**

In the RFP, Section 3, page 26 an ‘oral presentation’ is mentioned which is to accompany the proposal. Could you please specify who MCA expects to participate in this presentation on behalf of the bidding company (managerial staff, key experts/Team Leader, home office project director, finance manager)?

**Answer:** *It is up to the consultant to decide on who will be participating at the presentation. It is consultant’s responsibility to ensure the availability of individuals who will be able to respond to the range questions that might arise from the members of the Technical Evaluation Panel in response to your proposal and the evaluation criteria.*

*In case of in person or Skype presentation we expect no more than 3 representatives from each bidder.*

1. **Question**

Which period of time and services does the financial proposal have to cover (base period, option years one to four …)?

**Answer:** *The financial proposal should be the the total price which is calculated as the sum of the prices for the Base Period + Option Year Period 1 + Option Year Period 2 + Option Year Period 3 + Option Year Period 4 + the total Task 3 costs (monthly technical assistance rate X 48 months.)*

1. **Question**

With reference to page 39 of the RFP, Section 4, is it correct that the Technical Proposal – in particular TECH-6 (Work Plan), TECH-9 and TECH-10 – has to cover only the Base Period and Option year 1, i.e. a total of 16 months?

**Answer:** TECH-6 (Work Plan part only), has to cover only the Base Period and Option year 1. TECH-9 and TECH-10 has to cover *the Base Period, Option Year Period 1, Option Year Period 2, Option Year Period 3, Option Year Period 4, and Task 3*

1. **Question**

Does MCA envisage more non-key personnel inputs than the 48 person months to be allocated to the technical assistance under Task 3?

**Answer:** *Allocation of non-key staff to support the technical assistance is up to the consultant.*

1. **Question**

In the RFP, Section 4A, page 36 it reads: “Provide a brief description of the background and organization of your firm/entity and of each associate for this assignment”. Does the term ‘associate’ also apply to sub-consultants and is it necessary, in the case of working with a sub-consultant, to provide a Joint Venture or Association Agreement as in this required in the case of the full-fledged associated consultant?

**Answer:** *Sub-Consultants are different from associates and you are not required to provide any Joint Venture or Association Agreements with them. This section applies to the leading Consultant Organization and its associates (if applicable).*

1. **Question**

Section 1: Instructions to Consultants states (page 19 of the RFP) “It is the responsibility of the Consultant, before starting 6.3 financial negotiations, to contact the local tax authorities to determine the local Tax amount to be paid by the Consultant under the Contract. In no event, shall the MCA-Georgia be responsible for the payment or reimbursement of any Taxes. Unless there are exceptional reasons, the financial negotiations will involve neither the remuneration rates for staff nor other proposed unit rates.”  Does this mean there is no agreement between the US and Georgian government to implement government related work tax free?

**Answer:** *The United States of America, acting through the Millennium Challenge Corporation and MCA-Georgia on behalf of Georgian Government have signed a five-year compact on the 26th of July, 2013 which is available on the following MCC website link* <http://www.mcc.gov/pages/countries/program/georgia-compact-ii>. *Annex VI of this document talks about the Tax provisions. For your convenience, this extract from the Compact will be shared with all consultants.*

1. **Question**

Section 6: Terms of Reference (page 98 of the RFP) states “Specific technical assistance requirements will be issued as separate fixed-price ‘task orders’ which will include a scope of work, level of effort, and deliverable and payment schedule.”  Please confirm that MCA intends to issue separate task orders to the Consultant in addition to funding for ISWD.

**Answer:** Funding for the technical assistance is part of the total funding identified for the Industry-led Skills and Workforce Development Project. It is not separately funded.

1. **Question**

Section 6: Terms of Reference (page 102 of the RFP) states “Procurement of goods, works, and services valued over USD 25,000 per contract will be done under management of the MCA-Georgia. The Project Manager will be in charge of preparation of solicitation documents and managing of the flow of procurement activity.”  Please explain how the grant money will flow and clarify the role of the Consultant.  If the MCA-Georgia makes a grant of over USD 25,000 per contract does MCA-Georgia make the payment directly to the grantee or will the money flow through the Consultant and the Consultant will make the payment to the grantee?

