

HINTS

FOR NEW PLAYERS

WISHING TO PARTICIPATE IN AUSTRALIA'S OVERSEAS AID PROGRAM



The Australian Government's
Overseas Aid Agency

AusAID encourages the participation of new players in the Australian aid program. In any given year, AusAID would normally contract between \$500–700 million worth of new activities. Contracts vary in size, value and scope and support the delivery of Australian aid across a number of sectors focussing on the Asia–Pacific region. This provides many opportunities for new players to participate in the aid program. The following hints have been prepared to assist new players and potential bidders.

- Take advantage of early warning of opportunities on AusAID's web site. Don't wait until tenders are advertised before preparing your bid.
- Consult information on how AusAID conducts its business and contracts out opportunities under the Australian aid program. See AusAID's website www.ausaid.gov.au/business/default.cfm
- Adopt a strategic and focussed approach by targetting specific projects and opportunities where your organisation has specific expertise rather than adopting a 'scatter gun' approach.
- Understanding AusAID is important. Meet Country Program Managers and key CSG staff and treat AusAID as a client.
- Network with other consultants. Bids comprising several companies in association with each other are commonplace.
- After the tender process, take advantage of AusAID's offer of a debrief on your bid.
- Nominate key personnel for service on Technical Assessment Panels (TAPs). It is best to nominate a technically qualified person at the time the job is advertised rather than send in a blanket CV. Service on a TAP will help understand AusAID's selection processes and at the same time provide an insight into the quality of other bids. Technically qualified persons selected for service on TAPs must declare that they do not have any conflict of interest or association with any of the bidders.
- Bidding is a highly competitive process and new players must take a medium to long term view about doing business with AusAID rather than expect to bid and win vast amounts of work in the short term.
- Liaise with Australian Managing Contractors (AMCs) who have been awarded AusAID implementation contracts for sub-contracting opportunities.

Hints on Proposal Writing

General Comments

- Read the documentation carefully to ensure that you submit a bid that meets the requirements of the tender;
- Directly address the selection criteria and substantiate your claims explicitly and strongly;
- Note any weightings provided. Ensure that the emphasis in the submission reflects the weightings on the selection criteria;
- Ensure that your bid is subjected to some form of quality control prior to its submission to AusAID (eg. an independent review to tidy up typographical errors and to ensure logical consistency etc);
- Do not be shy. If you are unsure of something, please ask questions prior to the cutoff date stipulated in the tender document. (Contact officers are identified in the tender advertisement);
- Don't make claims that cannot be substantiated; and
- Provide data sheets that are explicitly relevant to the activity (not generalised or standardised forms).

Management Arrangements

- Clearly and explicitly identify management inputs (eg. precisely who will do what, and with what level of input such as number of days per month) as well as your proposed management framework. This is particularly important when the bid is submitted by a consortium.

Approach and Methodology

- When addressing methodology and approach, bidders need to demonstrate original thought. Do not just repeat what AusAID has already provided in the tender document. Bidders will need to show that they understand what the activity is about;
- Specifically identify and think about project risks and spell out how these will be managed; and
- If bidders are considering an alternative methodology they must submit a conforming bid in the first instance and include the alternative approach as a separate annex. Bidders must win the project on the conforming tender in the first instance before an alternative can be considered.

Key Personnel

- CVs should be provided for all personnel identified in the proposal. Focus the CVs on the skills required and clearly outline the duration and extent of the nominees involvement in previous activities;
- Provide referees who can comment on the nominees' experience in the field and their claims against the position selection criteria, not just provide a personal or character reference. AusAID can identify and contact referees of its choosing if it considers that it is not getting a complete picture.

Pricing of Bids

- Prices submitted with bids must reflect the cost of undertaking the activity. AusAID is not interested in proposals from bidders that do not adequately resource the task.

Presentations and Interviews

Bidders may be invited by AusAID to meet with the Technical Assessment Panel (TAP) to make a brief presentation of their bid and be available for interview. The following hints are provided to assist prospective bidders:

- Bidders must keep the presentation focussed and within the allocated time limit;
- The team must be fully conversant with the proposal. Ideally they should meet before the TAP;
- Take the opportunity during the presentation to expand only on the really key aspects of your approach and methodology;
- The presentation should be vibrant and engaging;
- Avoid overly complicated diagrams;
- Let team members answer questions posed to them. Do not answer questions on their behalf; and
- The TAP process allows for bidders to send an observer to the meeting. This provides an ideal opportunity for senior managers to see how their team performs and to understand comments provided during debriefing.