Date: 06 August 2012

Clarification Note # 1

Request for Proposal No. 03/UKR/2012 - DEVELOPMENT OF SOFTWARE, INTEGRATION, DEPLOYMENT AND MAINTENANCE OF THE ELECTION COMMISSIONER RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING SYSTEM

I. In accordance with paragraphs 8.2 and 8.3 of the Instructions to Bidders, the OSCE would like to provide the following clarifications to the Bidding Documents:

Question 1: We are asking for your kind approval of 4 (four) weeks extension of the due date. That is September 17 instead of August 20. Our policy is to provide our customers with the very best offers; and we strive being thorough and quality minded in the information we hand to our clients. Therefore, we feel necessary asking for this time extension. Recognizing the abnormal character of our demand, we will be in a better position to manage our engineers' schedule, in this particularly sensitive August time frame?

Answer 1: We recognize the difficulty with putting together proposals at this time of the year, when many people take leaves. However, we have to work with some deadlines that are not entirely within OSCE PCU's control, such as the dates for elections in Ukraine. The deadline for bids and the schedule indicated in the ToR are designed to make it possible to start using part of the software before the next election in the country. We know that the time-line we have established is very tight, but, unfortunately, we can not change it.

Question 2: Is OSCE currently using any software that should be integrated into this system?

Answer 2: No.

Question 3: Shall we propose also system of issuance of the secured (encrypted) test results (paper certificates) that are printed on normal home printers? We are using such system now with success. We can also connect our system to centralized (regionalized) ID issuance unit with the secured ID production. Shall we propose such solution as well?

Answer 3: Such systems aren't required by the ToR. However "Additional relevant features and services (if any)" proposed by the bidder may influence the results of the second stage of technical evaluation, part (ii) "The adequacy of the submitted methodology for developing an integrated software solution, the proposed architecture of the system and methodology for training and maintenance and their compliance with the requirements of the TOR" in accordance with the evaluation criteria provided. However, please note that the selection method that will be used to choose the winning bid is Least Cost, i.e. bidders should be aware that additional features (beyond the ToR) should not make their bid more expensive since that may hurt their chances when choosing the least cost offer.

Question 4: We have proprietary system of recruitment and payment that significantly reduces time for recruitment and payment for the labor. Shall this be also part of our proposal?

Answer 4: Since recruitment of election commissioners in Ukraine has its own specifics different from conditions for recruitment of governmental officials and also is a subject to frequent changes, implementation of such system at this stage doesn't seem to be possible.

Question 5: We believe that IT experience of the project manager is important but the most important is experience in similar election training projects. How much important will be the IT higher education experience?

Answer 5: It is important that experience of the project manager is relevant to the methodology proposed by the bidder.

Question 6: Could we receive some more information on the recruitment part of the system? What were usual problems reported and what are the CEC expectations in that matter? Maybe you have some reports available? Do you have current or latest version of the Election Training Deployment Plan and Staff Recruitment Plan from the CEC?

Answer 6: Since conditions for recruitment of election commissioners are different for different types of election (presidential, parliamentary, local) and, moreover are usually being changed from one election to another, it is impossible to provide a recruitment plan or approach which could be used as a sample. Thereby, at this stage the part of the ECRTS, which is related to the recruitment issue, is limited to management of information regarding composition of election commission and performance of the commissions' members.
With regard to Election Training Deployment Plan, at present the CEC is still working on its training approaches, there is no official Election Training Deployment Plan in place.

Question 7: Could we receive some more information on CEC "Vybory" system?

Answer 7: "Vybory" system is mainly tasked with transfer of information on the election results; it is closed to the external users. No integration of the ECRTS with "Vybory" system is expected.

Question 8: We can assist as well with the cascade training execution, would that be required as well or we focus only on the on-line training as the primary one?

Answer 8: The cascade training is not a part of this assignment.

Question 9: We believe that in some areas of Ukraine system shall provide content and assistance in Russian as well. I understand that this decision was already discussed and OSCE decided to go ahead with Ukrainian, but maybe you could advise us on this aspect so we can make more appropriate decisions regarding the content and support language. We would like to propose at least bi-lingual interface and maybe bi-lingual content for some areas? We are afraid that lack of such option could be disputed at later stages and might limit the efficiency of the overall solution. Please, advise on that.

Answer 9: The decision with regard to the use of the state language is made by the CEC in accordance with the Ukrainian legislation. The OSCE has no authority to decide which language(s) should be used by governmental bodies in Ukraine.

Question 10: SGS is present in number of locations around Ukraine and we are able to support implementation and F2F training deployment for number of regional centers. Do you envisage such deployment assistance?

Answer 10: Only training for the CEC personnel on the use of the ECTRS is planned within this assignment. At present the CEC has no regional offices.

Question 11: In item B 36, it is said: «The ECRTS user can be allowed to manage personal profiles of other parties». Who would be the "other parties"?

Answer 11: In this case "profiles of other parties" means public profiles described in par. (40), e.g. "current election commissioners, voters who would like to be candidates to work in elections commissions and trainers/instructors". Some of these profiles can be assigned (linked) to a system user as described in par. (34) after the system administrator ensures that the system user is the same person which profile he/she are being assigned to. Other profiles might be not assigned to any user. According to par (38) "System administrators are ECRTS users responsible for management of ECRTS users and personal profiles".

Question 12: I would like to ask, what are your expectations regarding the implementation timeframe? I have seen the examples of the schedule but I was wondering how much should be ready for the nearest elections. To do it right requires full cooperation of all entities involved and proper implementation/change management.

Answer 12: According to par. (124) of the TOR "The Online Training System should be functional and accessible to unregistered users by 1 October 2012". This term is conditioned by the terms of the election process: by 1 October information on composition of precinct election commissions (PEC) will be published and PEC members should have the opportunity to prepare themselves online for performing their duties before the elections scheduled for 28 October 2012. We fully comprehend that due to the tight timeframes full cooperation of all entities involved will be critical. OSCE PCU experts have already begun developing the content of the Online Training System in order to provide it to the contractor from the very beginning of the assignment.

Sincerely,

Csaba Csizmadia,
Chief of Fund Administration,
OSCE Project Coordinator in Ukraine