

Gender and Development, and Community Development Period Offer

Generic Debrief to Tenderers

1. Overview

1.1 AusAID wishes to thank all who tendered for the Gender and Development, and Community Development (GAD/CD) Period Offer (PO), which was advertised on 25 May and closed on 2 July 2002.

1.2 The tender proved very productive for AusAID attracting 39 conforming tenders from individuals and organisations, nominating 308 individuals. The high overall quality of tenders provided a very competitive field and allowed AusAID, with the assistance of the Technical Assessment Panel (TAP), to make clear distinctions in relation to tender quality and between individuals nominated.

1.3 Period Offer Deeds have been offered to all tenderers rated technically suitable by the TAP.

1.4 A number of tenders (and individuals included in tenders) were not rated technically suitable by the TAP. Accordingly, many tenderers have not been awarded PO Deeds and many of the Deeds awarded do not include all of the individuals nominated.

1.5 In the Request for Tender (RFT), AusAID advised that it would provide tenderers with a generic debriefing within 30 days of Tenderers being notified of the outcome of the tender process. Accordingly, the following summary of the common strengths and weaknesses of the tenders received (as identified by the TAP) is provided to assist tenderers to formulate future AusAID tenders.

2. About the Technical Assessment Panel (TAP)

2.1 The TAP comprised appropriately qualified AusAID representatives and independent external individuals/specialists contracted for the purpose. The TAP members ranked tenders and individuals on the basis of their technical merit based on tender content against AusAID's specifications as set out in the Terms of Reference (TOR) contained within the RFT. The following summarises TAP member comments on the common strengths and weaknesses of the tenders received.

3. Inclusions Which Strengthened Or Weakened Tenders

General Comment

Strong Tenders

3.1 The TAP found that tenders which rated well in the technical assessment demonstrated clarity, relevance and originality in form and content. Successful tenders:

- demonstrated a clear understanding of the tender requirements;
- were able to address *all* of these requirements in a clear and logical manner;

- only incorporated information relevant to the GAD / CD tender; and
- drew upon genuine experience in order to provide original insights with respect to the tender (supported by reference to specific AMC experience and/or project experience cited in CVs and Experience Data Sheets)

Weaker Tenders

3.2 The TAP found that tenders which rated poorly were not well structured, lacked relevance and/or did not add value' to the TOR. Unsuccessful tenders

- did not demonstrate a clear understanding of the tender requirements;
- failed to address all selection criteria;
- did not maintain a quality standard across the entire proposal;
- used generalised statements that lacked direct relevance;
- did not provide specific details to support claims (for example, “advised on gender”);
- “mirrored” the tender requirements, rather than expanding or adding original insights; and
- submitted responses from educational/other specialists rather than actual GAD/CD specialists.

Comments Against Selection Criteria

Selection Criterion A(i) for Organisations only (Demonstrated capacity to respond quickly to AusAID requests for personnel or teams)

3.3 Tenders which rated well against this criterion were able to:

- clearly spell out the mobilisation process;
- demonstrate capacity to find replacements if the named individual was not available (including details of data base, networks, etc.); and
- demonstrate previous general mobilisation experience and relate this experience to the context of the administration of POs.

3.4 Tenders which did not rate well:

- made generalised statements about capacity to mobilise without providing supporting evidence; and
- included information extraneous to the tender requirements.

Selection Criterion A(ii) – For Individuals and Organisations (appropriate office, administrative and financial support for contracted personnel)

3.5 Organisations which rated well against this criterion:

- nominated the proposed Contract, Administration and Finance Manager;
- provided details of office systems in place including systems for managing finances, travel and insurance;
- set out office structure;
- provided detail of systems compatibility with AusAID systems;
- demonstrated their financial capacity; and
- outlined the arrangements in place for auditing of the organizations books.

3.6 High scoring Individual tenders demonstrated the compatibility of their systems with AusAID's systems; demonstrated a fully equipped office and described management, administration and finance systems in place along with back-up arrangements.

3.7 Tenders that did not rate well against this criterion:

- appeared to shift administrative responsibilities to consultants;
- lacked structured levels of support/interaction with personnel;
- supplied limited financial information; and
- did not provide evidence of quality control or input

Selection Criterion A(iii) For Individuals and Organisations (preparation and production of high quality documentation)

3.8 Tenders which rated well against this criterion demonstrated:

- experience in producing high quality reports.
- the capacity to:
 - prepare, format, structure and present information to high standards of excellence;
 - follow tender instructions clearly; and
 - use plain English and grammatically sound approaches.
- in-house capacity to produce (including specialist staff);
- quality assurance arrangements with respect to both form and content.

3.9 High scoring Individual tenderers demonstrated production experience, in-house capacity and production arrangements.

3.10 Tenders which did not rate as well against this criterion:

- did not comply with tender requirements;
- lacked coherence in terms of submission styles; and
- were poorly or inadequately prepared and checked (for example, contained substantial typographical errors, mistakes in headers and footers, did not number pages or provided a table of contents without page numbers).

