

# Sierra Leone Financial Inclusion Project

(IDA Project No.: P166601)

Consulting Services: Recruitment of an International Consultant to support the procurement of the national switch

SL-MOFED-96347-CS-INDV

(Date of Issue: 26<sup>th</sup> March, 2019)

## REQUEST FOR EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST

### I. General Background

The World Bank has approved a loan of USD 12 million for Sierra Leone to implement the Sierra Leone Financial Inclusion Project. The project development objective is to increase the interoperability of digital payments and access to financial services. The project is an Investment Project Financing (IPF) and comprised of three components. Component 1 – Ensuring interoperability of digital payments; finances the hardware, software, and consulting services required to successfully implement a switch. Component 2 -- Ensuring the viability of the payments system through increasing usage thereof by financing access points for the switch, including Point of Sale (POS) terminals, mobile wallets, and government payments. The component has a special emphasis on increasing access in areas of the country with particularly low levels of financial inclusion, and in particular, rural areas. The component also supports other barriers to the usage of the payments system, including legal and regulatory barriers and financial awareness. Component 3 -- Project Implementation Support; finances a project coordinator and oversight mechanisms for the project to ensure private sector stakeholder involvement.

While Sierra Leone has put in place an RTGS and ACH system, a retail payment switch to facilitate interoperability is a missing element of the payments system. With the exception of a few banks, which are connected to each other through bilateral agreements and the various institutions connected by ACH, financial service providers, including banks, MFIs, and mobile network operators (MNO) are not connected to each other. The BSL sees the switch as a solution to this problem by creating a common platform through which all service providers can have access to the payments system. This would allow for interoperability and ultimately contribute to financial inclusion and deepening.

Recognizing the limitations in the current electronic payment system landscape in Sierra Leone and the significant constraint this has on improving the delivery of electronic payments in the country, the Ministry of Finance and BSL have requested support from the World Bank to establish a retail payment switch at the BSL with various functionalities. The three primary goals of the retail payment switch are to: 1) help address issues of interoperability of electronic payments, including government to person (G2P) payments, 2) connect MFIs and MNOs to the country's payments system, and 3) improve the convenience and user experience for customers transacting electronically. The switch has positive implications for access point development and financial inclusion in financially excluded regions as it will help enable these institutions provide new financial services and have more income generating services to be more viable entities.

### II. Objectives of the Assignment

Component 1 of the project will finance the needed hardware, software, and services required to introduce the retail payments switch. It will also ensure that the necessary institutional framework and requirements are in place in order to drive the successful introduction and operation of the retail payments switch. Considering the previous failed procurements of the retail payments switch, BSL is seeking for individual consultant's services to provide procurement support in order to ensure the success of this component. The consultant will assist BSL through the entire procurement and acquisition process of the retail payment switch platform and related hardware and services in accordance with the World Bank procurement regulations.

### **III. Scope of Work**

#### **a. Activities**

The activities and deliverables under this assignment include but are not limited to:

##### **Stage 1 – Procurement**

1. Support BSL in developing scorecards for technical and financial proposals evaluation and advise the BSL on assessing bids received; participate in pre-Bid meetings; study the contents of bids and comment on these proposals; participate in Bid Clarification Meetings with bidders with the purpose of clarifying details of their proposals.
2. Compile the Bid Evaluation Report.
3. Evaluate technical and financial proposals.
4. Prepare the final Bid Evaluation Report on bids.
5. Other necessary activity.

##### **Stage 2 – Contract**

1. Identify items for discussion and introduce adjustments during contract discussions with the successful Bidder.
2. Finalize the terms and conditions of contract with the supplier and guide BSL on the contract content
3. Participate in debriefing with unsuccessful bidders

##### **Stage 3 – System Design**

1. Support BSL in developing a Project Plan for implementation of the retail payments switch, ensuring its alignment with the supplier's project plan
2. Support in the completion of the business and functional requirements for the retail payments switch
3. Support in facilitating dialogue with financial institutions related to the system design
4. Assessment and sign-off of the detailed system specification

#### **IV. Deliverables**

The Consultant shall assist the BSL in production of the following documentation:

##### **Stage 1 – Procurement**

1. Comments on proposals received.
2. Minutes of Bid Clarification Meetings.
3. Bid Evaluation Report.
4. A guidance document for conducting bid evaluation.
5. A detailed spread sheet showing the breakdown on all financial proposals.
6. Final Bid Evaluation Report.