**Answer:** *Regardless of the size of the grant, no grant funds are expected to be disbursed by the Consultant to any grantee. Disbursement of all program funds is handled by MCA-Georgia’s Fiscal Agent, which is an external financial management contractor.*

1. **Question**

Section 4A Form TECH-6 (page 39 of the RFP) requires that the Consultant “Provide an MS Project work plan for the Base Period and Option Year 1”.  Form TECH-10 Work and Deliverables Schedule is also required.  This seems duplicative.  Will MCA-Georgia accept one or the other?

**Answer:** *Please submit all requested TECH forms. TECH-10 must cover* *the Base Period, Option Year Period 1, Option Year Period 2, Option Year Period 3, Option Year Period 4, and the Task 3.*

1. **Question**

In Section 4A the sample format for Form TECH-10 is for 12 months.  However, the instructions state “Indicate all main activities of the assignment, including deliverables and other milestones, such as MCA-Georgia approvals”.  Please confirm that Form TECH-10 should cover 12 months and not the life of the project.

**Answer:** *TECH-10 has to cover* *the Base Period, Option Year Period 1, Option Year Period 2, Option Year Period 3, Option Year Period 4, and the Task 3.*

1. **Question**

In response to a question suggesting that technical assistance is important and should be expanded, you answer in part: “There is an incentive for a lower cost for the project management and technical assistance, but this will be balanced by a 70% weighting of the technical proposal.” However, if the technical evaluation committee decides to agree with the view that technical assistance should be expanded, it seems inappropriate to deduct points for dollars allocated to this.  Would MCA please consider removing the dollar value for technical assistance from the cost determination, so that the cost determination in the evaluation is only based on the management cost, and that the allocation between technical assistance and grants is either left to proposals and evaluated in the technical evaluation, or simply left to be determined during implementation?

**Answer:** *The technical evaluation panel will evaluate proposals on the basis of the evaluation and qualification criteria specified in Section 3 of the RFP. The method of selection is Quality and Cost Based Selection.*

*The weights given to the Technical and Financial Proposals are: T = 0.7 and F = 0.3*

1. **Question**

Section 4B Form FIN-4 (page 51 of the RFP) are “Key Professional Staff” in no. 1 the same as “Professional staff” in no. 2?

Answer: *Yes. These refer to the same staff.*

1. **Question**

Section 4A Form TECH-2 (pages 34-35 of the RFP), calls for ‘certified’ financial statements for the last three (3) years, supported by tax returns.’   Is the ‘certification’ requirement satisfied by presentation of the tax returns or does it have additional meaning as defined by MCA. Is the entirety of the tax return to be submitted or is it sufficient to attach only those pages from the return that indicate sales (i.e., turnover), cost and profit or loss of the Consultant.

**Answer:** *In case of submitting certified financial statements for the last three (3) years, it should be supported by Tax returns in its entirety.*

1. **Question**

With respect to 3.7 and 6.3 in Section 1, please confirm that the cost of i) Taxes, as defined under 609g of the Compact and/or ii) local Tax amount to be paid by the Consultant under the Contract, will NOT be reimbursed by MCA under this contract and should not be included by the Consultant in its pricing under this proposal – UNLESS, as stated as 1.10e in Section 5, MCA agrees to reimburse such Taxes.

**Answer:** *Tax provisions are stipulated in the Compact and any agreement/contract signed shall be in conformity with these Provisions as they are supreme Laws regulating MCA-Georgia’s conduct.Therefore any agreement made by the MCA-Georgia will be in accordance to this provisions.*

1. **Question**

In the first round of questions, MCA gives an example payment schedule. That schedule references an Annual Payment, e.g. 5% of the Annual Payment for the Annual Workplan, 15% at the launch of the second round of grants. How will MCA compute the Annual Payment? Is it the approved amount of that year’s budget?  How long after the contract starts will the first Annual period commence?

