

QUESTION & ANSWER CONFERENCE CALL

PROJECT:

Institutional readiness for mainstreaming climate change / Component 1: Strengthening capacity for the institutional coordination role of environmental ministry, MARN and national coordinating body, SINAMA [TALA-0003b]

DATE / TIME:

14 January 2013 / 15:00 – 16:30 UK time (9:00-10:30 El Salvador time)

LOG-IN DETAILS:

Powwownow conferencing system Pin 901441

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QUESTIONS:

Please note answers in **GREEN** below were discussed on the Conference Call. The answers in **BLUE** are comments by the team pre/post Conference Call.

A. Previous Work

1. Are the offerors expected to adopt and follow the guidelines of the previous consultancy (results in Annex 1 and Annex 2) or use it as a basis for an early and short diagnostic to elaborate the work plan and implement their methodology?
Answer: We would like you to use the previous consultancy work as a basis and build from it. However, we do not want the assessment to be repeated, as this would just be a waste of time and money. Therefore, the methodology now should build on previous work, rather than replicate previous work.

Annex 1 was made on the base of those studies of last year so there some direct relationship between the studies and the project. But the study does not give you the methodology. The bidders should take the studies as a frame and build around this.

2. Will the bidders have access to additional documentation and information gathered during the 2012 consultancy? If yes, when will have access to such information?
Answer: No, there is no additional information or documentation.

B. On-line/Software (in the call we will only answer one or two of these questions, the answers to the other questions should go in writing.)

3. The TDRs mention the need for an indicators system, a monitoring system, and an information system to be implemented for the use of the quality management and processes unit: are the bidders expected to design, develop, and implement software based systems for each of them or provide for methodology and training?
Answer: Yes, and the use of open source, off-the-shelf modules is encouraged.

In the future we need to grow and address these systems. At present we don't have a platform as such to base systems on.

4. In the case of the on-line management system, please advise whether the bidders are expected to design and implement a software-based system or recommend the purchase of such a system?
Answer: Yes, as above, bidders are requested to design and implement software-based systems, prioritizing the use of open source, off-the-shelf modules

5. Please clarify the purpose of the on-line management system: i.e, provide statistical information, respond to the requirements of the access to information law, provide management training, and facilitate monitoring of activities, for example.

Answer: It should be MARN's executive information system, able to provide information for decision making, statistics, M&E, unit performance, financials (not just government but also project funding), budgets, progress of activities, indicators, etc.

We want to be able to have information at our finger tips. It should include at least the above. It may sound a lot but this is the minimal requirement. We will need to adjust this to our needs. One of the challenges that the Ministry is facing is to change the management style. With that we need to work on results. For example, how you are applying budget and resources etc. Information system will be aimed to inform decision making of managers in MARN.

Additional question – Should the online system function for MARN and SINAMA. Should the information updated be related or as an online M&E system? Ministries or just MARN or online or both components in the same system?

Answer – we would like both components. M&E should be part of the equations. But it should be restricted to MARN because we don't have the capacity to interconnect it with others. Also expecting you propose how MARN can build up and have it as an open system so that SINAMA can come in and consult with information that they can work on them in the future. This proposal would be

implemented after the project is finished. Implementing it is not part of this project but as with the other parts – shaping an online system in the way that it can grow in the future in the whole of SINAMA.

6. Does MARN currently use a system platform that the contractor should integrate in the new system? If so, please advise what is the capacity and use of such platform. What is the technical description of the platform in use?

Answer: No. We don't have a system platform; it has to be designed as part of the project.

7. Should the on-line management system include M&E?

Answer: Yes.

8. Should the on-line management system be linked with existing MARN's systems? If so, what are those systems?

Answer: Yes. It should be able to interact with the Environmental Evaluation System (SEA) and with the Planning and Monitoring System (tool that get all the planning info from the year from all the units in MARN, operating activities, budget, timelines and that should be provided information to managers, directors., vice pres and pres for decision making) (both need updating).

Two systems. Very robust and able to be consulted.

Additional Question - Since we have to integrate the current system into the new system can we have the technical specification of the current system to make sure we integrate it?

The specifications for the existing systems at MARN, i.e. Environmental Evaluation System (SEA) and Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation System (PLAME), are the following:

- Operating System: Windows Server 2008 with IIS 7.5.
- Databases: MS SQL Server 2005
- Development: Visual Studio 2005
- Programming: Visual Basic.Net with web interfaces on ASP.Net

9. Does MARN have an existing program the contractor should use and enhance to build the on-line management system?

Answer: No.

10. Does MARN have a database that the contractor should use in building the on-line management system? What are the technical design and structure of such database?

Answer: No. The project should include the design such a database and all elements of the on-line management system.

