



NATO UNCLASSIFIED

**Acquisition Directorate**

viktorija.navikaite@ncia.nato.int

Telephone: +32 (02) 707 8210

Fax: +32 (02) 707 8770

NCIA/ACQ/2020/7016

09 September 2020

**Notification of Intent to Invite Bids**

**Project Title:**

**'Provision of Transport Core Services (TCS)  
Urgent Requirement (UR) 2020/OCM03331  
IFB-CO-14797-TCS**

**Estimated Value: € 1,112,000 annually**

**Period of Performance: 5 year base period + 3 option years (1+1+1)**

Under the NCI Agency letter N° NCIA/ACQ/2018/1728 dated 6 November 2018, a Notification of Intent (NOI) was issued announcing the requirement for Enhanced Leased Transmission Services (CTD project). The present Notification withdraws the previous announcement and amendments issued. This decision is required in order to allow firms previously not interested in participating in the opportunity due to the revisions made to the Agency's requirement. The basis of award is revised in response to the Urgent Requirement (UR) 2020/OCM03331, which demands an uplift of the transmission services for the core sites only.

This is a new notification of an International Competitive Bidding for the provision of Transport Core Services (TCS) to replace the transmission bearer services that support the so-called High Speed Core (HSC) of the NATO Enterprise, currently delivered under Leased Transmission (LTX) contract. The HSC interconnects the three core sites of the NATO Communications Infrastructure (NCI): Mons, Lago Patria and Evere.

The NCI Agency also intends to compete in the future the Transport Edge Services, which are also part of the LTX contract. Such competition is planned under the framework of the Capability Program Plan (CPP) for NATO Enterprise-wide Core Communications and Multimedia Access Services, currently in preparation within Allied Command Transformation (ACT).

The Invitation for Bid (IFB) is planned to be issued by the end of September 2020, with a Bid Closing Date not later than December 2020. The Contract Award is envisaged to be concluded not later than June 2021, subject to the Budget Committee (BC) authorization.

**NCI Agency Point of Contact (POC): Ms. Viktorija NAVIKAITĖ, Contracting Officer**

E-mail: viktorija.navikaite@ncia.nato.int



NATO Communications  
and Information Agency  
Agence OTAN d'information  
et de communication

Boulevard Leopold III  
1110 Brussels, Belgium

www.ncia.nato.int



To : Distribution List

Subject : Notification of Intent to Invite Bids for the implementation of the Project 'Transport Core Services', IFB-CO-14797-TCS

References : A. NCI Agency Request for Information letter N° NCIA/ACQ/2018/1269 dated 6 June 2018;  
 B. NCI Agency Notification of Intent letter N° NCIA/ACQ/2018/1728 dated 6 November 2018;  
 C. Urgent Requirement (UR) ACT/CAPDEV/CAP/TT-2498/SER:NU 0686;  
 D. Budget Committee Budget Procurement Guidance, document BC-D(2018)0004-FINAL dated 29 January 2018;  
 E. NCIO Financial Rules and Procedures, document AC/337-D(2016)0014 dated 16 March 2016.

1. Notice has been given, through Reference (B), of the intent of the NCI Agency to invite bids for the Project 'Enhance and Sustain Core Transport Capability (CTD)'. On 27 February 2020, the Agency informed the nominated Prospective Bidders that the project is put on hold due to the lack of NATO funding committee authorisation.

2. The project has been cancelled following the decision made by the Resource Policy and Planning Board (RPPB), who has directed the Strategic Commands (SCs) to withdraw the Capability Package (CP) 9C0123 on Core Communication Network Services, and to use the New Common Funded Capability Delivery Governance Model to submit their requirement and the Urgent Requirement (UR) process to address critical needs.

3. The new requirement is described at Reference (C), and represents an Urgent Requirement (UR 2020/0CM03331) to upgrade the capacity of the core segment of the NCI (NATO Communications Infrastructure), the so-called High Speed Core (HSC) of the NATO Enterprise.

4. In accordance with References (D) and (E), notice is hereby given of the intent of the NATO Communications and Information Agency (NCI Agency), acting as a Host Nation responsible of implementing the subject requirement, to issue an Invitation for Bids (IFB) for the procurement of resilient 100G Ethernet transport services, interconnecting the three sites that form the HSC (Mons, Lago Patria and Evere), using Ethernet Private Lines (EPL).

