



Request for Proposal (RFP)

RFP Number: CPA-20-010-TECH

Issuance Date: March 26, 2020

Deadline for Offers: April 10, 2020

Description: Strategic Communications Firm

For: USAID Clean Power Asia

Funded by: United States Agency for International Development

Contract No.: AID-486-C-16-00001

Implemented by: Abt Associates, Inc.

Points of Contact: Thida Ruengsit, Finance & Administrative Manager (*Administrative*)

thida_ruengsit@abtassoc.com

Michael Wykoff, Director of Operations (*Technical*)

michael_wykoff@abtassoc.com

*** ETHICAL AND BUSINESS CONDUCT REQUIREMENTS ***

Abt Associates is committed to integrity in procurement, and only selects suppliers based on objective business criteria such as price and technical merit. Abt Associates does not tolerate fraud, collusion among offerors, falsified proposals/bids, bribery, or kickbacks. Any firm or individual violating these standards will be disqualified from this procurement, barred from future procurement opportunities, and may be reported to both USAID and the Office of the Inspector General.

Employees and agents of Abt Associates are strictly prohibited from asking for or accepting any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, object of value, or compensation from current or potential vendors or suppliers in exchange for or as a reward for business. Employees and agents engaging in this conduct are subject to termination and will be reported to USAID and the Office of the Inspector General. In addition, Abt Associates will inform USAID and the Office of the Inspector General of any supplier offers of money, fees, commissions, credits, gifts, gratuities, objects of value, or compensation to obtain business.

Offerors responding to this RFP must include the following as part of the proposal submission:

- Disclose any close, familial, or financial relationships with Abt Associates or project staff. For example, if an offeror's cousin is employed by the project, the offeror must state this.
- Disclose any family or financial relationship with other offerors submitting proposals. For example, if the offeror's father owns a company that is submitting another proposal, the offeror must state this.
- Certify that the price in the offer have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other offeror for the purpose of restricting competition.
- Certify that all information in the proposal and all supporting documentation are authentic and accurate.
- Certify understanding and agreement to Abt Associates prohibitions against fraud, bribery and kickbacks.

Please contact Ms. Thida Ruengsit, Finance & Administrative Manager, with any questions or concerns regarding the above information or to report any potential violations. Potential violations may also be reported directly to Abt Associates U.S. office.

Section 1: Instructions to Offerors

1. **Introduction:** USAID Clean Power Asia is a United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded program, implemented by Abt Associates, Inc. from its office in Bangkok, Thailand. The goal of USAID Clean Power Asia is to accelerate the regional transition to a high performing, low carbon power sector, and this goal is being accomplished through three outcomes: high renewable energy scenarios included in energy planning; an improved enabling policy, regulatory, and technical environment for renewable energy deployment; and increased investment in and deployment of grid-connected renewable energy projects. Abt Associates leads the implementation of the program, in collaboration with subcontractors and consultants.

We are seeking a strategic communications firm or firms in Thailand or from other ASEAN countries to provide innovative and creative ideas to contribute to the U.S. government in general, to achieve the project's goals within the context of USAID's Asia EDGE, Clear Choice, Journey to Self-Reliance (J2SR) initiatives, and the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy as a whole, and to plan for a legacy and sustainability of the program. after it has ended. The tasks required are outlined in the Scope of Work (SOW) in Attachment A of this request for proposals.

Offer Deadline and Protocol: Offers must be received no later than 17.00 ICT on Friday, April 10, 2020, by email addressed to Ms. Thida Ruengsit, Finance and Administrative Manager, at Thida_Ruengsit@abtassoc.com.

Please reference CPA-20-010-TECH in any response to this RFP. Offers received after the specified time and date will be considered late and will be considered only at the discretion of the procurement manager for this RFP.

