

Request for Proposals

Landscape Study and Development of Agriculture Finance Roadmap

APEP-2025-019

April 2025



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1. INTRODUCTION

Abt Global is inviting Proposals for the services specified in this Request for Proposal. A summary of the services is below with further details available in section 3 of this document.

1.1 Summary overview

Program

The Australia – PNG Economic Partnership (APEP) is a multi-sectoral investment to assist GoPNG to create a stable and more prosperous country. The investment is a key coordination point from which Australia delivers its economic development support to PNG in alignment with the Comprehensive Strategic and Economic Partnership (CSEP).

APEP's policy objective is to assist PNG in its efforts to achieve sustained growth, capable of lifting the standard of living of all citizens, while also ensuring Australia maintains its reputation as PNG's economic partner of choice.

APEP has gender equality, disability social inclusion (GEDSI), women's economic empowerment (WEE), climate change, economic dialogue and open government positioned as cross-cutting objectives across all engagement areas.

It has the following End of Program Outcomes (EOPOs):

- EOPO 1 Safeguarding Macroeconomic Stability
- EOPO 2 Strengthening Public Financial Management (PFM)
- EOPO 3 Supporting More Efficient and Inclusive Markets
- EOPO 4 Fostering Inclusive Growth and Expanded Livelihoods
- EOPO 5 Catalysing Economic Research and Dialogue

Services

We are seeking an organisation to conduct a comprehensive study of PNG's agriculture finance landscape, examining both supply-side and demand-side dynamics. On the supply side, the service provider will investigate the barriers preventing financial institutions—including commercial banks and licensed financial institutions—from expanding their agriculture finance portfolios. On the demand side, the service provider will explore the specific needs, expectations, and challenges faced by producers, aggregators, SMEs, and large agribusinesses across key value chains such as cocoa, coffee, oil palm, and fresh produce. By integrating global best practices with PNG-specific insights, this study will identify actionable solutions that address local market realities.

Upon concluding the data collection and analysis, the service provider will produce two primary outputs: a public report that offers a comprehensive overview of the agriculture finance landscape, and an internal roadmap with recommendations for DFAT and APEP to guide future interventions. The final deliverables must include actionable insights on overcoming supply- and demand-side constraints, strategies to enhance financial inclusion for marginalized groups, and practical policy or programmatic guidance. Throughout the assignment, the service provider will collaborate closely with APEP and key stakeholders, presenting interim findings, refining recommendations, and ensuring that the final outputs are both evidence-based and aligned with the development priorities of Papua New Guinea.

2. KEY DETAILS

2.1 Key dates

Request Issue date	30 April 2025
Industry briefing	9 May 2025, 2pm PNG time
Q&A Closing date	14 May 2025
Closing date and time	21 May 2025, 5pm PNG time
Services period	June 2025- November 2025

2.2. Contact Officer

The contact officer for this Request for Expressions of Interest (RFP) is the Abt Global Procurement Manager based in Port Moresby. The contact email address is png.tenders@anspng.org.

2.3. Registration

Interested organisations should register their interest in submitting an RFP with the contact officer to ensure they receive any additional information, modifications and/or addenda that may be released by Abt Global.

2.4. Questions

Respondents may submit a query or request for clarification arising from this RFP to the nominated contact officer. Questions can be by email only.

Questions may be submitted up to 5pm PNG time on **21 May 2025**.

Questions and answers will be distributed to all registered organisations and not just the organisation submitting the question.

2.5 Industry Briefing

There will be an industry briefing on **9 May 2025** through teams meeting at 2pm PNG time.

Interested organisations are encouraged to register their interest in attending the briefing session by emailing the contact officer.

If an organisation is unable to attend the briefing they can request the information from the briefing presentation along with responses to any requests for information raised during the briefing.

2.6 Proposal submission requirements

The following sets out the requirements for the submission of proposals. Please email the contact officer if you have any questions.