5. Due to the urgency of the requirement, this Notification of Intent, and the future Invitation for Bids, are issued ahead of the Budget Committee (BC) authorization of the subject Urgent Requirement, in order to accelerate the necessary actions leading to the award of the Contract.

6. A summary of the requirements of the future IFB is set forth in Annex A attached to this letter. These requirements may be subject to revision as a result of the Budget Committee authorization and will be refined and detailed as part of the preparation of the Invitation for Bid.

7. The Prospective Bidders are invited to carefully review the requirement summary in Annex A and provide, on a voluntary basis, any comments that the industry might have regarding the planned schedule, commercial conditions, options or any other aspects of the requirement. Any such comments shall be provided to the Purchaser prior to the closing date of the nomination period under Para. 17. However, the Prospective Bidders shall note that this is not a formal clarification requests process, and the Purchaser is under no obligation to respond to any of the comments received from industry during the notice period. This is just



an additional opportunity the Purchaser is giving to the Industry to provide any comments that may be taken into account ahead of the formal IFB.

8. The reference for the Invitation for Bid is **IFB-CO-14797-TCS**, and all correspondence concerning the IFB should reference this number.

9. The estimated annual cost for the services and deliverables included within the scope of the intended service provision contract is EUR 1,112,000 yearly, for a minimum of five years of the base contract period of performance, and subsequent optional years. The NCI Agency reserves the right to amend the envisaged base contract duration throughout the IFB stage, as may be directed by the Budget Committee.

10. For source selection, the NCI Agency is planning to use the International Competitive Bidding (ICB) procedures, with Lowest Priced Technically Compliant Bid evaluation methodology, governed by NATO Financial Rules and Procedures.

11. It is planned to award a single contract for the entire scope of work. No partial bidding will be allowed. Award of the contract is planned to be made on a Firm Fixed Price Basis.

12. The IFB is planned to be issued by the end of September 2020, with a Bid Closing Date not later than December 2020. The Contract Award is expected not later than June 2021. **Contract Award is subject to BC authorization and funding priority and availability as determined by the NATO Budget Committee. The NCI Agency reserves the right to amend the requirements and schedule as may be directed by the Budget Committee.**

13. Details regarding a **Bidder's Conference and Site Survey** in Brussels (Belgium), currently anticipated for November 2020, will be included in the IFB document. The event will be subject to the applicable pandemic restrictions.

14. Bidders will be required to declare a bid validity of twelve (12) months from closing date for receipt of bids, supported by a Bid Guarantee of Euro 300,000. Should the selection and award procedure exceed the twelve (12) months after Bid Closing Date, firms will be requested to voluntarily extend the validity of their bids and Bid Guarantee accordingly. Bidders may decline to do so, however they shall withdraw their bid and excuse themselves from the bidding process without penalty.

15. Firms from all 30 NATO Member Nations may respond to future solicitation once issued. Firms that wish to participate in this procurement must be nominated to the NCI Agency through their national delegation to NATO and such nomination must be accompanied by a **"Declaration of Eligibility"** (DoE) and certification of their security clearances executed by their national authorities. **Requests for participation received directly from firms shall not be considered.**

16. The nominated companies must be one of the National Public or Commercial Telecommunication Operators incorporated in one of the NATO Member Nations and which comply with the national and EU (where applicable) regulatory bodies.

17. The closing date for additions/nominations to the Bidders List of qualified and certified firms which may be interested in receiving an Invitation for Bid for this Project is **30 September 2020**. The Declarations of Eligibility shall include the following information for each of the nominated firms: the NAME of the FIRM, the TELEPHONE and FAX NUMBERS, E-MAIL-ADDRESS and POINT OF CONTACT. This information is critical to enable prompt and accurate communication with prospective bidders.



18. Delegations are requested to provide the prospective bidders list to the NCI Agency Point of Contact (POC) at the following address:

NCI Agency  
Acquisition Directorate  
Boulevard Léopold III  
1110 Brussels, BELGIUM  
POC: Ms. Viktorija NAVIKAITĖ, Contracting Officer  
TEL: +32 2 707 8210, FAX: +32 2 707 8770  
E-mail: viktorija.navikaite@ncia.nato.int

19. Annex B to this letter contains the list of the Firms nominated by their Embassies/Delegations of origin in response to the original NOI under Ref. (B). NATO Delegations are invited to review the list and confirm with industry their interest in the revised requirement. A new DoE shall be issued in the case of any changes in the contact details or security clearance information.

