



## **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Tender | Questions and Answers | July 7th, 2020 and Updated July 13th, 2020**

**#1) Question: Applicants are required to ‘have been audited by an external accounting firm or received an external review of financial statements in the past year (3 years)’ but, in the country from where we are headquartered and registered as an NGO, we are exempt from any requirement to be audited externally because of the (small) size of our organization. Could you confirm for me if our use of an external firm for our accounts is sufficient to meet this criteria, though we have not been audited?**

Answer: If your organization is exempt from external audits or financial reviews in the country where you are headquartered and registered and you can provide evidence of this exemption (link or document that shows your exemption), then producing evidence that you have an external firm handle your accounts is acceptable for fulfilling this particular eligibility criteria requirement.

**#2) Can we create a consortium for submitting a proposal for the MSA?**

Answer: No, consortiums are not allowed at the MSA-level, however subcontractors will be allowed at the individual Task Order level.

**#3) What is the average budget and timeframe of assignments coming through the MSA?**

We do not disclose budgets and the timeframe of assignments has ranged from a couple of weeks to a whole year.

**#4) What is the frequency of assignments coming through?**

There have been a total of 63 task orders written during the 2-year duration of the initial master service agreements.

**#5 How many MSA awards do you expect? That is, your note mentions "multiple" organizations on the roster. Can you give an approximate number of how many organizations you expect on the roster?**

There is not a set number. It will be dependent on the number of qualified bids that we receive and scored accordingly. It is not possible to estimate the number of organizations that will be awarded contracts under this MSA.

**#6) Is any Consulting firm allowed to bid jointly with a suitable survey firm, considering that the tasks involve the development of CAPI tool, etc.?**

Answer: No, consortiums are not allowed for proposals to the MSA. Not all task orders will involve development of CAPI tools. The description of activities under each Lot describes the variety of activities which could be requested under that Lot“

**# 7) How is inflation accounted for over the course of two years? Is this considered the same item as ‘annual rate escalation’, and should it be accounted for as such?**

Yes, the”:any year 2 escalation \_\_\_\_ %” at the bottom of each lot is for the purposes of accounting for any difference in year 2 pricing versus year 1.

**#8) Do we have any idea of the relative size or frequency of any one call down?**

We are not able to predict the size or frequency of task orders (call downs). For perspective, there have been a total of 63 task orders of various sizes written during the 2-year duration of the initial master service agreements. There is considerable variability in the level of effort required and duration of tasks orders released under this MSA.

**#9) How is the size of the project taken into account during call downs i.e. are longer-term projects may be priced lower than shorter ones?**

Mercy Corps does not fix prices or levels of effort when releasing task orders (call downs). It is the responsibility of the MSA contract awardees to determine the right mix and level of effort for labor and other direct costs. It is possible that a task order of shorter duration requires a higher level of effort (which may translate to higher cost) than a task order of longer duration.

**#10) What is the typical level of flexibility in terms of pricing when the MSA is negotiated with shortlisted, particularly when it comes to the size of call downs and different methodologies employed?**

See answer to question #9. Also, there is no negotiation of the proposed labor category rates once a contract under the MSA is awarded. That is, MSA contract awardees may only use the approved labor rates by category and level (entry, mid, senior) which are in the MSA contract. The flexibility that an MSA contract awardee has is in their use of various positions and experience levels along with the level of effort for each of these for a particular task order. There is also flexibility for non-labor direct costs which are only proposed under specific task orders.

**#11) Are the cost of logistics considered indirect costs or direct costs which should/should not be added to the cost for different staff? If logistics are considered indirect costs, how will these be accounted for in the MSA/call downs?**

The cost of logistics are considered neither as a direct or indirect cost for this MSA (labor) price offer. The cost of logistics such as training venue, per diems, lodging, transport, photocopying, tablet/phone purchases/rentals, internet connectivity, etc will be considered direct costs and are presented at the task order level.

**#12) Our organization operates under different legal entities in different countries, something which creates different tax liabilities depending on geography. How can we account for this in our proposal to provide the best value for money to MC?**

It is up to each firm to determine how best to factor this variability into their price offer taking into account that

a) MSA contract awardees are never obligated to bid on specific task orders

b) MSA contract awardees can propose a more qualified position at a lower rate but not vice versa (e.g. a person meeting the qualifications for a senior-level researcher in country X can be proposed at the awardees mid-level rate but not vice versa)c) Logistics and other data collection costs – including data collectors – are not included in the MSA price offer sheets because these vary considerably by country. Those costs are proposed in the budgets associated with each task order

**#13) How do we account for different prices in different countries where our organizations covers, specifically with regard to remote work (especially during COVID-19, prices can differ)?**

See answer to questions # 10, 11 and 12. With respect to conducting remote work especially during COVID-19 restrictions, all MSA contract awardees that submit bids for a task order are operating under the same restrictions. It is up to the MSA contract awardee to propose the most cost-effective way to conduct the work within COVID-19 restrictions or any other country-specific, non-COVID restrictions.