2. **Questions:** Questions regarding the technical or administrative requirements of this RFP may be submitted no later than 17.00 ICT on Friday, April 3, 2020 by email to thida_ruengsit@abtassoc.com. Questions must be submitted in writing; phone calls will not be accepted. Questions and requests for clarification— and the responses thereto—that Abt Associates believes may be of interest to other offerors will be circulated to all RFP recipients who have indicated an interest in bidding. Only the written answers issued by Abt Associates will be considered official and carry weight in the RFP process and subsequent evaluation. Any verbal information received from employees of Abt Associates or any other entity should not be considered as an official response to any questions regarding this RFP.
3. **Qualifications:** The offeror must be able to demonstrate substantial experience in the areas delineated in the scope of work at the end of this document. The offeror must specify the proposed final price for all of the services outlined in the provided statement of work. The selected service provider must have excellent communication skills and methods, and be able to communicate clearly at every step of development of work under contract in providing information to the USAID Clean Power Asia team as well as requesting, understanding, and closely following guidance.
4. **Proposals/Quotations:** Proposals and quotations in response to this RFP must be presented in Thai baht and priced on a fixed-price, all-inclusive basis, including delivery and all other costs. Offers must remain valid for not less than thirty (30) calendar days after the offer deadline.

Offerors are requested to provide quotations on their official quotation format or letterhead. In addition, offerors responding to this RFP are requested to submit the following according to the status of the bidder:

- Copy of official registration or business license if a business.

5. **Delivery:** The delivery location for the items described in this RFP is:

Abt Associates
Abdulrahim Place, Suite 501
990 Rama IV Road
Bangrak, Bangkok, 10500

As part of its response to this RFP, each offeror is expected to agree to the timelines and deliverables described in the scopes of work. The delivery presented in an offer in response to this RFP must be upheld in the performance of any resulting contract for the delivery of goods or services.

6. **Source/Nationality/Manufacture:** All goods and services offered in response to this RFP or supplied under any resulting award must meet **USAID Geographic Code 937** in accordance with the United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 22 CFR §228. The cooperating country for this RFP is Thailand. Offerors may not offer or supply any commodities or services that are manufactured or assembled in, shipped from, transported through, or otherwise involving any of the following countries: Myanmar, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria.
7. **Warranty:** Warranty service and repair within the cooperating country is required for all commodities under this RFP. The warranty coverage must be valid on all commodities for a minimum of twelve (12) months after delivery and acceptance of the commodities, unless otherwise specified in the technical specifications.
8. **Taxes and VAT:** The agreement under which this procurement is financed is not exempt from the payment of taxes, VAT, tariffs, duties, or other levies imposed by any laws in effect in Thailand. Therefore, offerors must include taxes, VAT, charges, tariffs, duties, and levies in accordance with the laws of the Thailand.
9. **Eligibility:** By submitting an offer in response to this RFP, the offeror certifies that it and its principal officers are not debarred, suspended, or otherwise considered ineligible for an award by the U.S. government. Abt Associates will not award a contract to any firm that is debarred, suspended, or considered to be ineligible by the U.S. government.
10. **Evaluation and Award:** Responses to this RFP will be evaluated against several criteria, including the following:
- a. Response to RFP follows the specified instructions.
 - b. Firm meets the eligibility requirements.
 - c. Offeror provides sufficient proof of capabilities, as evidenced through past projects of a similar nature and may include reference checks of those or other clients of the offeror.
 - d. Offeror provides suitable and dedicated project manager and alternate project manager to serve as point of contact for all matters related to this project.

All of these factors being equal, the offeror whose response is deemed to provide the best value to the U.S. government is likely to be selected. Price is a key determinant, and offerors are encouraged to provide their best and final price for all services provided. Abt Associates reserves the right to make a selection without negotiation with any offeror. Offerors are required to provide sufficient budget detail in their response to allow Abt Associates to determine the reasonableness of overall costs proposed.