Selection Criterion B(i) (appropriate formal qualifications)

3.11 Personnel who rated well against this criterion held completed/ current qualifications to at least Master level, which were appropriate/inclusive of the appropriate units or topics (GAD / CD)

3.12 Personnel who did not rate as well against this criterion:

- claimed to have studied gender without the courses (or depth of studies) making this apparent;
- did not fully describe their qualification/s (example: Master of Arts, but no other detail); and
- had only attended short courses (0.5 days) without any apparent ongoing interest.

Selection Criterion B(ii) (up-to-date knowledge and specialist skills)

3.13 Personnel who rated well against this criterion:

- Demonstrated commitment to, and involvement in GAD/CD issues over time and consistently:
 - in formal and directly relevant study programs;
 - in the workplace;
 - through membership of professional organisations;
 - in committee and/or community work;
 - in publications;
- identified specific methodologies, tools and practices;
- identified relevant theories and theoretical shifts over time, and related techniques and tools;
- demonstrated that their own knowledge and skills had been acquired and refined over time, had depth and a high level of use (routinely, regularly and over time); and
- had language skills other than English.

3.14 Personnel who did not rate as well against this criterion:

- confused GAD/CD with a general or human relation development commitment to equity;
- appeared not to recognise the specific skills associated with GAD/CD; and
- equated methodologies and processes for equity with those for GAD / CD.

Selection Criterion B(iii) (ability to apply knowledge & expertise in developing countries)

3.15 Personnel who rated well against this criterion were able to demonstrate:

- current or recent experience in carrying out GAD/CD related work in developing countries;
- ‘hands-on’ knowledge and skills in GAD/ CD in developing countries; and
- the application of skills and knowledge in a range of countries, situations and across the project cycle.

3.16 Personnel who did not rate as well against this criterion:

- considered GAD/CD issues without commitment to changing and improving outcomes (for example: “my work usually has a strong gender focus”);
- did not specifically mention GAD/CD tools or applications;
- did not evidence broad-based interest in GAD/CD (no commitment through reading, professional networks or reliable skill base);
- confused project management experience with GAD/CD experience; and
- claimed extensive time spent overseas, but did not appear to have language skills consistent with these timeframes.

Selection Criterion B(iv) (strong analytical, strategic & problem solving skills, particularly in the context of developing countries)

3.17 Personnel who rated well against this criterion:

- recognised the importance of planning for systematic and structure change at all layers and levels, including Government planning;
- identified/described methodologies and tools at planning and implementation (hands on) levels; and
- presented their responses in a clear, logical and structured way (i.e. there was correlation between their claims against selection criteria and the material presented in Experience Data Sheets and CVs).

3.18 Personnel who did not rate as well against this criterion:

- offered generalised or insignificant comments in other segments of their responses, which demonstrated a lack of a structured and analytical approach; and
- presented experiences which appeared to be “ad hoc” and due to inclination rather than strategic planning.

Selection Criterion C(i) (oral and written communication skills)

3.19 Higher scoring tenders:

- contained evidence of cultural immersion and language capacity in more than one country;
- demonstrated substance and depth of cultural immersion and language capacity in at least one specific country;
- submitted CVs that were specific to the tender; and
- used expressive but not exaggerated language to describe their experience.

3.20 Lower scoring tenders:

- did not give tangible evidence of language skills or the capacity to acquire language skills;
- used generalised statements, convoluted English and/or poor grammar in their written responses;
- did not make use of the available page limits to expand on their abilities; and
- submitted “generic” CVs rather than tailoring them to the tender.

Selection Criterion C(ii) (interpersonal skills, cultural sensitivity and ability to interact effectively)

3.21 Higher scoring personnel:

- demonstrated high order cultural-sensitivity through project and other experiences;
- described work experiences that spanned:
 - grassroots;
 - government at senior levels;
 - multi-agency/organisation advisory groups; and
 - bilateral/multilateral donors.

3.22 Lower scoring tenders did not verify claims against this criterion in their CV/Experience Data Sheets.

Selection Criterion C(iii) (need to integrate gender, environment and community development policies)

3.23 Stronger responses demonstrated knowledge of the particular policies, an understanding of the issues associated with their application and provided specifics of gender awareness or environmental training.

3.24 Lower scoring tenders did not verify claims against this criterion in their CV/Experience Data Sheets.

Selection Criterion C(iv) (capacity to lead and/or participate in teams)

3.25 The more successful tenders:

- provided examples of experience as team members / Team Leaders with multi/bilateral agencies on GAD/CD activities;
- cited repeat experience working as team member/Team Leader on GAD/CD activities; and
- provided original examples of issues which had arisen in the context of integrating GAD/CD into project design/implementation and how these issues had been handled.

3.26 Weaker tenders did not:

- provide information about their previous roles as leader/team participant;
- address the issues associated with being a leader/team participant; and
- provide examples of how they would avert/resolve issues associated with integrating GAD/CD into project design/implementation.