



INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR DEMOCRACY AND ELECTORAL ASSISTANCE

RESPONSES TO REQUESTS FOR CLARIFICATIONS

Tender Reference No: 2026-07-097

Project Name: U-VOTE (Ukrainians Voting: Organizing Trustworthy Elections)

Assignment Name: Preparation of the Detailed Technical Specification and the development of the software for the Unified Automated Information and Analytical System of the Central Election Commission of Ukraine (Phase I)

Based on questions received, the information below is provided for clarification regarding the tender referenced above. Please note that if new questions are received, they will be added to this document.

A. Contract structure, Service Orders and scope

Question 1:

Please confirm that the Financial Proposal must cover the entire Phase I assignment (Stage 1 and Stage 2, warranty support and the test equipment set) as a single evaluation price, and that no separate pricing of Stage 1 alone will be evaluated.

Response:

Confirmed. The Financial Proposal shall cover the entire scope of Phase I, including Stage 1, Stage 2, warranty support, and the required test equipment set. The total price for the complete Phase I scope will be used as the single evaluation price for the financial evaluation.

Separate pricing for Stage 1 alone will not be evaluated as a standalone financial proposal.

Question 2:

Will the Stage 2 Service Order be issued at the Stage 2 price stated in the Bidder's Financial Proposal, or may the Stage 2 price and level of effort be re-baselined after approval of the Detailed Technical Specification, using the unit rates fixed in the proposal what is the intended duration (validity period) of the Framework Agreement?

Response:

The price stated in the Bidder's Financial Proposal shall constitute the agreed financial basis for the assignment. The Contractor will be required to deliver the services within the scope of Phase I, including Stage 2, within the price proposed in its Financial Proposal.

The Stage 2 price will therefore not be re-baselined following the approval of the Detailed Technical Specification. The Contractor is expected to take into account the requirements and scope of the assignment when preparing its Financial Proposal.

The Framework Agreement may be concluded for a period of up to five (5) years. The final duration of the Framework Agreement will be agreed between International IDEA and the selected Contractor at the contract finalization stage.

Question 3.

Section 4.9 of the RFP allows a variation of scope by up to 25% at award. Please confirm whether this variation may also be applied to individual Service Orders during implementation.

Response:

Section 4.9 applies specifically at the negotiation stage and at the time of contract award. The provision allows International IDEA to vary the quantity of services and/or goods or the scope of work by up to a maximum of 25% of the original ToR.

The 25% variation provided under Section 4.9 does not automatically apply to individual Service Orders during implementation. Any variation to a Service Order would be subject to the applicable contractual provisions and agreement between the parties.

B. Budget, currency, payments and taxes

Question 1:

In which currency should the Financial Proposal be submitted (UAH, EUR, USD)? In which currency will the contract be denominated and payments made? If the contract is in a currency other than UAH, which party bears the exchange-rate risk?

Response:

Financial Proposals will be evaluated in EUR in accordance with Sections 4.3 and 4.4 of the RFP. Where a proposal is submitted in another currency, it will be converted into EUR for evaluation using the International IDEA monthly exchange rate, as provided in Section 4.3. Payments under the contract will be made in EUR.

Any exchange-rate risks, including fluctuations between EUR and UAH or any other currency relevant to the Contractor's costs and obligations, shall be borne by the Contractor.

Question 2:

Please confirm the expected payment schedule and milestones (e.g. advance payment, payment upon acceptance of Stage 1, payments per Stage 2 release, retention until Final Acceptance).

Response:

The detailed payment schedule, including payment milestones and the breakdown of payments between Stage 1, Stage 2 releases, warranty support, and other applicable deliverables, will be agreed individually with the selected Contractor during the contract finalization stage.

Bidders may propose their preferred payment schedule and milestone structure as part of their proposal. Such proposals will be taken into consideration when agreeing on the final payment arrangements between International IDEA and the selected Contractor. The applicable provisions relating to advance payments and payment terms are set out in the General Terms and Conditions included in the tender package.

Question 3:

Is the U-VOTE project registered as international technical assistance in Ukraine under CMU Resolution No. 153? Please confirm whether a registration card is available and whether the VAT exemption will apply to the Contractor's services and to the supplied test equipment. Should the Bidder present the evaluation price with or without VAT?

Response:

The U-VOTE project is registered in Ukraine as an international technical assistance (ITA) project. The availability and application of any VAT exemption to the Contractor's services and the supplied test equipment will be determined in accordance with the project registration documentation and applicable Ukrainian legislation. As required by Section 2.5 of the RFP, Bidders shall present prices both excluding VAT and including VAT, with each amount clearly identified. The financial evaluation will be based on the applicable price, taking into account the tax treatment applicable to the project and the respective goods and services.