Offerors are required to provide a project manager and an alternate project manager who will serve as the main counterpart to the Abt Associates/USAID Clean Power Asia point of contact. Offerors should include the CVs of these individuals. These individuals should be able to conduct all business meetings in English and should be designated by the offeror as the only individuals authorized to accept instruction from the USAID Clean Power Asia point of contact.

Please note that if there are significant deficiencies regarding responsiveness to the requirements of this RFP, an offer may be deemed “non-responsive” and thereby disqualified from consideration. Abt Associates reserves the right to waive immaterial deficiencies at its discretion.

Best and final offer quotations are requested and it is anticipated that an award will be made solely on the basis of these original quotations. However, Abt Associates reserves the right to any or all of the following:

- Abt Associates may conduct negotiations with and/or request clarifications from any offeror prior to award.
- While preference will be given to offerors who can address the full technical requirements of this RFP, Abt Associates may issue a partial award or split the award among various suppliers, if in the best interest of the USAID Clean Power Asia program.
- Abt Associates may cancel this RFP at any time.

Please note that in submitting a response to this RFP, the offeror understands that USAID is not a party to this solicitation and the offeror agrees that any protest hereunder must be presented—in writing with full explanations—to the USAID Clean Power Asia program for consideration, as USAID will not consider protests regarding procurements carried out by implementing partners. Abt Associates, at its sole discretion, will make all final decisions regarding this procurement.

11. **Terms and Conditions:** This is a request for a proposal only. Issuance of this RFP does not in any way obligate Abt Associates, the USAID Clean Power Asia program, or USAID to make an award or pay for costs incurred by potential offerors in the preparation and submission of an offer.

This solicitation is subject to Abt Associates' standard terms and conditions. Offerors should note that these include U.S. government terms and conditions that flow down to Abt Associates as a U.S. government contractor and subsequently no changes or deviations from these terms and conditions is allowed. Offerors are advised not to propose any other terms and conditions as they will not be considered. Any resultant award will be governed by these terms and conditions; a copy of the full terms and conditions is available upon request. Please note the following terms and conditions will apply:

- a. Abt Associates standard payment terms are net 30 days after receipt and acceptance of any commodities or deliverables. Payment will only be issued to the entity submitting the offer in response to this RFP and identified in the resulting award; payment will not be issued to a third party.
- b. Any award resulting from this RFP will be firm fixed price, in the form of a Purchase Order.
- c. No commodities or services may be supplied that are manufactured or assembled in, shipped from, transported through, or otherwise involving any of the following countries: Myanmar, Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, or Syria.
- d. Any international air or ocean transportation or shipping carried out under any award resulting from this RFP must take place on U.S.-flag carriers/vessels.
- e. United States law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. The supplier under any award resulting from this RFP must ensure compliance with these laws.
- f. The title to any goods supplied under any award resulting from this RFP shall pass to Abt Associates following delivery and acceptance of the goods by Abt Associates. Risk of loss, injury, or destruction of the goods shall be borne by the offeror until title passes to Abt Associates.

Section 2: Offer Checklist

To assist offerors in the preparation of proposals, the following checklist summarizes the documentation to include in response to this RFP:

- Cover letter, signed by an authorized representative of the offeror (see Section 4).
- Official quotation and budget, including specifications as applicable (see Section 3).
- Copy of offeror's registration or business license, work permit, as applicable.
- CV or resume of both designated project manager and alternate project manager
- CVs of individuals proposed as the overall Project Manager and communications experts.
- Examples of past work of a similar nature.
- Contact details (name, company, email, phone) of at least two references (firms, organizations, individuals) for whom the offeror has completed projects of a similar scope in the past two years. Abt Associates reserves the right to contact these references.

Section 3: Specifications and Technical Requirements

To assist bidders in establishing costs for this work, the scope of work in Attachment A provides an outline of the work being sought and the documents that should be included in your proposal.

