

AMENDMENT #1: 2025-31001 Belau National Hospital Relocation Feasibility Study in Palau

POC: Anna Amaya, USTDA, 1101 Wilson Boulevard, Suite 1100, Arlington, VA 22209-3901, Tel: (703) 875-4357, Fax: (703) 775-4037, Email: RFP@ustda.gov.

Please note that the Request for Proposals (RFP) for the Feasibility Study (FS) for the Belau National Hospital Relocation Project is amended, as follows:

Questions, Answers and Clarifications: This amendment consists of clarifying questions and answers submitted by potential Offerors regarding the RFP packet. Responses to submitted questions are attached.

Questions and Answers

Q1: Should subcontractors and/or independent consultants be exclusive to one proposal/bid or can they participate in multiple proposals/bid?

A1: Subcontractors are permitted to participate in multiple bids unless the solicitation explicitly states otherwise. USTDA does not require exclusivity for subcontractors/consultants, so long as there is full disclosure of their participation in each proposal and no conflict of interest arises.

Q2: We understand that the fixed grant amount is \$2,370,000 and that this amount was arrived at by estimating the costs for each task and subtask. May we see the budget as developed by each task? We realize that we do not need to provide cost data for the RFP response; however, as we speak with the various subcontractors that we would like to use, it would be very helpful to see the amounts the DM allocated for each task.

A2: USTDA will share its estimated cost for each task/subtask in the RFP Amendment #2

Q3: The U.S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) has provided a grant in the amount of US\$2,370,000 to Palau's Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Industry (the "Grantee"), which is a fixed amount as stated in the solicitation document. It is further stated that cost will not be a factor in the evaluation and therefore, cost proposals should not be submitted. Does this mean that the scope of work as described must be provided within the grant amount limits? Further, does this mean that the selected firm will be bound by that maximum amount and won't be able to exceed that amount, even if the selected firm may be able to showcase that additional funding maybe necessary to perform the full scope of work?

A3: Correct, the fixed grant amount of US\$2,370,000 provided by USTDA to Palau's Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Industry means that the scope of work, as described in the solicitation, must be completed within that budget. The solicitation explicitly states that cost will not be a factor in the evaluation and that cost proposals should not be submitted. The grant

amount is not negotiable, and all proposals will be evaluated based on technical merit alone. Firms are expected to carefully review the Terms of Reference and confirm that they can perform the entire scope of work within the fixed amount awarded.

Q4: Under *Section 1.2*, it is stated that three potential sites (Koror, Arai and Ngatpang) need to be evaluated; In addition to identifying the ideal location, the FS would also support 30% of the engineering and architectural design. Does this mean that the 30% design shall be developed for all three sites?

A4: No, the 30% engineering and architectural design is not expected for all three sites. Under *Section 1.2*, the FS is required to evaluate and compare the three potential sites—Koror, Arai, and Ngatpang—to identify the most suitable location for the new hospital. The 30% engineering design is expected to be developed only for the selected (preferred) site, based on the outcome of that site evaluation. The evaluation of the three sites will inform the final recommendation, and once that site is chosen *in coordination with the Grantee*, the consultant will proceed with the preliminary (30%) design for that site only.

Q5: Can USTDA clarify the meaning of this sentence: “*The Contractor shall consider the requirements for a 30 percent design with associated contingency levels*” Does this refer only to the hospital design or also to the civil engineering for the site? Can USTDA also clarify whether the “30% design” aligns with AACE Class 3 or another industry standard, and whether design documentation (drawings, specifications, modeling) must meet any specific codes or review thresholds?

A5: The 30% design requirement includes both the hospital facility and the supporting site-related civil works. This includes architectural, structural, and engineering design of the hospital as well as associated infrastructure, such as site grading, access roads, utilities, and other civil components required for actual project implementation, consistent with the AACE Class 3 cost estimate level. Since Palau doesn’t have a published building code available, the design should adhere to applicable U.S./international standards to the extent practicable.

