

NORTH ATLANTIC TREATY ORGANISATION (NATO)

**REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP – 2012/20**

**MANAGEMENT ADVISORY SERVICES (MAS)
FRAMEWORK AGREEMENT**

Responses to Bidders' Questions

No	RFP REF	QUESTION	ANSWER
1	NIL	How many consultants currently have framework agreements for the services mentioned in the RFP?	Currently, there are no framework agreements in place for the provision of the services specified in the solicitation of offers. So far these consulting requirements have been satisfied through standalone contract actions.
2	Part I, paragraph 4.2.5. 8)	Are we allowed to reply to this RFP as part of a consortium?	Bidders may propose subcontracting plans within the limitations established in paragraph 4.2.5. 8) of Part I. However, the Bidder must be a prime contractor that assumes overall responsibility for the warranties and representations stated in the offer, the execution of services under the agreement, and the fulfilment of any associated obligations.
3	Part I, Section 4	Is it mandatory to offer our services for each of the required 15 services as described in Annex A of Part IV and those of Annex G, or can we select a sub-set of those?	Bidders must submit an offer for the totality of the requirements (i.e., the proposal must cover the 15 domains specified in Part IV). However, Bidders may use subcontractors (within the limitations established in the solicitation) to cover the full scope of services.
4	Part I, paragraph 2.3.1.2, paragraph 4.2.5. 6), 11), and Annex D; Part IV, paragraph 4.1.2	Is it possible to present security clearance certificates of proposed personnel at the time of initiating the activities and not as part of the RFP response?	During the execution of the framework agreements, security clearances will be required for the execution of task orders that meet the characteristics specified in paragraph 4.1.2 of Part IV. As stated in the referred paragraph (and in other relevant sections of the solicitation) Contractor's personnel must be in possession of the required clearances at least 30 days before starting work under such task orders. Therefore, Bidders are not obliged to submit security clearance certificates at the current stage except with respect to the documentation required under paragraph 4.2.5 11) of Part I (if the relevant personnel is already in possession of a valid

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			<p>security clearance).</p> <p>Regarding this, also note that, as part of the evaluation of "Bidder's Resources, Capabilities, and Engagement" (see Section 8 of Part I) NATO will positively consider the wide availability of security cleared personnel as documented through the list specified in paragraph 4.2.5 6) and the resumes and certificates provided under 4.2.5. 11).</p>
5	Part I, paragraphs 8.4.1.4.2 and 8.5.3	Seem to contradict each other. Which one applies to this RFP?	<p>Both of them apply. Please, note that paragraph 8.5.3 also states that "<i>NATO reserves the right to conduct discussions if the source selection authority later determines them to be necessary.</i>" and paragraph 8.4.1.4.2 belongs to sub-section 8.4.1.4 which describes the standard competitive negotiation process that would be followed if NATO decides to conduct such discussions.</p>
6	Part I, paragraph 4.2.5 13)	<p>Regarding the number of pages that will be evaluated of the "technical understanding":</p> <p>How many pages will NATO evaluate regarding the 15 Management Advisory Services as described in Part IV?</p>	<p>The page limitations with respect to the documentation required under this paragraph are clearly specified in the solicitation. We assume that the domain descriptions included in Annex A to the SOW are sufficiently clear and correspond to standard consulting domains. Therefore, we are not very much interested in the Bidder's understanding of such generic domains.</p> <p>NATO is more interested in the overall understanding of the requirements specified in the main body of the SOW, the way the frameworks will be executed, and the typical approach and methodologies that Bidders would implement in order to tackle the representative tasks specified in Annex G to Part I.</p>

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7	Part I, paragraph 4.2.5, 13) c.	Will NATO evaluate additionally 2 pages of the 17 tasks described in Annex G?	NATO will evaluate up to 2 pages per task as specified in paragraph 4.2.5, 13) c.of Part I.
8	Part I, paragraph 2.3.1.2 and 4.2.5.6)d.	Is it mandatory to have NATO security cleared personnel in order to send you the proposal? If not, what is the process we should follow to obtain a valid NATO security clearance up to NATO SECRET level and how long does it take to receive it?	No, it isn't but also note that not having cleared personnel will have a negative impact on the evaluation of your offer (also see answer to question # 4 above). National Security Authorities are responsible for the issuance of NATO clearances. The specific application procedures and the time required for security vetting vary from one nation to another. Bidders are encouraged to contact their relevant National Security Authority in order to clarify this type of questions.
9	Part I, paragraph 4.2.5.13)c.	You mention that the representative tasks are specified in Annex G. In the Annex G, for instance, we have the following structure for the point 3: 3. Shared Service Design and implementation 3.1 Shared Services Detailed Design 3.2 Shared Services Implementation Which is a task? Do we have to consider the 3 as a task including the 3.1 and the 3.2 or the 3.1 and the 3.2 have to be seen as two different tasks?	A task is a level 2 paragraph (e.g., 3.1, 3.2, etc.). There are a total of 17 tasks described in Annex G to Part I. Bidders may propose the combination of several tasks into a single task order, if they consider that this would make their offer more competitive or add greater value to NATO.
10	Part I, paragraph 4.2.5 13)	In case we don't enter for a task (or a subtask), are we still able to send you our proposal?	Bidders must submit proposals that cover the totality of the requirements. Please, also see the answer to question # 3.