Lodgement
By email to png.tenders@amspng.org
Eligibility
<p>This request for proposal is open to organisations based in Papua New Guinea and internationally. To be eligible for consideration, organisations must be registered on the company register of their country of incorporation.</p> <p>Organisations registered outside of Papua New Guinea must ensure that they are permitted by Papua New Guinean legislation to provide the proposed services in Papua New Guinea. Further information on the requirements for registration of overseas companies in Papua New Guinea can be found in the <i>Companies Act 1997</i> and on the Investment Promotion Authority website.</p> <p>Responses from individuals will not be considered.</p>
Technical Proposal
<p>Respondents are required to submit a comprehensive Technical Proposal detailing how they will deliver the services outlined in the Terms of Reference (TOR). The Technical Proposal should explicitly address all relevant sections of the TOR—including the scope of work, proposed methodology, implementation plan, and key deliverables—and must clearly demonstrate how each of the evaluation criteria (outlined below) will be met.</p> <p>Proposal Format and Length</p> <p>The Technical Proposal should not exceed 20 pages (excluding annexes such as CVs, references, and supporting documents).</p> <p>All annexes and supporting documents (e.g., detailed CVs, letters of reference, and examples of previous work) should be clearly labelled and referenced within the main proposal text.</p> <p>Required Sections</p> <p><u>Understanding of the Assignment</u></p> <p>Provide a concise overview of your understanding of the PNG agriculture finance context, including key challenges and opportunities relevant to the study (e.g., supply- and demand-side barriers, regulatory environment, climate considerations, GEDSI/WEE issues). Demonstrate familiarity with local conditions, referencing any prior experience in the Pacific region or PNG.</p> <p><u>Proposed Methodology and Approach</u></p> <p>Describe in detail how you plan to conduct the multi-phased research—covering inception, desk research, stakeholder pre-engagement, pilot and full-scale field studies, data analysis, and validation workshops. Emphasize both qualitative and quantitative techniques you will use, how you will integrate GEDSI/WEE considerations, and any risk mitigation strategies.</p> <p><u>Implementation Plan and Work Schedule</u></p> <p>The technical proposal must include a timeline for delivery of the project noting that the final deliverable must be submitted no later than 30 November 2025. The timeline must include dates for delivery of the deliverables specified in section 3 of this RFP. Present a proposed timeline that aligns with the phases described in section 3 (inception, pilot, full fieldwork, analysis, and final reporting). Specify key milestones, deliverables, and resource</p>

requirements. Include a clear plan for stakeholder engagement and field logistics, especially for geographically dispersed data collection.

Team Composition and Capacity

Identify key personnel, their roles, and relevant experience—particularly in agriculture finance, research methodologies, gender and social inclusion, and PNG or Pacific contexts. Include short bios in the main text and attach detailed CVs in an annex. Describe how the team's structure will ensure efficient project delivery and quality outputs.

Relevant experience

Summarise previous projects of a similar nature, highlighting outcomes, lessons learned, and demonstrated impact. Provide at least two relevant references who can attest to the organisation's capabilities and past performance.

Financial Proposal

Respondents should submit a financial proposal for the provision of the services and associated expenses. Respondents should note the following financial proposal requirements:

- the proposal should be in PGK if the organisation is registered in Papua New Guinea
- the proposal should be in AUD if the organisation is registered outside of Papua New Guinea
- the proposal should be GST exclusive and if this is not clearly notated in the proposal it will be assumed the proposal is GST exclusive
- the proposal should include a budget proposal in two sections: fees and reimbursable expenses.
 - The 'fees section' should be a lump sum proposal for the fees for the project. It should include technical fees and any visa expenses, per diems, meal allowances, ground transport costs and other costs not identified in the expense category.
 - The 'reimbursable expenses section' should include an estimate of expenses for flights and accommodation. These are the only expenses that will be reimbursable in the final contract. Expenses in this section will be paid as reimbursables with receipts for exact amounts requiring submission for verification before payment.
 - Note- Abt Global will manage any venue hire and/or catering costs for workshops and these expenses should not be included in proposals
- if the fee proposal is based on the number of input days, the proposal should include the number of input days proposed

Abt Global will contract with the successful respondent using a fee for service arrangement. There will be no upfront payment and fees will be paid following acceptance of milestone deliverables. The milestone deliverables will be derived from the deliverables listed in this document and agreed between the parties. A percentage of the agreed fee will be attached to each milestone deliverable.

