

Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, Royal Government of Bhutan

ACCELERATING TRANSPORT AND TRADE CONNECTIVITY IN EASTERN SOUTH ASIA (ACCESS) – BHUTAN PROJECT

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR PROCUREMENT SPECIALIST

A. BACKGROUND

The World Bank’s Accelerating Trade and Transport Connectivity in Eastern South Asia (ACCESS) Multi-Phase Programmatic Approach (MPA) consists of a series of linked transport and trade facilitation projects in eastern South Asia designed to increase the efficiency and resilience of trade and transport along selected regional corridors. The ACCESS Program was approved on June 28, 2022, with Phase 1 covering Bangladesh (\$753m) and Nepal (\$275m). ACCESS Phase 2 consists of a \$150m notional allocation for Bhutan. The proposed project development objective is to enhance the resilience and efficiency of trade and transport along selected corridors in Bhutan (“Project”).

The ACCESS program framework consists of three main pillars: (a) Digital Systems for Trade: provision of digital solutions and automation, designed to eliminate manual and paper-based processes, resulting in faster border crossing times; (b) Green and Resilient Infrastructure: enhancing regional corridors, infrastructure, and trade gateways; and (c) Institutional and Policy Strengthening for Transport and Trade: technical assistance and capacity building for trade and customs modernization.

The Royal Government of Bhutan (RGoB) is currently preparing the Bhutan phase of the ACCESS Project (\$150m), including but not limited to targeted road investments, digital trade systems, and relevant enablers that are aligned with ACCESS objectives. The implementing agencies for the project are the Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MoIT, the lead agency) and the Government Technology Agency (GovTech), in coordination with other relevant stakeholders and technical partners. In addition, a Project Steering Committee (PSC) was formed to oversee high-level technical issues related to ACCESS. The Committee is Chaired by the MoIT Secretary, and currently consists of representatives from MoF, GovTech, Ministry of Industry, Commerce, and Employment (MoICE), and Ministry of Foreign Affairs and External Trade (MoFEA). In October 2023, the RGoB received a Project Preparation Advance (PPA) of US\$2.5 million to support the preparation of the proposed ACCESS Project, until approval of the eventual \$150m loan. The PPA is spread over 1 year.

Using a portion of PPA from the World Bank (PPA Advance No. IDA V504-BT). The Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport (MOIT), the Employer, intends to recruit an appropriately qualified individual to render consulting services for on related procurement and contract management for the PMU and relevant Implementing Agencies for the ACCESS Project. The services will be procured following the latest World Bank’s Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, July 2016, and Revised November 2020. The proposed PMU would support the preparation and implementation of the ACCESS Project, and the Procurement Specialist is a key member of the PMU.

B. OBJECTIVE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

The main objective of the consultancy assignment is to provide procurement support to the Project Management Unit (PMU) and serve as the key expert on procurement issues for the Project. The Consultant will lead the procurement related activities and provide necessary oversight for all procurement packages under the PPA for the proposed ACCESS Project and minimize procurement-associated risks for the Project.

C. SCOPE OF SERVICES

As a key member of the ACCESS PMU, the Procurement Specialist will perform the following duties/tasks (ToR):

- Develop and maintain a procurement calendar, listing events in procurement and contract management cycle for each works, goods and services package; remind the Client of the necessary actions to be taken for each event and assist in taking these actions; monitor activities following the agreed procedures and within approved budget, schedule, and scope.
- Prepare and update the Project Procurement Strategy Document (PPSD) for the Project in consultation with the PMU and the World Bank.
- Prepare and regularly update the Procurement Plan(s) of the Project and process procurement transactions through the World Bank's Systematic Tracking of Exchanges in Procurement (STEP) system. Monitor the progress of activities according to the Procurement Plan.
- Upload the documents onto STEP and ensure that all relevant policies are followed and that all due processes are fulfilled while undertaking procurement actions.
- Advise on optimal procurement methods based on the type and volume of procurement activities.
- Assist in drafting of TORs for consulting and non-consulting services.
- Assist in compiling of Specifications for goods to be procured.
- Assist in listing of evaluation and qualification criteria.
- Assist in preparing cost estimates based on norms and approved district rates or market rates, whichever is applicable.
- Prepare and finalize procurement and contract document required for the procurement of goods, works and consulting services including drafting of TOR, REOI, RFP, Bidding Documents using the applicable format.
- Solicit bids, proposals and expression of interest: including use of electronic bidding portal.
- Participate in or provide support for pre-qualification, short-listing, evaluation and selection of winning bids/ proposals.
- Responsible for (i) the organization of pre-bid or pre-proposal meetings, preparing answers/ clarifications/ modifications/ amendments; (ii) receiving, opening, and examining bids/ proposals; (iii) organizing technical evaluation committees, and participating where appropriate; and (iv) writing evaluation reports using standard format.