##### **Stage 2 – Contract**

1. The contract conditions issues for discussion and reconciliation with the successful bidder.

##### **Stage 3 – System Design**

1. Support in drafting of BSL's project plan
2. Comments on system design documentation as applicable at each iteration of the design

#### **V. Duration, Location and Nature of Appointment**

The duration of the assignment is expected to last up to 60 total work days over the course of a calendar year. During this time, the consultant may reside abroad, but is expected to be present in Freetown for at least three periods of one to two weeks (per agreement with BSL) to support the procurement efforts by BSL. The consultant will work under the direction of the head of the Project Implementation Unit (PIU).

#### **VI. Qualifications**

- University degree (4-year program or more) in fields related to the project
- Practical experience (not less than 5 years) in implementation of a retail payments switch
- Knowledge of the relevant World Bank procurement (ICB) procedures
- Experience successfully leading or facilitating the procurement of ICT on at least two projects
- Substantial technical expertise in acquisition, customization, utilization, and maintenance financial sector IT

- Substantial project management and organizational and functional change expertise. Proven proficiency in the preparation of study reports and ability to communicate project issues with high ranking local officials, and to resolve key issues quickly, will be essential
- Significant experience in information & cyber security challenges, strategy and plans in a banking environment
- Thorough understanding of banking business processes including retail, corporate, and card management
- Experience working in the international environment, especially when it concerns confidential information
- Experience working in Fragility, Conflict, and Violence (FCV) states will be an added advantage;

## **VII. Support from The Client**

BSL will provide office space (if needed) for the work of the Consultant. BSL will assist the consultant in her/his consultations with relevant stakeholders and will ensure that the Consultant has access to all information as may be legally allowed for the performance of her/his services. BSL will assign the Senior Manager of the FSDP (head of the PIU) to oversee the overall performance of the consultancy and represent BSL to the Consultant on all matters relating to the project and shall accordingly advise the Client. The consultant will therefore directly report to the FSDP Senior Manager, but will regularly interact with all levels of BSL management, the Project Coordinator, the Ministry of Finance's Project Financial Management Unit, and the World Bank, as needed.

### **Selection Criteria**

The short listing criteria are:

1. Individual Consultant's experience relevant to the Assignment
2. Competency/Qualification of the Individual Consultant relevant to the Assignment

### ***This REoI will lead to the preparation of Short list of Consultants***

Consultants will be selected in accordance with the procedures set out in the World Bank's *Guidelines: Selection and Employment of Consultants by World Bank Borrowers* (July 2016, Revised November 2017)

### **Mode of Application**

All applications in writing should be accompanied by up-to-date Curriculum Vitae and supporting documents (Note: do not send originals) with the names and addresses of three referees, one of which should be the last or current employer and addressed to:

**Team Lead**  
**Project Fiduciary Management Unit (PFMU)**  
**Ministry of Finance**  
**Africanus House, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor**  
**13A Howe Street**  
**Freetown, Sierra Leone**

**Or**

By E-mail: application should be sent as an attachment (including all supporting documents) to: [pfmu2018@gmail.com](mailto:pfmu2018@gmail.com)

Please clearly indicate on the envelope (in the case of hard copy application) or in the email subject heading and attachment (in the case of electronic applications) the post for which application is made.

**QUALIFIED WOMEN ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO APPLY.**

**Closing Date:**

The Closing Date and time for receipt of applications is **9<sup>th</sup> April 2019, at 4:00 pm GMT.**

**Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.**

Signed  -----

Dated 25/03/19 -----