Supporting documents

The following supporting documents and information is required to be submitted with the proposal:

1. For Papua New Guinean organisations:
 - IPA Certificate of Good Standing long form (must be for the entity the organisation will contract with if successful)

- TIN certificate
2. For international organisations:
 - Company extract showing the directors and shareholders of the company
 - IPA Certificate of Foreign Registration (where applicable)
 - IPA Certificate of Good Standing for Overseas company (where applicable)
 3. Nominated representative for the RFP (name, email address and phone number)
 4. CVs of all personnel nominated to deliver the services
 5. Certificates of currency for public liability, professional indemnity and workers compensation insurance
 6. Specifics of any conflict of interest that exist or that could be perceived to exist in relation to this RFP and/ or any contract. If there are no conflicts of perceived conflicts please state that no conflict exists.
 7. Statement of Contract compliance- Respondents should indicate any provisions of the contract forming part of the RFP package that they are unwilling to comply with and provide suggested amendments where relevant.

2.6 Proposal evaluation

Organisations will be assessed for inclusion on the panel in two stages:

- (a) Compliance with the response requirements, submission of all requested document and pre-qualification and due diligence checks; and
- (b) Assessment against the following technical evaluation criteria:

Criterion No.	Weighting %	Description
1	20%	Technical expertise and experience <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • relevance of experience • experience in PNG / regional context
2	25%	Proposed methodology and approach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research methodology and stakeholder engagement strategy • understanding of project scope
3	25%	Team Composition and Capacity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team Leader experience • key team members experience
4	30%	Cost Competitiveness <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • value for money



2.7 Contract terms

The successful respondent will be invited to enter a contract arrangement with Abt Global in the form of the contract included in this RFP package.

The contract will be in Papua New Guinean kina for organisations registered in Papua New Guinea and in Australian dollars for organisations registered elsewhere. Please contact the contact officer ahead of proposal submission if alternative arrangements will be sought.

3. STATEMENT OF REQUIREMENTS

3.1 Background

Agriculture in Papua New Guinea (PNG) employs approximately 85% of the population, contributes around 14% of GDP, and generates K4.1 billion in exports (NASP 2024–33). Despite this significance, the sector remains underserved by financial institutions, largely due to high perceived risks, operational challenges, and limited outreach beyond urban centers. Such barriers have led to minimal agriculture lending in PNG’s banking sector, constraining both short-term (working capital) and long-term (equipment investment) credit options for producers and agribusinesses.

Various development partners—including bilateral and multilateral agencies—can help bridge this financing gap, but their efforts are often hampered by the lack of current, in-depth research on agriculture finance in PNG. As a result, donor interventions and policy decisions may not be fully evidence-based or adequately tailored to local market conditions.

To address this gap, APEP is commissioning a qualitative action research study to examine the current state of agriculture finance in PNG. The successful service provider will employ a mix of stakeholder consultations, interviews, and focus group discussions to identify the major bottlenecks impeding financial access and to determine the needs of key market actors—particularly within the coffee, cocoa, vanilla, and fresh produce value chains. Through this research, we expect to develop clear, evidence-based recommendations that inform both public policy and programmatic decision-making. Ultimately, the findings will guide APEP and DFAT to craft impactful strategies and investments that expand access to finance and bolster PNG’s agricultural sector for sustainable, long-term growth.

3.2 Objectives and Outcomes

The primary aim of this assignment is to **conduct a comprehensive landscape study** of agriculture finance in Papua New Guinea (PNG), focusing on both supply- and demand-side dimensions. By examining the critical barriers preventing financial service providers from expanding their portfolios—and understanding the specific needs and challenges of agricultural stakeholders—this study will produce action-oriented findings that inform future policy and program design.