C. Timeline and electoral calendar**Question 1:**

What is the target date by which the CEC and International IDEA expect CEC EIAS (Phase I) to be ready for trial operation and for production operation? Is there a fixed end date for the U-VOTE project funding?

Response:

No specific target date is prescribed for the commencement of trial operation or production operation of CEC EIAS (Phase I). No U-VOTE funding end date is specified in the tender documentation as a deadline for these activities. No further information on the project funding end date is being provided for the purposes of this tender.

Bidders are expected to propose a realistic implementation schedule, including the indicative dates for trial operation and production operation, based on their assessment of the scope of work, required activities, dependencies, and proposed implementation approach.

The proposed work plan, implementation timeline, and associated deadlines form part of the Technical Proposal and will be considered as part of the tender evaluation in accordance with the applicable evaluation criteria.

Question 2:

The ToR states that the Stage 2 schedule must take into account the electoral calendar for the next regular elections. What planning assumption regarding the election date should Bidders use when preparing the delivery schedule?

Response:

Given the current circumstances in Ukraine and the resulting uncertainty regarding the electoral calendar, no indicative or assumed election date can be provided for planning purposes at this stage.

Bidders should therefore prepare the Stage 2 implementation schedule based on the scope of work, technical requirements, dependencies, and a realistic assessment of the time required for delivery. The proposed schedule should remain sufficiently flexible to accommodate potential adjustments related to the electoral calendar once relevant dates are officially determined.

Question 3:

Is there an expected or maximum duration for Stage 1?

Response:

No fixed maximum duration for Stage 1 is prescribed. Bidders are expected to propose a realistic and justified duration for Stage 1 as part of their implementation schedule, taking into account the scope of work, technical requirements, dependencies, and the resources proposed for the assignment.

Question 4:

What is the expected duration of the CEC/International IDEA review and approval period for Stage 1 deliverables and for each Stage 2 release?

Response:

No fixed review and approval period is prescribed for Stage 1 deliverables or individual Stage 2 releases. The duration of the review and approval process will depend on the specific stage, the scope and complexity of the deliverables submitted, any required revisions or corrections, and the time required for review and approval by the CEC.

International IDEA and the CEC will seek to complete the review and approval process within a reasonable timeframe, taking into account the nature and complexity of the respective deliverables.

D. Qualification requirements

Question 1:

Should CVs be submitted in a specific template (e.g. EU format), and in English only or in English and Ukrainian?

Response:

No specific CV template is prescribed. Bidders may use their own CV format, provided that the submitted CVs clearly demonstrate the qualifications and relevant experience of the proposed experts in accordance with the requirements of the tender documentation.

All CVs shall be submitted in English.

E. Technical scope and infrastructure

Question 1:

Please confirm that all development, test, pre-production and production environments will be provided by the CEC on its existing infrastructure, and indicate the expected date of their availability. If the CEC infrastructure is not available on time, how will the resulting delay be treated in terms of the Contractor's obligations and schedule?

Response:

The Contractor shall configure and use a controlled development environment hosted on infrastructure provided or approved by the CEC, subject to the availability of the necessary resources, in accordance with Annex 2.2, Section 10.1. The CEC will provide access to the infrastructure required for deployment and testing in accordance with the agreed implementation schedule. If access to the required infrastructure is delayed, the parties will assess the impact on the schedule and agree on appropriate corrective actions through the established governance and change management procedures.

Access to the CEC's technical infrastructure will be provided to the Contractor at the relevant stages of the agreed implementation schedule, to the extent necessary for software installation and configuration, integration and acceptance testing, trial operation, and subsequent production operation of the CEC EIAS (Phase I), in compliance with the applicable cybersecurity and cryptographic information protection requirements for Critical Information Infrastructure (CII) facilities.

The CEC's infrastructure is expected to support testing, pre-production (staging), and production environments, subject to the availability of the necessary resources. The composition and configuration of these environments, including arrangements for trial operation, will be determined during the development of the Detailed Technical Specification and agreed with the CEC.

The timing for providing the Contractor with the relevant infrastructure and access will be determined by the agreed implementation schedule, taking into account the sequence of the System development and implementation stages. If access to the required infrastructure is delayed, the parties will assess the impact on the implementation schedule and agree on appropriate corrective actions through the established governance and change management procedures.

F. Test equipment

Question 1:

Annex 2.3 sets requirements for the USB media (para 5.4.5) and QES devices (para 5.4.7), but no technical requirements for the 4G/LTE modems and MIMO antennas. Please provide the required specifications (form factor, interfaces, supported bands, Linux compatibility) or confirm that the Bidder may propose devices at its discretion.