11. Please clarify who should have access to the on-line management system: strictly MARN's staff? Civil society? SINAMA's institutions? Donors? Internal and/or external clients?

Answer: For this stage, access should be restricted to MARN's staff. However, the project should include a proposal for opening the system to SINAMA's institutions and the general public.

12. In the event the bidders need to develop software-based systems, could you indicate the percentage of the budget that should go towards this activity?

Answer: We cannot provide a figure, however we would like it to be as little as possible and that is why we would suggest the use of open-source and of-the-shelf modules.

There is no figure as such. However, this should not comprise a large part of budget but should still address our needs.

C. Relationship between Component 1 and 2

13. Establishment of learning and knowledge transfers mechanisms between the ministry's personnel: this brings up three questions:
- a. Is this an issue that will be handled under component two of the project (human resources) or are the bidders under Component 1 expected to work jointly with the implementers of Component 2 and integrate their results?

Answer: bidders under Component 1 are expected to work jointly with the implementers of Component 2 and integrate their results.

Component 1 aims for Organisational Development to try and strengthen units in the Ministry and SINAMA. Component 2 aims to strengthen the personal capacities of MARN.

Whilst Component 1 is specific to units of MARN and SINAMA that are related to the processes, Component 2 is broader in terms of scope, because it reaches all employees at MARN. However, Component 1 requires strengthening units that will create necessities for personnel to accommodate for new systems in Component 2.

Additional Question – In Component 2 there is a need to prepare people to work to results on a more daily fashion. So will the supplier of Component 1 get status of what has been done to make sure both methodologies are congruent to ensure they can work well together?

Answer: Yes, for example in the process – e.g. comp1 to improve processes regarding main services. One of the tasks of Component 1 is to strengthen capacity to improve processes. You must train people here to improve processes.

Additional Question – Do we have to train and leave a system for MARN to use that same training capacity for newcomers at the Ministry?

A – No. You are not going to train MARN to train others, which is scoped in Component 2. However, this issue will need to be refined because Component 2 is more or less defined and going ahead therefore having their programme will facilitate planning of component 1.

In addition, we are in the process of finalising the contract for the supplier with Component 2. They are aware to work in parallel with Component 1 and there has to be meetings so that you will inform them of progress and vice versa. Therefore, expect a lot of stakeholder engagement as part of this project.

- b. If this activity falls under Component 1, are the bidders expected to integrate education or training specialists in their staff?

Answer: The responsibility for implementers of Component 1 is to work on tools and mechanisms for knowledge transfer, but not to input with content of knowledge. To this extent, bidders should have experts/specialists on designing such mechanisms/tools.

- c. Please confirm that the bidders are not expected to include the implementation of such knowledge transfers mechanisms to the SINAMA or any of the institutions which participate in the coordination process?

Answer: Yes, bidders from Component 1 are not expected to implement any training. There will be a pilot training for directors under Component 2.

14. Please clarify the areas that the knowledge transfer system should include: i.e, management/processes, technical issues, systems maintenance, among others.

Answer: Component 1 does not need to develop a knowledge transfer system.

15. Please clarify the staff levels which should be taken into account in developing the knowledge transfer system: technical levels, management and directorate levels, among others.

Answer: Not applicable, considering the previous answer.

D. Engagement with SINAMA

16. In designing the methodology for coordination between the MARN and the SINAMA's institutions, are the bidders expected to take into account the management and technical capacity of all the institutions in order to make a more realistic approach? If so, what information is available from the other institutions? Will the contractor have access to this information and when (during Part A or Part B of the process)?

Answer: Yes, SINAMA's institutions capacities need to be considered. Information will be given during project implementation, and the implementer should gather data through interviews with key SINAMA institutions and MARN.

We are working in a way that works specifically with municipalities and another with central institutions. We are not expecting to assess all institutions and technicalities of SINAMA but interested to see capacities of institutions to work in a network.

Additional Question – Would it be possible to work in the pilot of phase 1 to establish work system to have a first phase with people that are more readily functioning in terms of networking.

Answer: Yes, we are not expecting at the start to work with everybody. We need to go on what exists.

17. What is the current level of commitment of the SINAMA's institutions to participate in the coordination process?

Answer: There is a starting point of environmental units created in municipalities and public institutions that are the base for SINAMA. The challenge for this project is to build upon this commitment.

We are assuming a level of commitment of the institutions involved. We have different levels of work to address this. It is under this administration that we have developed more work precisely at a level which is key to make this move on and go ahead addressing environmental institutions.

18. This is an election year in El Salvador: this creates uncertainty as to the political will of institutions in all sectors; has this risk been taken into account? Are there some progresses made at the coordination level for SINAMA (political will) that could be seen as mitigating such risk?