Expected outcomes include:

- A **comprehensive evidence base** clarifying the key drivers and impediments in PNG’s agriculture finance ecosystem.
- **Actionable policy and program recommendations** that empower financial institutions, government bodies, and donors to address gaps and scale agricultural lending.
- A **targeted roadmap** for APEP that aligns with broader development priorities, enabling more strategic and impactful investments in PNG’s agriculture sector.

More specifically, this study will:

1. **Analyse Supply-Side Constraints**
 - Identify and understand the key issues deterring financial institutions from scaling agriculture lending, including regulatory barriers and perceptions of high risk.
 - Suggest practical, context-relevant solutions that help financial institutions and other stakeholders increase the sustainable flow of finance to the agriculture sector.
2. **Assess Demand-Side Needs**
 - Investigate the financial service requirements of diverse stakeholders—such as smallholders, aggregators, SMEs, and large agribusinesses—across selected value chains (e.g., cocoa, coffee, oil palm, and fresh produce).

- Determine how tailored financial products and services can address these needs, ultimately fostering more robust and sustainable growth within PNG's agricultural enterprises.

3. Align with APEP Priorities

- Ensure that the study's findings and recommendations align with APEP overarching goals for the agriculture sector, taking into account recent investments such as the MSME report's section on access to finance.
- Develop a strategic roadmap for APEP, guiding future support to high-impact interventions in agriculture finance and ensuring the best use of available resources. Inputs required for such alignment will be made available to the successful applicant.

3.3 Services required

The successful service provider will undertake a multi-phased, qualitative action research initiative aimed at generating actionable insights into agriculture finance in Papua New Guinea (PNG). Unlike a large-scale quantitative study, this approach will utilise smaller, carefully selected samples to capture diverse stakeholder perspectives while remaining cost-effective and methodologically robust. The outputs will include a publicly available report and an internal roadmap for APEP.

This project will adopt a qualitative action research methodology, employing interviews, focus groups, and stakeholder consultations to capture both high-level perspectives and on-the-ground realities. By prioritising practical insights over purely theoretical analysis, the study will furnish actionable recommendations that can be rapidly integrated into programmatic and policy initiatives. Emphasis will be placed on value chains such as coffee, cocoa, vanilla, fresh produce, and oil palm, ensuring that diverse producer and agribusiness contexts are adequately represented.

Specifically, the successful service provider is expected to:

1. Desk Research and Inception

- Conduct a focused review of existing documents, including relevant government publications, finance sector reports, and donor studies.
- Produce an inception report and research plan detailing the qualitative methodology (e.g., key informant interviews, focus groups), stakeholder engagement strategy, and a high-level timeline.

2. Stakeholder Engagement and Pre-Fieldwork Consultation

- Collaborate with institutions such as the Bank of Papua New Guinea (BPNG), commercial banks, and relevant commodity boards to confirm research priorities and refine data collection tools.
- Obtain initial feedback to ensure that the research framework aligns with local realities and PNG's policy landscape.

3. Field Research (Supply and Demand Side)

- Supply Side: Conduct in-depth interviews and group discussions with a select range of financial institutions to understand current lending practices, risk perceptions, and market constraints.
- Demand Side: Gather qualitative insights from producers, aggregators, and agribusinesses (in key agriculture provinces such as the Highlands, Morobe, and Eastern Highlands). This may include focus group discussions and interviews designed to explore challenges and needs in accessing finance.
- Incorporate Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI) and Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE) considerations throughout all data-gathering exercises, ensuring that voices of marginalized groups are included.

4. Data Analysis and Validation

- Synthesise qualitative findings to pinpoint core barriers, potential interventions, and emerging opportunities in agriculture finance.
- Share preliminary results in interim workshops or validation sessions, integrating feedback from APEP, DFAT, and other stakeholders into the final deliverables.

5. Report Writing and Dissemination

- Produce a public report offering a detailed qualitative analysis of agriculture finance in PNG, accompanied by clear, actionable recommendations for government bodies, financial institutions, development partners, and other stakeholders.
- Develop an internal roadmap specifically for DFAT/APEP, outlining strategic priorities and resource allocation to advance agriculture finance in PNG and present that in an internal workshop.
- Support APEP in conducting a public launch event, ensuring widespread dissemination of key findings and fostering collaborative engagement among stakeholders.