**Answer:** *Annual payment is the approved amount of that year’s total price as indicated in Form Fin-3. We anticipate that first Annual period will start immediately after ending the base period, if MCA-G decides to renew the contract.*

1. **Question**

In relation to task 2 (on page 97) it is mentioned that MCA Georgia already identified best practices amongst local TVET providers, and that priority areas are already identified. Other areas can be proposed by the Project Manager. However this seems not in tune with the next paragraph where it is mentioned that the Project Manager will identify existing best practices, build capacity within identified institutions, and strengthen these drawing on international best practice.

* 1. Can you clarify if the “best practice” will need to be identified by the Project Manager, or by MCA- Georgia?
	2. Can you clarify if the institutions will need to be identified by the Project Manager, or by MCA- Georgia?
	3. If a small grant (less than 10.000 USD) is used for achieving the objectives of this task, is it expected to be deducted from the 11.5 MLN Grant or is it preferred to add these costs to our budget?

**Answer:** *(a)* *The mechanism to identify “best practices” will be developed during the Base Period and during the beginning of the “Option year 1” by the Project Manager.*

*(b)Institutions will be identified by the Project Manager.*

*(c) The RfP states: Mechanism(s) to fund the activity that may include, but is not restricted to, grants of up to $10,000; if grants are used, they will be the part of the funding available for the competitive grants program.*

1. **Question**

The TOR specifies in relationship with eligible organizations active or planning to be active in the provision of professional/technical training and education “Organizations should be appropriately authorized and/or accredited by the Government of Georgia or have internationally recognized accreditation or approved certification to deliver training programs.”

1. What is the definition accepted by MCA Georgia of “organizations having internationally recognized accreditation or approved certification to deliver training programs”?
2. Should the respective accreditation be endorsed by the Georgia competent authorities?

**Answer:**

*a) It is anticipated that the Project Manager will propose how to define organizations having internationally recognized accreditation or approved certification to deliver training program and we expect it to be outlined in the “Grants Manual”, elaborated during base period*

*b) Yes, by Georgian Education Quality Enhancement Centre (EQE)*

1. **Question**

The TOR provides limited information on the respective roles and responsibilities of the Ministry of Education and / or other stakeholders in the project. If possible, can MCA elaborate on this matter?

**Answer:** *The Ministry of Education is one of the major stakeholders of the process, and, at the same time, is the focus of technical assistance provided as outlined in TASK 3.*

1. **Question**

In relation to task 3 (page 98) it is mentioned that specific technical assistance requirements will be issued as separate fixed-price “task orders”. Is this fixed based on the monthly technical assistance rate (which will be included in Form FIN 3)?

**Answer:** *Form FIN 3 shall include separate fixed-price “task orders” (referred to as Options in some cases).*

1. **Question**

Should the monthly technical assistance rate also be included for different experts working on task 3 in FIN-4?

**Answer:** *Yes. FIN-4 shall include all the rates for the technical assistance advisors for the indicative tasks identified in the Terms of Reference.*

1. **Question**

In the explanatory note for the fully loaded prices for FIN-2-3-4, the RFP refers for travel related expenses to PDS 3.6, however in the Proposal Data Sheet item 3.6 is not included. Can you provide the missing information here?

**Answer:** *PDS 3.6 was eliminated and is not required*.

1. **Question**

Furthermore should the fully loaded prices used for FIN-2-3-4 also include the costs for the annual conference?

**Answer:** *Yes, the cost for the annual conference must be included.*

1. **Question**

In relation to task 4 (page 99), the Project Manager would be expected to fully fund the first conference, in subsequent years the Project Manager will need to seek sponsorship. If we understand this correctly, we should also reduce the budget for the conference in our financial proposal accordingly.

**Answer:** *Yes.*

1. **Question**

In relation to task 4 can you clarify if the following costs are not part of the Project Manager financial responsibility, such as attendance fees, travel costs and per diems for participants, lunch and/ or coffee and tea breaks, printing of hand-outs, and alike.

**Answer:** *It is the part of the Project Manager responsibility to cover all proposed conference costs with the exception of travel costs and per diems for general attendees*

1. **Question**

The standard contract form refers to a professional liability insurance, (special conditions of the contract p. 81), however the coverage is not given, can you inform us about the anticipated value of the coverage and if the professional liability insurance applies also for the 4 month base period?