Answer: Yes.

Answer: Even though we are in electoral year we are confident to stakeholders because the government is very much interested in taking advantage in order to modernise and establish processes. This has been a commitment from this government (within 5 yr plan).

19. Does the consultancy include providing technical assistance to institutions which have not yet complied with the legal requirement of forming an environmental unit?

Answer: No.

20. To advance faster in establishing the coordination system for SINAMA, can the contractor work on a pilot project with the institutions which already have a functioning environmental unit?

Answer: Yes.

21. M&E system for SINAMA (2.5): does the word systematization refers to the creation of an information system or does it mean standardize, implement, and replicate?

Answer: No, it does not mean the creation of an information system. It means standardize and document for replication.

E. Engagement with other stakeholders

22. What is the current level of awareness and commitment of civil society and the private sector as to their involvement with the National Environmental Policy?

Answer: They are aware. The level of commitment should be determined by the implementers as part of the strategy.

This was approved and consulted in the past year and its already moving on to the final strategy. We highly recommend you read the NEP as it is basis of what we are doing.

23. Mention is made that implementation of changes are underway at the ministry: are those changes clearly identified and, if so, is there any concrete information available in that respect?

Answer: Reflecting on the changes that have been made since the last assessment of MARN's institutional capacity, there is currently a process in place to hire additional 46 staff which will allow the creation of the Units and positions indicated in Annex II of the ToR (Quality and Planning Unit, Environmental Statistics Unit, Interinstitutional Articulation Units, and hiring other necessary staff for all Directions of MARN).

This process started last year and we hope to have it finished by April. This is important because it will reinforce capacity to work exclusively to work with stakeholders. Also, in terms of commitment and engagement over stakeholders we have to mention that we have already some institutional agreement with the Ministry of Agriculture and Public Works and Treasury and we are signing now another agreement with another relation.

24. Do MARN and SINAMA consider necessary additional needs assessments for the development of the new strategy, operational plans and mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation?

Answer : See Answer to question 1

25. What is the level of change that MARN and SINAMA seek to achieve within the proposed timeframe of 11 months?

Answer : See Answer to questions 17 and 23

26. Is SINAMA expected to have responsibilities for public consultation and linkage to multiple stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector? If so, what is the degree of responsibility that is expected?

Answer: No. SINAMA is comprised by governmental institutions at the local and national level. At present, it has no responsibilities as such for public consultation and linkage to multiple stakeholders.

27. What will be the expected roles of MARN and SINAMA in a broad spectrum of national environmental governance? It is expected that SINAMA depends on MARN?

Answer: The role of MARN in relation to SINAMA is to coordinate the system.

28. It is considered to continue providing institutional support and assistance to ensure sustainable national environmental governance, even after the termination of the mandate of this government?

Answer: Yes.

29. In connection with the on-line management information system that is expected to develop, please consider the following questions:

a. Who should manage and who should be the end users of the system?

Answer: The Information Systems Unit will manage the on-line system. End users are: MARN staff.

b. Which or what kind of information is expected to be managed (documents, project phases, etc.)?

Answer: Information for decision making, statistics, M&E, unit performance, financials, budgets, progress of activities, indicators, etc.

c. Are contemplated different levels of access to the system?

Answer: Yes.

d. Are there any models, technologies or technical specifications to be met and/or respected?

Answer: Open source, off-the-shelf software.

F. Other Questions

30. To make sure we understand part A and B of process. We have to provide a proposal with workplans. That workplans will be enhanced and improved during the part A period and at the end of the period the process will follow into part b OR the whole process stopped and again another process.

Our intention is to contract only once for part A and B. However, we will structure the contract such that at the end of Part A we can opt to break the contract if we are dissatisfied. We have left the ToR relatively open so that this can be fine tuned during part A and then implementation in part B. But if we don't reach an agreement then we would have to contract somebody else.

31. We are a local company and have international company on board. Is this needed?

We do not require an international company in this instance. However, international firms require a local partner on board.

32. Has MARN identified some specific local partners of interest? If so, can MARN provide names of such partners?

For the sake of illustration only, here is a list of organisations of which we are aware of that work in organisation change in El Salvador. These will give you an idea of the nature of companies that we are looking

for you to partner with. We stress these are not recommendations but simply examples and we do not endorse any of the companies below. You are free to partner with any organisation irrespective of whether they are in the list below or not, based solely upon your own judgement and assessment.

- Desisa www.desisa.com
- Search www.searchjobsca.com
- FEPADE www.fepade.org.sv
- ADEPRO www.adepro.biz/english.php
- AFAN consultores www.afanca.com