3.4 Deliverables

The successful service provider will provide the following key deliverables over the course of the assignment.

Delivery timeframes are to be proposed in a timeline as part of the service provider's technical response noting the delivery period of June to November 2025.

1. Inception Report

- Outlines the refined research methodology, scope, and detailed work plan based on initial stakeholder consultations.
- Includes any adjustments to the sampling framework for key informant interviews, focus group discussions, and risk assessment.

2. Public Report on Agriculture Finance in PNG

- Presents the qualitative research findings, covering both supply- and demand-side barriers and opportunities.
- Emphasises practical, evidence-based recommendations tailored to financial institutions, regulators, agribusinesses, and development partners.
- Incorporates cross-cutting themes such as Gender Equality, Disability, and Social Inclusion (GEDSI), Women's Economic Empowerment (WEE), and climate change considerations.

3. Internal Roadmap for DFAT/APEP

- A strategic, action-oriented roadmap detailing how DFAT/APEP can leverage the findings to shape and prioritize future agriculture finance interventions.
- May include recommended partnerships, potential financing mechanisms, and areas for policy dialogue.

4. Validation and Dissemination Support

- Participation in interim and final stakeholder workshops or validation sessions, incorporating feedback into final deliverables.
- Assistance with the organization and delivery of a **public launch event** to present the study's findings and engage key stakeholders.

All deliverables will be subject to review and approval by APEP. The consultant is expected to maintain flexibility in adjusting deliverable timelines and content based on emerging field realities and stakeholder feedback.

4. RFP CONDITIONS

4.1 About this Request document

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is an invitation to treat and shall not be construed, interpreted, or relied upon, whether expressly or impliedly, as an offer capable of acceptance by any professional, firm or organisation or as creating any form of contractual, quasi-contractual, restitutionary or other relationship.

No binding legal relationship will arise out of this process until execution of a contract with a service provider.

4.2 Eligibility

The following conditions must be met by the respondent:

- a) the respondent must exist as a legal entity at the closing time and date;
- b) the respondent must be registered on the relevant country register of companies and be operating as a company or an association (partnerships may be considered);
- c) at the time of lodgement of their proposal, the respondent must not have been:
 - i. precluded from bidding for Australian Government funded work; or
 - ii. subject to a judicial decision against them relating to employee entitlements (not including decisions under appeal, and have not paid the claim; and
 - iii. the respondent must be solvent and financially capable to undertake the proposed contract work and to perform such work and to undertake the necessary expenditure without anticipated financial difficulties and must be able to so demonstrate prior to contract award.

Abt Global will exclude from consideration any response if the respondent or one of its related entities is listed by:

- a) the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs under the Charter of the United Nations Act 1945 and/or listed in regulations made under Division 102 of the Criminal Code Act 1995. Further information about listed persons and entities is available from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website at www.dfat.gov.au
- b) the World Bank on its "Listing of Ineligible Firms" or "Listing of Firms Letters of Reprimand" posted at www.worldbank.org (the "World Bank List"); or
- c) any other donor of development funding on a list similar to the World Bank List.

4.3 Minimum Content and Format Requirements

Abt Global will exclude a response from further consideration if Abt Global considers in its absolute discretion that the response does not meet the minimum content and format requirements specified in this document.


4.4 Late lodgement

Abt Global will exclude late responses and will not admit them to the evaluation process unless Abt Global determines the response may be considered or has caused or contributed to the failure to lodge by the closing date and time. The response is considered late if:

- a) it is submitted after the closing date and time; or
- b) it is incomplete as at the closing date and time (including where the response includes electronic files that cannot be read or unencrypted).

4.5 Proposal Modification Procedure

Abt Global may, in its absolute discretion, issue modifications to this RFP before the closing date and time.



If Abt Global elects to issue modifications, Abt Global will issue a formal addendum via email to all registered respondents. It is the responsibility of respondents to ensure they have registered their interest and contact details with the contact officer so that they are able to receive all modifications.