Q6: *Task 4* states: “The Contractor shall prepare at least three, and no more than five, suitable hospital design concepts based on the needs analysis results for medical facilities of similar size and complexity built in greenfield areas. The design options shall also be based on discussions with hospital stakeholders, including the hospital administration and officials from the Government of Palau. The design options shall include conceptual designs, including plan and elevation drawings, 3D exterior renderings, general arrangement drawings, and floor plan drawings. Structural or detailed design build drawings are not required as part of the Activity. The Contractor shall prepare five separate design concept packages for review by the Client and the Committee.” Are “three to five” or “five” separate concept packages required under this task?

A6: The intent is for the Contractor to develop a range of 3 to 5 conceptual design options that reflect different design approaches suitable for the selected site. The reference to “5 separate design concept packages” is meant to define the upper bound of that range and ensure the Contractor plans for up to five options. Ultimately, the number of design concepts developed—

between 3 and 5—will be determined in consultation with the Grantee based on the outcome of the site evaluation process.

Q7: Has the Grantee decided on a “hospital service concept”, as discussed in the RFP (e.g. All-Inclusive, General Acute Care, or Acute Care and Specialty) or is this part of the *Task 4 Design Options* task?

A7: The Grantee has not yet finalized a hospital service concept. This will be part of *Task 4: Design Options* in the Terms of Reference. As part of this task, the Contractor is expected to work closely with the Grantee and relevant stakeholders to develop and evaluate multiple hospital service models. These options will inform both the site selection process and the 30% design effort for the preferred site.

Q8: Order of magnitude estimate is required in *Task 4*, but then a AACE level 3 is required in *Task 6*. Please clarify.

A8: The order-of-magnitude estimate in *Task 4* is intended to support the site evaluation and selection process to help inform the recommendation of a preferred site, but is not intended to be highly detailed. *Task 6* requires an AACE Class 3 cost estimate for the selected/preferred site. This estimate will serve as a more accurate basis for financial analysis and project planning.

Task 4 = preliminary estimate to compare sites (order-of-magnitude)

Task 6 = more detailed estimate for selected/preferred site (AACE Class 3)

Q9: Does the Grantee also want the contractor to look at clinics and other services available in the Republic of Palau and/or any retrofit uses for the current hospital structure?

A9: Yes, as part of *Task 2: Needs Assessment*, the Grantee expects the Contractor to consider the role of existing clinics and healthcare services throughout the Republic of Palau. This includes understanding how the new hospital will complement or integrate with these facilities to ensure efficient, equitable service delivery. In addition, the Grantee is interested in assessing potential future uses for a new/modern Belau National Hospital. Therefore, the Contractor should provide preliminary recommendations for possible retrofit, repurposing, or decommissioning based on the condition/ value of the current facility.

Q10: This is a very complex undertaking in a remote location. Would it be possible to delay the submission from September 1 for (up to) three months to (potentially/ latest) December 1 adding an Industry Day to present the project and expectations to potential bidders. Would it also be possible to visit the existing Belau National Hospital in Koror, Palau as well as potentially seeing the other sites as well prior to bidding.

A10: The ultimate extension of the solicitation deadline will need to be determined by the Grantee. However, the hospital relocation is a high priority Project for both the U.S. and Palau; therefore, the RFP would not be extended beyond 90 days from the day it was posted in Sam.gov. Additionally, USTDA must ensure a fair and transparent procurement process, where no firm is given a competitive advantage. It is possible that other qualified firms are already preparing and submitting proposals within the current timeline. USTDA will take your input into

consideration and consult with the Grantee regarding the next steps. If any changes to the solicitation or timeline are made, they will be formally communicated to all interested parties to ensure equal access and opportunity.

Q11: Can USTDA provide the U.S. Firm Information Form as mentioned on page 11 of the solicitation?

A11: The U.S. Firm Information Form is no longer used by USTDA to collect background information. We will update the RFP shortly to reflect this change. Please refer to RFP Amendment #2.

Q12: *Section 2.23 Complete Services* indicates the “Offeror shall be required to (a) provide local transportation, office space and secretarial support required to perform the TOR if such support is not provided by the Grantee”. Can USTDA clarify whether the Grantee expects the Contractor to establish office space for the duration of the FS or are the requirements listed only required as associated with site visits? Furthermore, is there a minimum requirement regarding time to be spent onsite versus remotely for the implementation of this FS?