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11	Part I, paragraph 3.1.1	The framework will be awarded to more than 2 providers. Could you specify how many providers are you intending to retain?	There is no predetermined number. The number will be determined after evaluation of proposals.
12	Part I, paragraph 4.2.5. 13) c	A tentative list of resources is requested. Further to Annex A p110, there is a list of 152 functions (Annex I page 36). Kindly specify how many CVs you would like to see in our offer and per subtask?	As stated in Part I, paragraph 4.2.5 11), resumes are required for those individuals specified in the list stated in Part I, paragraph 4.2.5 10) only.
13	Part I, paragraphs 8.1.1 and 8.2.1	Does the visit will intervene after a sort of short-listing or can happen to anyone participating in the bidding? Oral presentations of the bidders are as foreseen. Is this for all bidders or only shortlisted, and if shortlisted, what are the criteria?	No short-listing is foreseen at that stage. All responsive Bidders will be invited to the oral presentation.
14	Part I, Annex G	Representative tasks. Do we have to respond to all tasks or can we submit our proposal for some selected tasks?	Bidders must address all tasks in their responses. Please, see the answer to questions # 3 and 10 above.
15	Part II, paragraph 3.4	Ordering task orders/purchase orders: how much time does the provider have to respond to those task orders? Could it be a fixed time for all or this might vary?	The response time will depend on the complexity and the urgency associated with task order requirements.
16	Part IV	Besides the Part IV, Annex A – Domains of MAS. Could you kindly describe a typical purchase order, with average people involvement, duration and maybe cost?	According to our historical records, prior consulting engagements falling within the scope of MAS ranged between a few days of effort of a single consultant to a 6-month effort involving a team of up to 14 consultants. Also, note that this is just historical information and should not be interpreted as a limitation to the maximum effort or duration of the engagements that may be required under the framework

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			agreements.
17	Part I, paragraph 2.3.1.1	<p>"Having performed or been awarded at least three contracts within the last five years substantially similar in scope to the requirements described in this solicitation"... Question: As the scope areas are very specific to NATO IS needs, our experience across public sector is that many potential bidders would be highly unlikely to possess 3 separate contracts with "substantially similar scope" and therefore, not able to offer a competitive bid in response to this requirement. Alternatively, will NATO allow bidders to provide three references that when combined have substantially similar scope to the current NATO MAS requirements?"</p>	<p>NATO will change the past performance requirements to allow Bidders greater flexibility in meeting the eligibility requirements specified in the solicitation. Bidders will be authorised to present a combination of contracts and prime contractor or subcontractor references to satisfy the past performance requirement. However, the majority of the references provided must relate to the prime contractor (the Bidder itself). The revised past performance requirements will be included in a formal solicitation amendment.</p>
18	Part I, paragraph 4.2.3	<p>"using Arial 11 or a larger font. Title pages and diagrams are excluded from the page counts specified in this section." Question: Can the bidder use smaller than 11 point font in graphics/diagrams?"</p>	<p>Yes, Bidders may use any type of smaller fonts in diagrams, graphics, tables, and any other proposal elements which are excluded from the page counts.</p>
19	Part I, paragraph 4.2.5, 6) d.	<p>Bidder's must also list any personnel in possession of other national or international security clearances that may be easily converted into NATO clearances and indicate the typical time required for such a conversion under the Remarks column." Question: The number of staff holding easily converted security clearances number in the hundreds. Does the organization want each individual listed or may a summary of numbers and typical conversion time to NATO clearances be included?"</p>	<p>If the total number of personnel in possession of such national clearances exceeds 50, Bidders may omit these personnel from the list and include instead a summary of clearance types, typical conversion times, and staff numbers. The wording of paragraph 4.2.5, 6) d of Part I will be modified to clarify this.</p>