All conditions and rules of this RFP will apply to all addenda unless modified by the addenda. Any such addenda will become part of the RFP.

4.6 Unintentional Errors of Form

If an unintentional error of form in a response is identified, Abt Global may in its absolute discretion allow correction of that error by the submission of a correction, variation or additional information.

An unintentional error of form is an error that Abt Global is satisfied in its absolute discretion:

- a) represents incomplete information not consistent with the respondent's intentions and, if relevant, capabilities at the time the submission was lodged; and
- b) does not materially affect the competitiveness of the respondent's response.

4.7 Ownership of Response Material

All material submitted in response to this RFP becomes the property of Abt Global. By submitting a response, the respondent allows Abt Global to copy and do anything necessary to material, including the respondent's intellectual property contained in the response, for the purpose of evaluating the respondent's response and negotiating a Contract if the respondent proceeds to that phase of the process.

4.8 Conflict of Interest

During the RFP process, the respondent must immediately advise Abt Global in writing of any circumstances or relationships constituting an actual, potential or perceived Conflict of Interest in respect to its response, or the obligations under the Contract if the respondent is awarded the Contract. Abt Global may in its absolute discretion:

- a) enter into discussions to seek to address such Conflict of Interest;
- b) exclude the respondent from the process and further evaluation; or
- c) take any other action it considers appropriate.

4.9 Health, Safety and Security

The respondent, if appointed, must at all times, identify, comply with and exercise all necessary, duties and precautions for the health, safety and security of all persons including the respondent's employees, subcontractors, subcontractor's employees, employees of Abt Global and other persons who may be affected by the delivery of the contract work.


4.10 Insurance

All potential respondents must have appropriate insurance cover as a condition of submitting a response and, at a minimum, the insurance requirements specified in the draft contract. If the respondent is not yet covered by any of these insurances, Abt Global requires the respondent to provide a certification that it is willing to get coverage of these insurances if to provide services for Abt Global.

4.11 Ethical dealing, financial and probity checks

Abt Global's policy is to engage in the highest standards of ethical behaviour and fair dealing throughout the RFP process. Abt Global requires the same standards from those with whom it deals. Respondents must compile responses without improper assistance of employees or former employees of Abt Global and without the use of information improperly obtained or in breach of an obligation of confidentiality. Respondents should not:

- a) engage in misleading or deceptive conduct in relation to the procurement process;

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- b) engage in any collusive submissions, anti-competitive conduct, or any other unlawful or unethical conduct with any other respondent, or any other person in connection with the procurement process; or
 - c) attempt to influence improperly any officer, employee or agent of Abt Global, or violate any applicable laws or Abt Global policies regarding the offering of inducements in connection with the procurement process.

Abt Global may exclude from consideration any respondent which, in Abt Global's reasonable opinion, has engaged in any behaviour contrary to this section in relation to the procurement process.

Abt Global (or its agents) may perform such security, probity, and financial investigations and procedures as Abt Global may determine are necessary in relation to any respondent, its employees, officers, partners, associates, sub-contractors or related entities including consortium members and their officers, employees and sub-contractors.

Respondents should promptly provide Abt Global with such information or documentation that Abt Global requires in order to undertake such investigation. A response may be rejected by Abt Global if the respondent does not promptly provide, at its own cost, all reasonable assistance to Abt Global in this regard or based on the outcomes of the investigations or procedures.

Abt Global may also make independent enquiries about any matters that may be relevant to the evaluation of a response.

4.12 Safeguarding

Prior to working with Abt Global respondents must have appropriate child protection policies in place and/or be willing to comply with Abt Global and DFAT's latest Child Protection Policy. DFAT's Child Protection Policy is available on its website. Respondents engaged to work with Abt Global will be required to work with Abt Global to implement any necessary Child Protection Implementation Plan for medium and high-risk activities.

Respondents should be aware of the DFAT Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy available on the DFAT website. Respondents engaged to work with Abt Global may be required to submit a narrative response and risk assessment in relation to this policy and to work with Abt Global to implement any requirements for medium and high-risk activities.

