

## Bidders' Conference Questions & Answers

**RFP-CATALYZE-PSD-2023-0035: Call for services of a web development vendor to redesign, launch and maintain a Sri Lankan Women MSME focused Industry Organization Portal.**

**Date & Time: June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2023, 11:00 Colombo Time**

1. I wanted to reach out regarding the RFP quoted in the subject. Based on our experience, we would love to submit a bid for this, but it seems that a local partner would be preferred. With that, I just wanted confirmation on whether international submissions may be considered?

**Yes, all bidders must be commercial organizations registered in Sri Lanka.**

2. Question related to the marketplace - Annex A, Section 5, Point 2

“Provide a common marketplace for WE to advertise their products and services and serve as a matchmaking portal for buyers and sellers comprised of curated WEs to network and connect with each other.”

Kindly confirm / provide feedback on below functionalities required to enable the requirement stated above,

- WEs should be able to register on the portal and create an account. Created accounts will be reviewed and approved / rejected by the admins.
- Only the approved WE shall be able to login and use the marketplace
- Approved WE shall be able to list their products / services
- Public users shall be able to browse WEs and their listed products and services
- Should the public users be able to view WEs contact details to connect with them or do they need to register in the portal as buyers to gain access to WEs contact information?
- If it is a requirement for users to register as buyers to connect with WEs, do we need an account verification mechanism for buyers as well? (Only the admin approved buyers will be able to login)
- Do we allow online purchasing of product / service through the portal?
  - If yes, different WEs will have different structure to their products and services. Can we use a standard structure across all WEs?

**We are not setting any guidelines on this as we would like to empower vendors to propose their own solutions and to provide their reasoning for doing so in the bid. Ideal solutions should be focused on ease of use of WCIC members and buyers etc.**

3. Who will be hosting the newly developed platform?
  - If the newly developed platform to be hosted on the existing infrastructure, could you please share the details of the existing infrastructure, Shared Host, LAMP Stack, Dedicated server

**Hosting platform changes can be suggested by bidders as there is very low likelihood of continuing use of existing infrastructure.**

**The existing hosting solution is to be discontinued with the implementation of this activity. Bidders are requested to propose hosting solutions that offer the following recommended specifications either through direct vendor implementation or through reputed third party providers (e.g. GoDaddy, SLT) -**

- 1. At least 20GB of storage**
- 2. At least 50 GB of monthly bandwidth capacity**
- 3. Over 99% uptime**
- 4. SSL Encryption**

4. Can we develop the portal on top of a known platform like WordPress or Drupal?

**Yes. These solutions would be preferred as they are well tested, quick to deploy and would allow for lower cost site maintenance and updates. Bidders should justify their reasoning for picking a particular platform for their proposal by accounting for cost/value, ease of use, UI considerations and potential for future expansion as necessary.**

5. Question related to the Search Engine Optimization (SEO) - Annex A, Section 5, Point 3

- Could you please let us know the duration required for the SEO campaign. (six months / 12 months etc.) SEO campaigns will run after the launch of the portal at a monthly charge. Based on the duration we can include the cost in the cost proposal.

**The duration is to be at the suggestion of the bidder and should be included in the cost of the proposal.**

6. When it came to hosting, you said we can propose, but the thing is the cost of the proposal will depend based on the hosting cost. Because for example, if we are proposing our own cost, if the vendor is proposing their own hosting solution, then there will be a cost component added. But if the vendor is going to use the existing infrastructure that WCIC is using, then that cost will not get added to the post proposed site. So how are we to address that?

**Yes, please provide this as a separate cost in your submission.**

**For more information on required hosting specifications, please refer to Point 3.**

7. There are certain organizations who are not that great with SEO, can they hire a consultant or subcontract that part? How is it going to be measured?

**There are no restrictions on this from a contracting point of view as the responsibility for delivery remains on the selected primary vendor. Instructions on subcontracting will be provided during the procurement process and bidders should disclose the same to Palladium.**