**#14) In one instance the RFP asks says that: “all offers should indicate whether they include taxes, compulsory payments, levies and/or duties, including VAT, If applicable,” and in another states “offerors must not include VAT and customs duties in their offer.” Can you explain whether/which items should include VAT, taxes, duties, or other additional cost items?**

The RFP has been modified and now reads “all offerers should indicate if they include taxes on [labor] such as VAT and other compulsory payments such as workman’s compensation, leave, medical insurances, etc [in their fully burdened rates]. Offers must not include any import customs, levies or duties, costs of visas, etc in this MSA price offer. Those costs can be budgeted as (non-labor) direct costs for specific task orders released under the MSA”.

**#15) Can organizations place a price range in each cell (demonstrating differences in-country contexts, remote/in-person work, tax liabilities, etc.) across the different countries?**

No, only a single price is allowed for each cell in the price sheet is permitted. See questions #10 - #13 for answers to related questions.

**#16) Please can I have access to who are contractors for lots 2 and 3 on the last framework?**

Lots 1, 2 and 3 are defined very differently for this MSA than they were for the previous MSA so this is not possible as they are not comparable.

**#17) We would like to know if there is any flexibility in the Work Product and IP Rights section of the posted sample agreement. Given Mercy Corps "aspires to publish the results of these studies [created in lot 1] in peer-reviewed journals," it would be easier to facilitate this with either co-ownership or by issuing a no-cost license to use the data for publication or potential future study.**

Any proposed changes to Work Product and IP Rights clauses to the posted sample agreement would be negotiated as part of the contract discussion and in conjunction with Legal review.

**#18) Should we apply for more than one lot, are we scored on a lot-by-lot basis or globally according to our overall application?**

While some of components of the overall application are applied to scoring for all three Lots, there are other components of the application that are Lot specific. Thus, each Lot is scored separately. It is up to each applicant to decide if they will apply for than one Lot.

**#19) From the RFP document, we see that the previous MSA was valid for two years, will it be the same for this one, if not what is the expected duration of this MSA?**

The expected duration of this MSA is also for two years.

**#20) In terms of scale, may we kindly know the number of assignments that each lot will generate over the contract period? And, What is the expected or anticipated number of call-downs per Lot?**

While we cannot predict the number of assignments that each Lot will generate of the contract period, as a guide, across all lots, there was a total of 63 task orders written during the 2-year duration of the initial master service agreements.

**#21) Under the Lot Specific information, this is stated: For Each lot to which offeror is applying, submit not less than 3 but not more than 6 resumes – 6 is encouraged, in any combination of staff or consultants). Do we understand right that this means that we can have a combination of our own staff and external consultants? If not, please explain what this means.**

For applicants that regularly use consultants from their consultant pool, they may submit at least 3 but not more than 6 resumes with any combination of their staff and consultants. As part of Mercy Corps' due diligence, Mercy Corps reserves the right to require applicants to provide evidence that the consultants for whom they have submitted a resume as part of this requirement have, in fact, conducted previous work for the applicant or have signed a letter attesting to their willingness to work as a consultant for said applicant.

**#22) What is the expected average value of the anticipated call-downs?**

Please see question 3.

**#23) Is there a preference towards firms with USAID experience?**

There is no preference for firms with USAID experience for this MSA. However, a given task order released under this MSA might require or have a preference for experience with a specific donor (Mercy Corps conducts its work worldwide with funding by many different donors)

**#24) Is it expected that this framework will support the MercyCorp HQ office, regional offices, or both?**

The intent and history of this framework is for it to be a global tender. Task orders released under the MSA global tender can be for HQ, regional, country or program-specific support.

**#25) Is there a specific format or page limit for project references? We assume this is a reference to describe the project, client, size etc, not just a contact point, i.e., not just a referee?**

Please provide a brief description of the project (no more than one paragraph) along with contact information of the client/donor.

**#26) When writing about country experience, can you please confirm is this is one paragraph per project within chosen country(s), or one paragraph per country?**

This is one paragraph per country. You may follow the paragraph with a bulleted list of project's conducted in that country in the past 3 years if desired.

**#27) We created the consulting firm this year (March 2020). However, my partners and I have more than 15 years of experience. So, we do not have a Record of an audit or financial review by an external accounting firm. Are we still eligible or we should wait for the next call for consultants firms?**

Producing evidence that you have an external firm handle your accounts is acceptable for fulfilling this particular eligibility criteria requirement. See question #1 and the answer for further explanation.