4.13 Costs Borne by Supplier


All costs and expenses incurred by respondents in any way associated with the development, preparation and submission of the response, including but not limited to attendance at meetings, site visits, discussions, presentations and providing any additional material required by Abt Global, will be borne exclusively by the respondents.

4.14 Supplier Acknowledgements

Respondents are considered to have:

- a) examined this RFP, any documents referenced in this RFP and any other information made available by Abt Global to respondents for the purpose of responding;
- b) examined all further information which is obtainable by the making of reasonable enquiries relevant to the risks, contingencies, and other circumstances having an effect on their response
- c) undertaken their own professional advice in respect of this RFP, any other information provided to Respondents and the procurement process generally, as appropriate;
- d) satisfied themselves as to the correctness and sufficiency of their response including submitted prices; and
- e) satisfied themselves as to the terms and conditions of the Draft Contract and its ability to comply with the Draft Contract.

Responses are submitted on the basis that Respondents acknowledge:

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- a) they do not rely on any representation, letter, document or arrangement, whether oral or in writing, or other conduct as adding to or amending these conditions other than addenda; and
 - b) they do not rely upon any warranty or representation made by or on behalf of Abt Global, except as are expressly provided for in this PROPOSAL, but they have relied entirely upon their own inquiries and inspection in respect of the response.

4.15 Rights of Abt Global

Abt Global is not bound contractually, or in any other way to respondents who respond to this RFP. Abt Global reserves the right not to proceed with this RFP or any part of it, and to suspend or vary the RFP and/or its requirements at any stage.

Without limiting any other rights contained in this RFP, Abt Global may do any or all of the following at any time:

- a) not proceed with the procurement activity;
- b) suspend, defer or change the structure and timing of the procurement activity;
- c) forward any clarification about this PROPOSAL to all known respondents on a non-attributable basis and without disclosing any confidential information of a respondent;
- d) negotiate with one or more persons who have not submitted responses or enter into a contract or other binding relationship for similar specifications outside of this procurement process; and/or
- e) terminate any negotiations being conducted at any time with the respondents.

5. EVALUATION PROCESS

5.1 RFP Response

The respondent is to provide a written response to the RFP requirements set out in this document. The proposal will be assessed by an evaluation committee in accordance with the evaluation criteria set out in section 2. The evaluation committee will be made up of representatives from Abt Global and relevant stakeholders.

The evaluation committee may also use any relevant information obtained in relation to the RFP (whether from the respondent as part of clarification, reference checks, negotiations, presentations or by any other independent inquiry) in the evaluation of proposals.

5.2 Evaluation Process

The purpose of the evaluation process is to identify and select the respondent that represents the best value for money to Abt Global, consistent with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and Abt Global procurement standards and procedures.

Proposals will be assessed in accordance with the evaluation criteria to determine which respondent provides the best value for money. In evaluating each proposal, Abt Global will have regard to:

- a) the specific evaluation criteria; and
- b) the overall value for money proposition presented in the proposal.

In this context, value for money is a measurement of benefits represented by a respondent's submission, including:

- a) the quality of goods and/or services;
- b) fitness for purpose;
- c) relevant experience and performance history;
- d) innovation and adaptability over the life-cycle;
- e) environmental sustainability of the proposed goods and services;
- f) risk and compliance; and
- g) whole of life costs.

As part of, and in addition to the evaluation process, Abt Global may:

- a) require clarifications and/or presentations from respondents at any time during the evaluation process; and
- b) conduct reference checks (including site visits, if relevant) on respondents.

5.3 Negotiations with respondents

Abt Global may engage in discussion with one or more respondent for the purpose of clarifying its response. Where information of a material nature is provided to one respondent, it will also be provided concurrently to all other respondents who are currently participating in the evaluation process.

Abt Global reserves the right to, at any time conduct post-proposal negotiations with any or all of the respondents on any aspect of their proposal. This may involve conducting parallel negotiations with several respondents. These post-RFP negotiations may result in changes to the terms of the draft Contract.

5.4 Debriefing

Respondents may request a debriefing following the award of a contract. Respondents requiring a debriefing should contact the contact officer.