- Prepare minutes of proceedings such as pre-proposal meetings, pre-bidding meetings, bid clarification meetings, etc. relating to the procurements under the Project consulting with other relevant professionals of the project, if needed.
- Participate in evaluation, negotiations, and contract award process. Lead in negotiating with bidder, when required, and preparing contract documents, for approval/ clearances by the concerned authority and the World Bank.
- Maintain records and other documentation required for audit and progress reporting purposes.
- Prepare monthly and quarterly progress reports of procurement and contract activities, project account and regular progress reports in acceptable format to the World Bank; including uploading of essential documents in STEP. Prepare different types of procurement-related reports for the project.
- Carry out training activities on procurement and contract policies, processes to the PMU and Implementing Agencies (IA) staff.
- Assist IAs on procurement and contract management activities when instructed by the Project Director.
- Assist in preparing Annual Work Plan and Budget.
- Responsible for dispute resolution activities and in handling relevant procurement-related complaints against the Project.
- Responsible in drafting procurement and contract related letters to the World Bank, Bidders, and Contractors.
- Responsible in the publication of the procurement notices in different print and electronic media.
- Visit project areas for monitoring of activities for performance assessment concerning the project.
- Sensitize the PMU and implementing agencies (IA)'s staff on procurement planning, contract management, preparation of TOR, drafting of specifications, and other procurement documents and the whole procurement cycle.
- Review and guide the Procurement Consultants in all the IAs.
- Participate in regular PMU project meetings and progress meetings with the World Bank.
- Ensure the procurement of consulting services, goods and works are done as agreed between RGOB and the World Bank and as per the World Bank's procurement procedures.
- Any other related task assigned by the Project Director concerning the project.

QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

- Education: At least Bachelor's degree, preferably in business administration, procurement, supply chain management, or relevant field; Master's/Postgraduate degree in similar field and/or certification of training on public procurement, contract management, and FIDIC procedure is preferred. Familiarity to STEP will be an advantage.

- Experience: 10 years of relevant experience with 5-year experience in Procurement and/or Contract Management Specialist in multilateral donor funded project will be preferred. Excellent knowledge of World Bank procurement and contract policies, procedure, regulations and guidelines with excellent knowledge of the RGOB's procurement policies, direct and indirect taxation in Bhutan is preferred. Proficiency in using office software and English language is a must.

D. REMUNERATION AND COMPENSATION

The Consultant shall be provided with the remuneration and benefits as per the contract. The contract will mention a lump sum amount of remuneration per month. The Consultant shall be responsible to clear all taxes including the income tax as applicable in Bhutan. The normal government calendar and the working hours shall be applicable. The Consultant shall be stationed at the ACCESS PMU office, with possible visits to works sites. In case of travel outside Thimphu on project-related assignments, the Consultant shall be paid a daily subsistence allowance as per contract to cover all expenses (food, lodging and travel).

E. INPUTS FROM THE EMPLOYER

The Employer will be responsible for providing the following inputs to the Procurement Specialist:

1. Office space and equipment at the PMU office with basic furniture, internet access, stationery, etc.
2. The Employer will also facilitate the Consultant to get trained on the World Bank's STEP system.
3. All relevant documents on the project on procurement
4. Introduction to the Implementing Agencies
5. Authoritative support for procurement coordination and monitoring

F. REPORTING

The Procurement Specialist will work under the guidance of the Project Director (PPD, MoIT) of the Project Management Unit (PMU) of the ACCESS Project. The Consultant shall be stationed at the ACCESS PMU office, with possible visits to work sites when required.

G. CONTRACT DURATION

The duration of the consulting services will be 12 (Twelve) person-months (full time). However, the contract duration may be increased based on performance and project need.

H. SELECTION METHOD

Selection of the Consultant will be carried out in accordance with the approved selection methods for Individual Consultants as stated in the “World Bank’s Procurement Regulations for IPF Borrowers, September 2023.”¹

¹ <https://projects.worldbank.org/en/projects-operations/products-and-services/brief/procurement-policies-and-guidance#Guidelines>