Section 4: Offer Cover Letter

*The following cover letter **must be placed on letterhead** and completed/signed/stamped by a representative authorized to sign on behalf of the offeror:*

To: Abt Associates
Abdulrahim Place, Suite 501
990 Rama IV Road
Bangrak, Bangkok, 10500

Reference: RFP No. CPA-20-010-TECH Strategic Communications Firm

To Whom It May Concern:

We, the undersigned, hereby provide the attached offer to perform all work required to complete the activities and requirements as described in this RFP. Please find our offer attached.

We hereby acknowledge and agree to all terms, conditions, special provisions, and instructions included in the above-referenced RFP. We further certify that the below-named firm—as well as the firm’s principal officers and all commodities and services offered in response to this RFP—are eligible to participate in this procurement under the terms of this solicitation and under USAID regulations.

Furthermore, we hereby certify that, to the best of our knowledge and belief:

- We have no close, familial, or financial relationships with any Abt Associates or USAID Clean Power Asia program staff members.
- We have no close, familial, or financial relationships with any other offerors submitting proposals in response to the above-referenced RFP.
- The prices in our offer have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other offeror or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition.
- All information in our proposal and all supporting documentation is authentic and accurate;
- We understand and agree to Abt Associates prohibitions against fraud, bribery, and kickbacks.

We hereby certify that the enclosed representations, certifications, and other statements are accurate, current, and complete.

Authorized Signature: _____

Name and Title of Signatory: _____

Date: _____

Company Name: _____

Company Address: _____

Company Telephone and Website: _____

Company Registration or Taxpayer ID #: _____

Active bank account (Yes/No): _____

Official name on bank account: _____

ATTACHMENT A
STATEMENT OF WORK & DELIVERABLES
Strategic Communications Firms
USAID Clean Power Asia, Implemented by Abt Associates

I. Introduction/Overview

The primary objective of USAID Clean Power Asia is to work with Lower Mekong Countries and other Associations of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) developing member states to encourage power sector investments in environmentally friendly, clean energy sources, specifically focusing on scaling up investment in grid-connected renewable power. USAID Clean Power Asia is a program funded by USAID and implemented by Abt Associates. When any reference is made to approvals or authorizations, it will be stipulated whether those decisions are contractually made by USAID or Abt as implementer. As the client, any decisions made by USAID and communicated to Abt are final.

II. Background

Abt Associates is USAID's implementing partner for the USAID Clean Power Asia program. USAID Clean Power Asia collaborates with diverse stakeholders, partners and regional organizations in Lower Mekong countries and shares lessons learned and best practices among additional ASEAN countries. The goal of the program is to accelerate the regional transition to a high performing, low carbon power sector, and is being accomplished through four areas:

1. Improving Power Sector Planning
2. Fostering Supportive Policy Frameworks
3. Mobilizing Finance and Investment
4. Promoting Enhanced Regional Collaboration

Along with the USAID Clean Power Asia program, Asia Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy (EDGE) is a whole-of-government initiative to grow sustainable and secure energy markets throughout the Indo-Pacific region.

Launched on July 30, 2018, Asia EDGE furthers the U.S. vision for a free and open Indo-Pacific to ensure peace, stability, and growing prosperity in the region. Under Asia EDGE, USAID plays a leading role helping its Indo-Pacific partners expand energy access, promote energy diversification and trade, and strengthen energy security across the region.

Since 2016, Abt Associates has been implementing technical efforts to increase the supply of grid-connected renewable energy, with five-year project implementation coming to a conclusion in June 2021. For the purpose of program's sustainability and legacy, Abt Associates seeks a strategic communications firm with experiences working in Thailand or throughout the Southeast Asian region to take an overall look at the organization's outreach calendar and communications work plan to creatively and innovatively suggest how the organization can supplement current efforts to extend program impacts. The tasks required for events are outlined below.

III. Scope of Work

Abt Associates expects a winning firm with creative and innovative ideas to help Abt Associates achieve project goals, to assist in communicating the project's achievements and expected impacts to the public, USAID, and program stakeholders through the lends, and within the context of, Asia EDGE, "Clear Choice", the Journey to Self-Reliance and the U.S. Indo-Pacific Strategy while contributing to the program's legacy and sustainability.