20. A Final Bidders List, with all the new nominations or modifications, will be issued along with the Invitation for Bids.

21. The participating National Authorities are advised that the IFB package will only contain "NATO UNCLASSIFIED" material. However, participation at the Site Survey during the bidding process under the Para. 13 above may require personnel security clearance of NATO SECRET.

22. Your assistance in this procurement is greatly appreciated.

FOR THE DIRECTOR OF ACQUISITION:

**Pezzi Tiziana**

Digitally signed by Pezzi Tiziana

Date: 2020.09.09 17:45:35

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AGENCY

Ms Tiziana Pezzi

Principal Contracting Officer

Enclosures:

Annex A (Summary of Requirements)

Annex B (Draft Prospective Bidders List)

## ANNEX A

### Summary of Requirements

#### UR 2020/OCM03331 (UR ACT/CAPDEV/CAP/TT-2498/SER:NU 0686)

- [1] NATO is planning to procure Enhanced Leased Transmission Services to interconnect the three NATO Data Centre (DC) locations over a resilient ring (hereafter referred to as the Transport Core). Therefore, this Contract is intended to upgrade the transmission bearer that supports the so-called High Speed Core (HSC) of the NATO Enterprise.
- [2] The HSC interconnects the three core nodes of the NCI (NATO Communications Infrastructure), in support of data transfers between Data Centres and between NCI Core nodes, as well as traffic from the NCI Edge Nodes, transiting over the NCI Core nodes.
- [3] For transport purposes, the HSC will rely on Metro compliant (MEF 6.3) “Ether Virtual Connect” (EVC) services of the type “Ether Private Line-1” (EPL1) at 100 Gbps, featuring uptimes higher than 99.9% (per EPL). The services of the future contract are hereafter referred to as Transport Core Services (TCS).
- [4] This Contract shall deliver the TCS in support of the HSC, at the sites of Mons (BE), Lago Patria (ITA) and Evere (BEL). These sites will be interconnected in a full mesh EPL topology, with each node connected to the other two nodes over two independent links, each link consisting of ingress and egress EPL, featuring the same data rates and performance, with uptime targets.
- [5] The TCS will solely rely on Contractor-owned and Contractor-Operated (CO-CO) infrastructure.
- [6] This infrastructure will interconnect NATO-owned and NATO-operated (NO-NO) redundant P-Core Routers of the HSC, at each Core Node (see CO-CO and NO-NO boundaries in figure below). These will be referred to as PCR clusters.

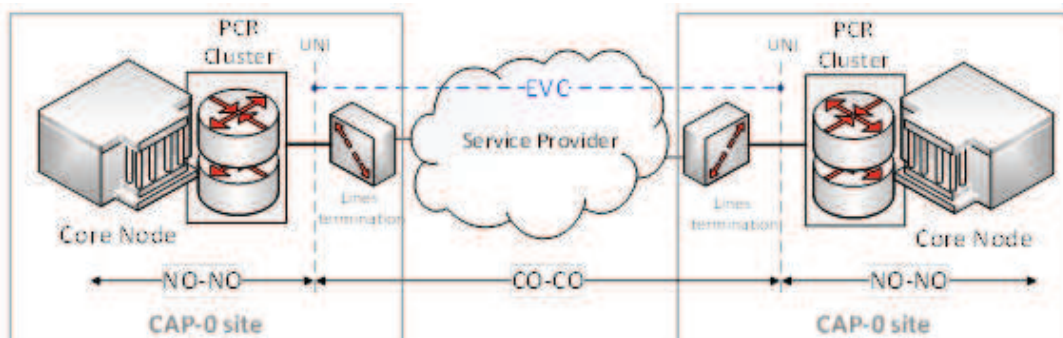


Figure A-1 CO-CO and NO-NO boundaries for TCS

- [7] Each PCR cluster consists of two routers (Cisco NCS 55A2), working in tandem in an active-active configuration.
- [8] Between any pair of PCR clusters, EPL performance and availability will be measured per direction, meaning that any outage or degradation affecting any of the EPL will be considered an outage or degradation of the TCS.
- [9] With regards to the duration of the Contract, the NCI Agency envisages a base contract of five (5) in-service years, with three (3) optional years that can be exercised on an annual basis. Given the fact that the IFB will be issued prior to NATO funding committees authorisation, the Purchaser reserves the right to make the decision regarding the Contract baseline period any time prior to the Contract award. For this reason, the Bidders may be requested to provide different pricing scenarios.