A12: Local transportation, office space, and secretarial support applies only as needed during site visits and periods of fieldwork. The Grantee is expected to facilitate necessary office space and support for these visits. Although the Grantee is expected to offer other reasonable support to the Contractor—such as coordinating meetings, providing office space, and assisting with stakeholder engagement during site visits and fieldwork—if the Grantee is unable to provide such support, the Contractor will be responsible for making the necessary arrangements independently. There will be no minimum requirement regarding time to be spent onsite versus remotely.

Q13: *Annex I – 6 Subtask 3.3 Site Surveys and Evaluation* indicates “contractor is expected to drill a minimum of six and a maximum of ten borehole to ten meters of bedrock on the preferred site.” Typically, such geotechnical requirements would state “...ten meters OR bedrock”. Can you verify the technical requirement for depth of drilling?

A13: To clarify: the technical requirement is intended to mean drilling up to a maximum depth of ten meters or until bedrock is encountered, whichever comes first on the selected site.

Q14: Are firms that participate in this FS excluded from participation in future work (architectural, engineering, construction, etc.) related to the hospital relocation?

A14: USTDA does not impose any restrictions that would prevent a firm selected to conduct the FS from participating in future implementation work related to the hospital relocation. Any future procurement would be managed by the Grantee or other implementing partners and would fall outside of USTDA’s jurisdiction. It will ultimately be up to the Grantee to determine eligibility criteria for future contracts, in accordance with their own procurement policies and any requirements imposed by future funders.

Q15: Since Palau is a sovereign nation and the grant amount excludes taxes, tariffs, etc. will this scope of work be exempt from taxes, or is there a funding source to cover those costs?

A15: The applicability of local taxes is ultimately subject to the Grantee's laws and policies. The selected U.S. firm will have the opportunity to clarify with the Grantee, Palau's Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Industry, whether the FS activities will be exempt from taxes, or whether there is an alternative funding source (e.g., in-kind cost share/contributions) to cover such costs. This would be negotiated during the secondary agreement/contract review. USTDA grant funds cannot be used to pay for host country taxes or tariffs.

Q16: Could you please confirm whether proposed key staff are expected to be full-time? If not, kindly clarify the anticipated level of effort (in person-months) for each Key Expert over the project duration.

A16: Key staff are not required to be full-time, but they are expected to dedicate sufficient time and engagement to ensure high-quality, timely delivery of their assigned responsibilities. The anticipated level of effort for each key personnel is at the discretion of the Offeror, based on the proposed approach to completing the Terms of Reference. Offerors should clearly explain the proposed level of effort in their work plan to ensure alignment with the project scope.

Q17: Are there specific key personnel the Grantee would like provided along with the Project Manager (PM) or is this at the firm's discretion based on the scope of work?

A17: Offerors are free to propose key personnel they consider appropriate based on the scope of work. The key team members should have appropriate extensive professional experience in their respective disciplines. Experience in architecture/engineering in the Pacific region for architectural and engineering staff is desired. Examples of key functions may include but are not limited to PM, Healthcare Management Consultant, Senior Civil Engineer, Electrical Engineer, Mechanical Engineer, Senior Architect (LEED-certified), Environmental Specialist, Regulatory Attorney, Procurement Specialist, and Financial Specialist. For additional guidance, please refer to *Section 4: Award Criteria of the RFP*.

Q18: Please confirm the date USTDA anticipates this FS will commence.

A18: The actual start date will depend on the completion of RFP process, the selection and approval of the U.S. firm (Contractor), and finalization of contractual arrangements between the Grantee and the Contractor. That said, USTDA-funded activities typically commence within a few weeks to a couple of months following contract award, depending on local conditions and logistical considerations.

Q19: For the proposal, does the client expect any particular specifications, such as font, point size, line spacing, margins, etc., or is the offeror open to use whatever specifications we believe will be legible and engaging, including for components such as tables, charts, graphics, text boxes, etc.?

A19: The solicitation does not prescribe specific formatting requirements such as font type, point size, line spacing, or margins. Offerors are free to use formatting they believe is legible,

including for tables, charts, graphics, and text boxes. That said, USTDA recommends that proposals are easy to read and consistently formatted.

Q20: Please clarify the staff members, data, resources, assistance, facilities, and/or information that will be provided by counterpart staff to facilitate the successful implementation of the FS. Further, please advise if there will be dedicated full-time counterpart staff assigned to the Project for its duration, and if so, the positions of these individuals if it is known.