Response:

The CEC does not prescribe any specific model or manufacturer for the 4G/LTE modem or the 4G LTE MIMO antenna. The Bidder may propose equipment at its discretion, provided that full compatibility with the software client environment of the PEC/DEC ARM/ZARM workstations is ensured and that the testing scenarios specified in the tender documentation can be successfully performed.

The proposed 4G/LTE modem shall, at a minimum:

- support connectivity to 4G/LTE mobile networks operated by mobile network operators in Ukraine;
- provide an interface for connection to the ARM/ZARM workstation, including USB;
- support connection of an external antenna using MIMO technology;
- support operation in a GNU/Linux (Debian-compatible) environment;
- not require the user, during normal operation, to install additional software or make modifications to the ARM/ZARM system environment;
- allow the necessary drivers and software components to be incorporated into the ARM/ZARM system image.

The 4G LTE MIMO antenna shall be compatible with the proposed modem, support the relevant operating frequency bands of that modem, and provide MIMO operation.

The specific equipment models, technical specifications, interfaces, connector types, and compatibility parameters shall be provided by the Bidder as part of its Technical Proposal and shall be further finalized during the development of the Detailed Technical Specification.

Question 2:

Are there any approved / preferred models or vendors of QES devices (hardware key carriers) already in use by the CEC that the ARM client must support?

Response:

The Central Election Commission (CEC) does not prescribe any mandatory model or specific manufacturer of the Qualified Electronic Signature (QES) device to be proposed by the Bidder.

The proposed QES device shall comply with the requirements of Ukrainian legislation in the areas of electronic identification, electronic trust services, and cryptographic information protection, and shall have a valid document confirming its compliance with the applicable requirements, including a certificate of conformity and/or a positive expert conclusion issued following a state expert review in the field of cryptographic information protection, where and as required by applicable legislation.

The QES device shall be included in the current list of certified qualified electronic signature or seal devices or shall have another valid document confirming compliance, as provided for by applicable legislation.

In addition, the QES device shall comply with the technical requirements applicable to the ARM/ZARM workstations, including:

- proper operation in a GNU/Linux (Debian-compatible) environment;
- support for use via PKCS#11;
- support for operation in kiosk mode;
- availability of the necessary drivers and cryptographic libraries that can be incorporated into the ARM/ZARM system image;
- a unique manufacturer-assigned serial number for accounting and inventory purposes.

The Bidder shall independently determine the specific model and manufacturer of the QES device and shall provide, as part of its proposal, sufficient information to demonstrate compliance with the above requirements and compatibility with the ARM/ZARM software client environment.

Question 3:

Please confirm that the test equipment is delivered to the CEC and remains its property, and clarify the customs/import and VAT treatment for such equipment under the project.

Response:

Yes. The equipment specified in the tender documentation for testing, acceptance, execution of use-case scenarios, and verification of compatibility with the software client environment of the PEC/DEC ARM/ZARM workstations shall be delivered to the Central Election Commission (CEC).

Following delivery and verification of the completeness and operability of the equipment, its handover to the CEC shall be documented through the applicable acceptance and handover documentation. The equipment will become the property of the CEC. The timing and procedure for the transfer of title will be specified in the contract and applicable project documentation. The procedures for customs clearance and importation of the equipment, as well as the applicable value-added tax (VAT) treatment, shall be determined in accordance with the international agreement under which the international technical assistance is provided, the documentation of the registered project, the rules of the development partner, and the Customs Code and Tax Code of Ukraine.

G. Information security and compliance

Question 1:

Does the CEC or International IDEA intend to perform an independent penetration test or security audit before production, and at whose cost?

Response:

Yes. Prior to the System being put into production operation, an independent penetration test and/or an independent security assessment is planned.

The engagement of an independent service provider to perform such testing is expected to be carried out under a separate procurement procedure. Therefore, the cost of the independent penetration testing services should not be included by the Bidder in the price of this procurement.

At the same time, this does not relieve the Contractor for CEC EIAS (Phase I) of its obligation to perform the security-related testing required under the ToR and Technical Requirements, including testing of security controls, access mechanisms, logging, QES functionality, APIs, resilience, and other security mechanisms within the System being developed.

The Contractor shall also provide the necessary technical cooperation and support to the organization conducting the independent testing and shall remediate any vulnerabilities or non-conformities identified as a result of such testing, where they relate to the Contractor's deliverables and fall within the scope of the contract, within the timeframe agreed with the CEC.

Question 2:

Are there any requirements for security clearance or vetting of the Contractor's personnel who will access the CEC's environments or data?

Response:

Access by the Contractor's personnel to the premises, technical infrastructure, information systems, environments, and data of the Central Election Commission (CEC) shall be granted exclusively to individuals designated by the Contractor and approved in advance by the CEC, and only to the extent necessary for the performance of their respective tasks.