The firm will analyze the USAID Policy Framework, the U.S. Department of Defense's Indo-Pacific Strategy Report, Asia EDGE, the Journey to Self-Reliance, Clear Choice and USAID Clean Power Asia program's goals and objectives to devise a suitable strategic communications plan for Abt Associates. The firm should have storytelling capacity and should know how to link the program's story to the U.S. government story. The firm is also expected to plan and develop additional communication activities and products for Abt Associates including outreach, development and implementation, and conducting webinars for knowledge sharing.

IV. Services Sought

1. Phase 1

a. Monitor USAID/USG (U.S. Government) communication and speeches from high ranking officials:

In order to understand the environment and current trends to recommend innovative communications products to Abt Associates, the firm is expected to regularly monitor communication and speeches from USAID/USG high-ranking officials to note the strategic direction and links to high priority USG policies indicated in these communications and speeches.

b. Finalize communications strategy for the remaining 16 months of the program:

The winning firm is expected to finalize a communications strategy for Abt Associates to implement over the remaining 14 months of the program (April 15, 2020 – June 15 2021). The final communication strategy should contain potential concepts for communication products and services. The ideas to be recommended in the strategy should include ideas *for a minimum of 5 and up to 10 products and/or services*. Abt Associates may select a limited number of strategic ideas to be devised and implemented in Phase 2 of the project.

2. Phase 2

a. Continue to monitor communications

b. Implement selected products and services

After the products and services are selected, the winning firm will implement the selected approaches working with Abt Associates' communications staff. The winning firm will develop *communication products and services that achieve program goals, and are linked to USAID Asia edge as well as the program's legacy and sustainability*. This item includes communication products and services that help achieve program goals and objectives, significantly contribute to enhancing engagement between Abt Associates and target audiences, tell the story of the USAID Clean Power Asia program's impact and lessons learned, and contribute to the program's legacy.

c. Monitor and measure effectiveness of communication products and services;

The winning firm will monitor and measure the effectiveness of the selected communication products and services together with the management team of Abt Associates.

d. Suggestions and ideas for the closing event

Prior to the end of the project, Abt Associates is planning to arrange a closing event to summarize overall activities and achievements over the five-year life of the program. The winning strategic communications firm will coordinate with an event management firm to recommend ideas for the closing event.

e. Final report

A final report illustrating project background, goals and objectives, implemented activities and strategic planning for legacy and sustainability, will be published. The winning firm will assist Abt Associates program staff to prepare the report which will serve as a major and final communications piece.

V. Deliverables

The firm is expected to provide the following documents during the course of the contract:

- Phase 1: Draft and finalize communications strategy with potential concepts for communication products and services, to be implemented during Phase 2 (up to 10 concepts)
- Phase 2: Products and services produced
- Phase 2: Monthly report on monitoring of communications and outreach activities
- Phase 2: Memo on recommendations for closing event
- Phase 2: Inputs on the USAID Clean Power Asia final report
- Phases 1 and 2: Monthly report summarizing USG/USAID high level communications

VII. Schedule

1. Firms are invited to submit Q&A on this RFP by Friday, April 3, 2020. Answers will be shared with all firms submitting Q&A within two days.
2. Proposals are due no later than 5 pm on Friday, April 10, 2020 at Abt's offices in Bangkok.
3. The agreement with the winning firm will commence immediately upon signing, and will continue through at least June 1, 2021.
4. Duration of agreement: Approximately 14 months

VIII. Miscellaneous Information

Documents required in your proposal include the following:

- Past communication efforts /past documents and works to show if the firm has enough capacity. A few pages describing past experiences with similar assignments is an advantage.
- A proposed budget, broken down by core costs that cross activities and a budget for each type of activity.