A20: At this time, the Ministry of Public Infrastructure and Industry (MPII or Grantee), has not confirmed the assignment of full-time counterpart staff dedicated *exclusively* to the Project. However, MPII is expected to assign a designated point of contact and relevant technical staff, as needed, to coordinate with the Contractor throughout the FS. Any updates regarding assigned personnel will be communicated during the review of the secondary agreement/contract review between the Grantee and the Contractor. In addition, the Grantee is required to provide sufficient documentation and information, as outlined under Task 1 of the Terms of Reference, for the successful performance of the FS.

Q21: Regarding *Section 3.5 Experience and Qualifications*, please clarify whether Offeror can provide up to six relevant project references for each firm in a consortium (Offeror and subcontractors) or whether the maximum of six relevant project references applies to the entire consortium.

A21: *“As many as possible but not more than six (6) relevant and verifiable project references must be provided for each of the Offeror and any subcontractor.”* That said, only six relevant and verifiable project references will be scored as part of the evaluation process. Firms are encouraged to carefully select the most relevant and impactful examples that demonstrate their qualifications.

Q22: Please clarify which countries are considered 'target countries' for this grant as referenced in *Section 10. Nationality, Source and Origin* of the RFP.

A22: *“Target Country means a country, other than the Host Country, (i) that is an integral part of the Project’s scope and (ii) whose local labor is required for work to be performed in connection with the Activity. A Project may have one or more Target Countries.”* This grant has no such requirements.

Q23: Is the Army Corps report available for review: *MEDICAL FACILITY MAINTENANCE ROOT CAUSE ANALYSIS, SITE REPORT: BELAU NATIONAL HOSPITAL, MARCH 2022 U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, HONOLULU DISTRICT DEPARTMENT OF INTERIOR, OFFICE OF INSULAR AFFAIRS Contract No: W9128A19D0002 / Task Order No: W9128A20F0008*

A23: USTDA will confirm with U.S. Army Corps. If there is an existing public version of this report, USTDA will issue another RFP Amendment.

[illegible]

Q27: Are topographic surveys, geotechnical assessments, hydrology studies, and flood assessments required at each of the three sites as a basis for selection? Or just the recommended site?

A27: The FS requires a site assessment/comparative evaluation of the three proposed sites to identify the most suitable location for the new hospital. To support this evaluation, the Contractor is expected to conduct preliminary-level assessments of topography, geotechnical conditions, hydrology studies, and flood risk assessment at each site, sufficient to inform a sound, data-driven site selection recommendation.

Q28: Confirming water supply and quality analysis is limited to interviews during site visits and document review at the FS phase of work. Please confirm water well drilling, aquifer testing, and water quality analysis are not within the scope of this FS.

A28: Correct--water well drilling, aquifer testing, and laboratory water quality analysis are not within the scope of this FS, as these are typically part of detailed design or implementation phases. The FS is only intended to identify whether water supply and other resources exist at or near each site and assess potential constraints based on currently available information.

Q29: *In Task 3*, Would the use of alternative technologies be acceptable in assessing site Geotechnical Characteristics if bringing in a drilling rig for the Study proves to not be cost effective or not available in a timely manner?

A29: Offerors may propose alternative, cost-effective methods for assessing geotechnical characteristics as long as they justify their proposed approach in their technical proposals and explain how it will meet the objectives of the study. That said, any proposed alternative would need to be reviewed and agreed upon by the Grantee as part of the work plan. In addition, any proposed changes to the Terms of Reference (TOR) must be clearly communicated and justified in writing for USTDA's approval, *before any changes are made*.

Q30: Is the proposer able to determine/adjust the soils and geotechnical survey scope as long as the information gathered supports evaluation of feasibility for each site and development of potential benefits and deficiencies, from a geotechnical standpoint, to support site selection; with the understanding additional geotechnical studies will be necessary after site selection?

A30: Contractors may adjust the scope of geotechnical surveys as long as the information gathered supports evaluating feasibility and identifying key geotechnical advantages and challenges for each site. Again, any proposed adjustments to the TOR must be justified and previously approved by the Grantee and USTDA. More detailed geotechnical studies may be needed after the preferred site is selected.