At the request of the CEC, the Contractor and/or individual members of the Contractor's personnel who are expected to be granted access to the CEC's information resources, technical infrastructure, server and communications rooms, or information may be subject to appropriate checks by authorized state authorities within the scope of their competence and in accordance with the legislation of Ukraine.

The necessity and scope of such checks shall be determined taking into account the nature of the access, the category of information and resources to which access is to be granted, applicable information and cybersecurity requirements, as well as security requirements in force under the legal regime of martial law.

The granting of such access may be conditional upon completion of the applicable checks and approval of the respective individual by the CEC.

In addition, access shall be provided in compliance with:

- Order No. 12 of the Chair of the Central Election Commission dated 23 February 2026, "On Approval of the Instruction on the Procedure for Access to the Server and Communications Rooms of the Central Election Commission";
- the principle of least privilege;
- a non-disclosure agreement (NDA).

Upon request by the CEC, the Contractor shall be prepared to provide information regarding the personnel requiring such access, to the extent and in the scope permitted by the legislation of Ukraine.

The CEC reserves the right to deny, restrict, suspend, or terminate a specific individual's access to its premises, information resources, systems, or environments where there are justified security grounds or where the established access rules have been violated.

Furthermore, the Contractor, its founders (members or shareholders), ultimate beneficial owners, managers, and persons exercising direct or indirect control over the Contractor shall not be subject to sanctions imposed in accordance with the legislation of Ukraine, be included in the State Register of Sanctions of Ukraine, or be included in any other sanctions or restrictive lists that are mandatory under the conditions of this procurement and/or the rules of the

development partner. The Contractor shall not be under the direct or indirect control of any state recognized by Ukraine as an aggressor state or occupying state.

H. Warranty and support

Question 1:

Is post-warranty maintenance and technical support expected to be procured from the same Contractor under the Framework Agreement, and should it be priced (e.g. as an optional annual rate) in the Financial Proposal?

Response:

Post-warranty maintenance and technical support may be procured from the Contractor under the Framework Agreement, subject to the needs of the CEC and agreement between the parties.

However, pricing for post-warranty maintenance and technical support is not required as part of the Financial Proposal for this tender and will not form part of the financial evaluation. If such services are required in the future, their scope, terms, and pricing will be agreed separately under the Framework Agreement.

I. Proposal format and submission

Question 1:

Is there a page limit or recommended length for the Technical Proposal?

Response:

No specific page limit or recommended length is prescribed for the Technical Proposal. Bidders should provide sufficient information to clearly demonstrate their proposed approach, methodology, compliance with the technical requirements, and other information required for the evaluation.

Question 2:

Are there mandatory templates for the Technical Proposal, the Financial Proposal, the Third-Party Software and Licensing Declaration or the Warranty Support Plan, or may the Bidder use its own format?

Response:

No mandatory templates are prescribed for the Technical Proposal, Financial Proposal, Third-Party Software and Licensing Declaration, or Warranty Support Plan. Bidders may use their own formats, provided that all information and requirements specified in the tender documentation are clearly addressed and included in the respective documents.

Question 3:

Is there a size limit for e-mail attachments? Is submission via a file sharing link acceptable for large files?

Response:

No specific size limit for e-mail attachments is prescribed in the tender documentation. Bidders are responsible for ensuring that their complete proposal is successfully submitted and received by the deadline indicated in the RFP.

If the proposal files are too large to be sent in a single e-mail, they may be submitted in several e-mails, clearly indicating the tender reference and the sequence of the messages (e.g. "Part 1 of 3", "Part 2 of 3", etc.).

Submission via file-sharing links is not recommended unless agreed in advance with International IDEA.

Question 4:

Should the Financial Proposal be password-protected or otherwise sealed, given the instruction "Do not open before 23:59 (CET), 7 October 2026"?

Response:

There is no requirement for the Financial Proposal to be password-protected or otherwise electronically sealed.

All proposals received from Bidders will be kept unopened and will only be opened by the designated evaluation committee at the specified time, following the submission deadline and in accordance with International IDEA's applicable procurement procedures.

Question 5:

Must the Declaration of Honour be signed with a qualified electronic signature or is a scanned wet-ink signature acceptable?

Response:

Both options are acceptable. The Declaration of Honour may be signed either with a qualified electronic signature (QES) or with a handwritten (wet-ink) signature and submitted as a scanned copy.

Question 6:

Will the responses to clarification requests and any amendments to the tender documents be published only on <http://www.idea.int/>, or also sent by e-mail to the Bidders who submitted questions?

Response:

Responses to clarification requests and any amendments will be published in the relevant tender announcement on the International IDEA website. An email will also be sent to the requestor about the publication. Bidders are responsible for checking the website regularly during the tender process.