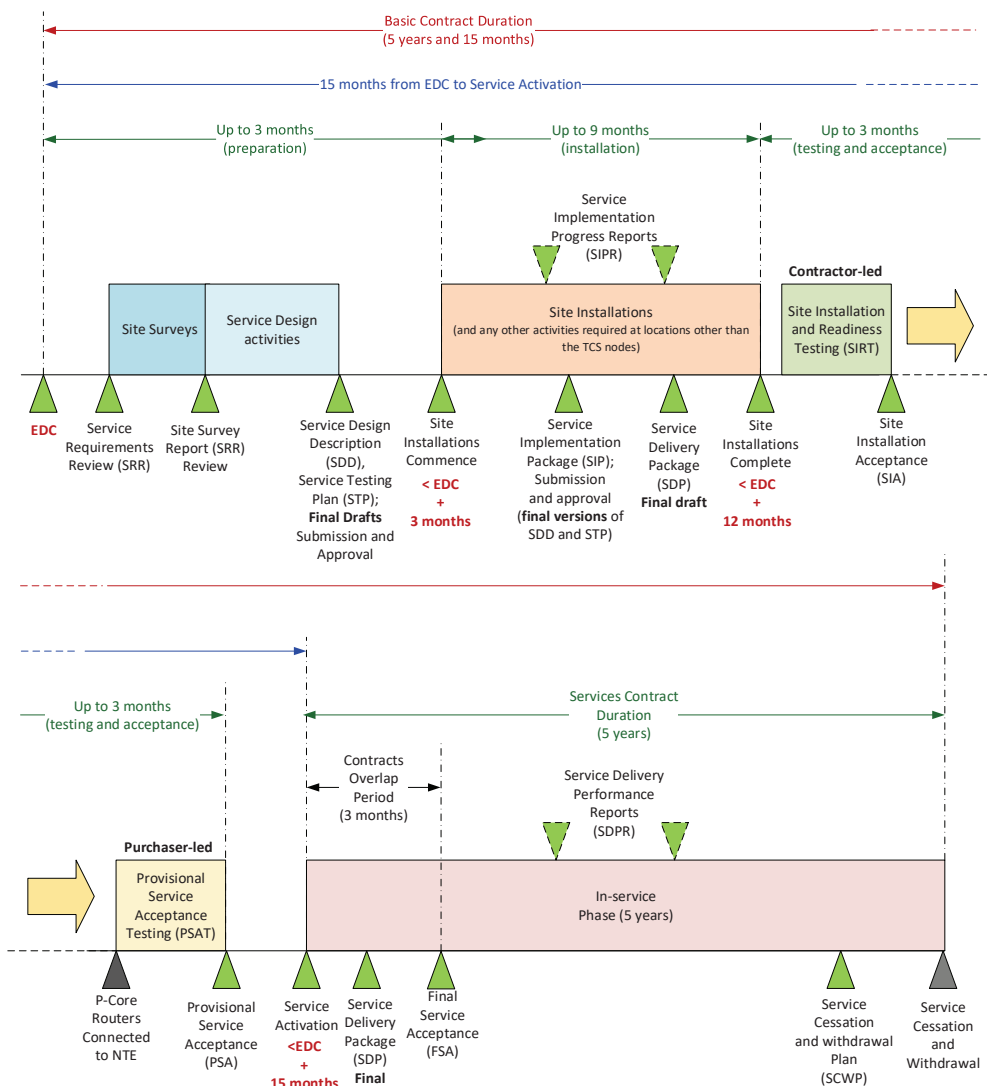


Figure A-2 Contract Execution Timeline

- [10] The figure shown above outlines the sequence of activities and deliverables associated to the Contract. The duration of the 'In-Service Phase' may vary as explained under Para. [9] above.
- [11] The actual dates referred to EDC will be provided at a later stage in the Schedule of Supplies and Services. **The service activation date shall be regarded as not later than (NLT) date.** Bidders will be allowed to propose shorter service implementation timelines leading to an earlier acceptance of the services by the Purchaser and an earlier service activation, but this will not generate any advantage in the bid evaluation process.