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20	Part I, paragraph 4.2.5, 11) b.	"This section cannot exceed 5 (five) one-sided pages." and Section 4.2.5, subsection 11e - "The total size of each resume shall not exceed 5 (five) one-sided pages (without copies of clearances, certificates, and clients' statements)." Question: Is the total size of the resumes limited to 10 pages (5 for education and experience and 5 for references) or 5 pages total (without copies of clearances, certificates, and clients' statements)?	No specific page limitations apply to the sections of the resumes but the total size of the resume (without copies of clearances, certificates, and clients' statements) must not exceed 5 one-sided pages. The wording of paragraph 4.2.5 11) will be modified in order to clarify this.
21	Part I, paragraph 4.2.5, 8)	List of Sub-Contractors (if any) which the Bidder intends to use for the performance of the Contract (use the attached template in ANNEX D to the Instructions). The Bidder must certify that it will not subcontract for the entire duration of the framework more than 40% of the staffing resources or labor hours/work required for the execution of work under the agreement. Please clarify if this restriction applies to the whole agreement and not to individual task orders for which the stated percentage may be exceeded. Also, please clarify the subcontracting restriction does not apply either to subcontracting to entities or divisions that are part of the same holding entity, company, or network of companies. Question - If a prime contractor intends to sub-contract the execution of particular elements of an awarded task under the NATO MAS agreement, must the subcontractor be identified by name in the original proposal? Or may sub-contractors be added or proposed in future task orders post award of the master MAS contract?	Bidders must provide the subcontracting plan that they intend to implement in order to cover all the domains under solicitation. Subcontractors included in such plan must be identified by name through the form in Annex D to Part I. The text in this form will be modified in order to make clear that the 40 % limitation applies to the whole framework agreement only and not to the individual task orders (as specified in Clause 18 of Part II) The inclusion of additional subcontractors for the execution of particular tasks will still be possible but will be subject to the evaluation and approval by NATO as stipulated in Clause 18 of Part II.

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22	Part I, paragraph 4.2.5, 10)	List of Bidder's Key Personnel and other Bidder's Focal Points (including suitable backup personnel). Bidders must specify name, nationality, and intended position (i.e., primary or backup) for the proposed personnel (use the template in ANNEX F). Question - Is there a limit to the number of key personnel or backup personnel? May representative resumes of cleared personnel or strategic advisor resumes be included if not bid as key?	With respect to the documentation required under paragraph 4.2.5 10) of Part I, resumes must be included only for those roles and Key Personnel identified in Section 4 of Part IV. Also, note that Bidders may appoint more than one individual to perform the same role as specified in paragraph 4.3.3 of Part IV. Regarding the submission of additional representative resumes of cleared personnel or strategic advisor resumes, Bidders may include condensed versions of such resumes as part of the documentation requested under paragraph 4.2.5 6) b of Part I and within the page limitations established in the referred paragraph.
23	Part I, Annex G, Section 2.5	RELOCATION PLANNING, LOGISTICS, AND EXECUTION SUPPORT. All staff including NATO and non NATO (i.e. national delegations) will be moved from the CNHQ to the NNHQ. The move is expected to have a high degree of complexity and stringent security requirements and will span several months. In addition to traditional office moves there is a significant number of specialist items that must be moved. Specialist items include archives, art work, weapons and ammunition, specialized technical equipment. The move is a critical activity for the program due to its complexity, visibility and risk. Comprehensive move planning, execution and follow-up (including individual customer satisfaction surveys) must be undertaken as part of this activity. A comprehensive move plan and sound execution are the outcomes of this activity. Question - Is it the expectation that the bidder/contractor will procure and manage the physical move of personnel and applicable furniture	The expectation is that the contractor will perform an advisory and management support role related to this effort, such as move planning, requirements specification, contract management support, and execution oversight of the physical move.

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		fixtures and equipment on behalf of NATO IS? Or is it the expectation that the bidder/contractor will provide advisory services related to this effort, such as move planning and execution oversight of the physical move from a cost, schedule and risk perspective?	
24	Part I, Annex G	Question relating to all tasks in Annex G - If an overarching methodology for approaching transformation projects is applicable to multiple sections, may bidders reference the methodology addressed in a prior task section? Or must the methodology be addressed in each representative task section response?	Bidders should avoid unnecessary redundancy in their proposals. Bidders may make reference to methodology or other elements which may be described in other sections of the proposal without having to repeat the same descriptions in several sections.
25	Part I, paragraph 8.1.1.2 and Part II, paragraph 3.4.3	This paragraph states that NATO will evaluate the total estimated cost of the service over the intended duration of the agreement based on a projection of future consultancy needs. Paragraph 3.4.3 of Part II states that <i>"The Contractor may decline to participate in the process by responding to the request with a "no bid" and including a brief statement as to the reasons why the Contractor chose not to respond."</i> How would NATO protect against Bidders that propose abnormally low labor rates to obtain the award of the framework and later opt for not participating in the mini-competitions for task orders which are based on a labor hour or time and materials compensation arrangement.	NATO will perform a thorough price analysis in order to determine whether labor rates are reasonable, realistic, and balanced. NATO may determine that a proposal is unacceptable if the prices proposed are materially unbalanced, unrealistic, or unreasonable. We will use price analysis techniques such as the comparison of proposed rates with historical rates, commercial rates, and the rates available from other NATO or government agreements for comparable resource categories. Further, paragraph 3.4.3 of Part II will be modified in order to exclude the no-bid option for task orders which are based on a labor-hour compensation arrangement only.