

PPDA/MOES/013

6th August 2025

The Permanent Secretary
Ministry of Education and Sports
P.O. Box 7063
KAMPALA

BID PREPARATORY AUDIT EXERCISE FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE PROVISION OF DIGITAL SCIENCE E-LEARNING SOLUTION TO IMPROVE THE TEACHING AND LEARNING OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

Reference is made to the above subject.

The Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) conducted a bid preparatory audit on the procurement of consultancy services for the provision of digital science e-learning solution to improve the teaching and learning of science and mathematics at the Ministry of Education and Sports.

The objectives of the audit were to:

1. Establish whether the public procurement planning and requisitioning processes were conducted in a manner which promotes transparency, accountability and fairness in accordance with the PPDA Act Cap. 205 and PPDA Regulations 2023; and
2. Establish whether the solicitation documents issued to the bidders were prepared in accordance with the provisions of the PPDA Act Cap. 205 and PPDA Regulations 2023.

The scope of the bid preparatory audit included review of the procurement requisition forms, solicitation documents, bid notices and the Contracts Committee approval of the procurement method, Evaluation Committee and solicitation documents. The areas of the solicitation document analyzed were - Instructions to Bidders, Bid Data Sheet, Evaluation Methodology and Criteria, Bidding Forms and the Special and General Conditions of Contract.

The Authority identified some exceptions for the attention of management. The purpose of this letter therefore is to communicate the following findings and recommendations for your attention and action:

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1.0 Whether the public procurement planning and requisitioning processes were conducted in a manner which promotes transparency, accountability and fairness in accordance with the PPDA Act Cap. 205 and PPDA Regulations 2023

The audit noted that the Entity was compliant with the processes of procurement planning, requisitioning and obtaining the necessary approvals from the Contracts Committee.

2.0 Whether the solicitation documents issued to the bidders were prepared in accordance with the provisions of the PPDA Act Cap. 205 and PPDA Regulations 2023

2.1 Restrictive qualification criteria in the Terms of Reference

The audit noted that there were several qualification criteria in Section 7(G) page 60 of the Terms of Reference in the bidding document that were restrictive as indicated below:

a) Criteria 1: Bidder shall have at least 10 years' experience in developing e-learning software in science and mathematics at O-level.

Requiring bidders to have at least 10 years experience specifically in developing e-learning software in science and mathematics at O-Level is restrictive because this criterion can only be met by Cyber Schools Technology Solutions Ltd, being the only company implementing this specific procurement at the Ministry of Education and Sports since 2012. The audit noted that the Entity had agreed to reduce the experience requirement from 10 to seven years during the pre-bid meeting, which period the audit still found restrictive.

Recommendation

The Entity should modify the experience required from 10 to five years and open it to experience in the development of the e-learning software in learning institutions in the education sector.

b) Criteria 2: The firm must have worked with implementing e-learning solutions in Ugandan Secondary Schools for at least 3 years in order to be able to fully understand, appreciate and overcome the challenges involved

Limiting the experience requirement to provision of e-learning solutions in Uganda Second Schools is restrictive as bidders with the required years of experience in other training institutions and schools outside of Uganda will be disadvantaged. All training institutions and schools in developing countries have similar experiences and challenges, thereby negating the Entity's reason for limiting this requirement to Ugandan Secondary Schools.

Recommendation

The Entity should modify this requirement to three years experience in implementing e-learning solutions in learning institutions in developing countries.

c) Criteria 3: The firm shall have previously been able to work with at least 200 secondary schools at a time – in secondary schools in East and Central Africa – implementing interactive e-learning solutions

Targeting 200 secondary schools at a time is unrealistic since the procurement being carried out is for the supply and installation of the e-learning solution in 100 schools for a 12 months period. Similarly, the audit noted that the previous service provider – Cyber Schools Technology Solutions Ltd had carried out implementation of the e-learning solutions in 50 schools within the same 12 months period, although they implemented the project since 2012. This means that any bidder who has experience in working with at least 50 schools can manage implementation of the contract.

Furthermore, limiting the experience to secondary schools in East and Central Africa is also restrictive as it will discourage participation of international firms with experience in other developing countries.

Recommendation

The Entity should revise this requirement to experience in implementing e-learning solutions in with 50 education institutions in developing countries.

d) Criteria 4: The bidder shall be able to document positive results from its prior implementation of its teaching and learning approaches in secondary schools by providing written and video testimonials of documented and recorded user satisfaction and independent recommendations preferably from Ugandan institutions of learning

Limiting the documented positive results and recommendations to only secondary schools from Ugandan Institutions of learning is restrictive, especially to international bidders and local bidders that may have experience of implementing similar services in other countries.

Recommendation

The Entity should open up this requirement to encompass experience arising from implementation and recommendations from any Institution in the Education Sector in a developing country.

e) Criteria 5: The Project Manager should have a minimum 10 years' experience working with deployment of e-learning solutions in more than 200 secondary schools. Experience from deploying e-learning solutions in Uganda an added advantage

Since it has only been Cyber Schools Technology Solutions Ltd implementing e-learning at the Ministry in the last 13 years where they covered over 1,000 schools, this requirement favors them at the detriment of other firms. Additionally, limiting the experience to implementing e-learning solutions in Uganda is also restrictive as other bidders with similar experience in other developing countries will be discriminated.

Recommendation

The Entity should revise this criteria to require a Project Manager with five years experience working with deployment of e-learning solutions in more than 50 schools/ institutions in order to match with criteria 1 and 3 above. Experience from deploying e-learning solutions in developing countries should be an added advantage.

2.2 Issuance of bidding documents to bidders with insufficient information

Whereas the Entity asked bidders to prepare their bids based on servicing 100 schools for a 12 months period, making three school visits per term, the audit noted that the Entity did not include the list of the 100 schools or where they are located. This will make it hard for bidders to come up with their bid prices since they may need to factor in the location of the Schools.

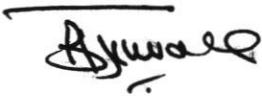
Recommendation

The Entity should immediately avail the bidders with the list of 100 beneficiary schools and their respective locations to enable bidders to adequately prepare their bids.

Conclusion

The Entity should amend the bidding document to incorporate the above recommendations by issuing an addendum in accordance with Regulation 44 of the PPDA (Procurement of Consultancy Services) Regulations, 2023. The Entity should also extend the bid submission deadline to allow bidders sufficient time to prepare their bidding documents in light of the amendment.

The purpose of this letter is to forward the findings of the bid preparatory audit exercise for implementation.



Benson Turamye
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

- cc: The Chairman, Contracts Committee
- cc: The Head, Procurement and Disposal Unit