**Answer:** *Insurance coverage is subject to negotiation and it also applies to the 4 month base period.*

1. **Question**

For task 3 we shall make available a pool of international and local experts, should we indicate in the financial or technical proposal the percentage of local versus international inputs because of the difference in fully loaded prices (travel/per diem/etc.) and the fact that these inputs will be provided on “separate fixed price task orders”

**Answer:** *It is up to the consultant to decide on the percentage of local versus international consultants. All costs for the 48 person month TA assistance need to be included in the consultants price. There is no additional funding for TA.*

1. **Question**

The ToRs state that “By the time of final grants selection, all potential grantees should demonstrate that they have obtained program authorization or accreditation”. Is the NCEQE, fully aware of this requirement, and will they be able to provided such authorization and accreditation without causing significant delays to the submission of grant applications?

**Answer:** *It is the responsibility of the consultant to verify that grantees have obtained their own accreditation.*

1. **Question**

Will the capacity to provide co-financing funding, alongside grant finance be taken into account in selecting grantees. If so, what types of contribution will be accepted and not accepted as co-financing?

**Answer:** *This will be elaborated during the Base Period, within the grant manual development process.*

1. **Question**

Sponsorship for annual conferences – the ToRs state that “in each of the subsequent years (to year 2)  the Project Manager will be expected to seek sponsorship from the private sector”. Is it only private sector sponsorship which will be admissible?

**Answer:** *All forms of sponsorship could be considered.*

1. **Question**

Is it the intention to allocated grants on a “fixed obligation” basis or will financial reporting and documentation be necessary?

**Answer***: Grants recipients will be required to provide documentation to support the use of their funds. It is up to the Grant Manager to develop and detail these requirements and procedures in the Grants Manual prepared in the Base period.*

1. **Question**

On page 98 it states that one or more best practice examples should be adopted by at least 24  institutions, while on page 104 it states that up to 24 best practices should be taken up by 24 providers! If this the case? Is there confusion here? Can you explain?

**Answer:** *See Response to Question 6.*

1. **Question**

Could you please clarify the page number limits requirements for the description of approach, methodology and work plan for performing the assignment. On page 40 (Section 4), an overall maximum of 60 pages (excluding the MS project work plan) is mentioned. However, when adding the pages for each part of TECH 6, it gets to a maximum of 55 pages (15 pages for the overall approach to managing the project + 20 pages for Task 1 + 10 pages for Task 2 + 5 pages for Task 3 + 5 pages for Task 4 = 55 pages). Could you please clarify this? Furthermore, does the page number requirement for Task 3 include the CVs of indicative TVET experts?

**Answer:** *A consultant shall address Form TECH-6 maximum in 60 pages. This means that Description of Approach, Methodology and Work Plan for Performing the Assignment shall not exceed 60 pages.*

*The page number requirement for Task 3 does not include the CVs of indicative TVET experts.*

1. **Question**

For Task 1, apart from the MCC Program Procurement Guidelines and the MCA Georgia Procurement Operations Manual, are there any MCC/MCA regulations and other documentations relating to grants programs? And are these available to tenderers?

**Answer:** *There is no other MCC/MCA regulation specifically relating to grants program. All relevant MCC/MCA policies and guidelines are outlined in the RFP or are available on the MCC/MCA websites. Any additional guidance will be provided after contract signature.*

1. **Question**

Is one of the LEPL (Legal Entity of Public Law) of the Ministry of Education and Science of Georgia eligible to compete?

**Answer:** *Government-Owned Enterprises are not eligible to compete for MCC-funded contracts. This prohibition does not apply to Government-owned Force Account units owned by the Government of the MCA-Georgia country, or Government-owned educational institutions and research centers, or any statistical, mapping or other technical entities not formed primarily for a commercial or business purpose.*

*The full policy is available for your review on the Compact Procurement Guidelines page at the MCC Website (*[*www.mcc.gov*](http://www.mcc.gov)*).*