**Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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| --- | --- |
| **RFP Number:** | TFCS-RFP-2025-004 |
| **Issuance Date:** | Day (31 -July-2025) |
| **Deadline for Receipt of Questions** | 05:00 pm, Day (7-Aug-2025) (Ramallah local Time) |
| **Deadline for Offers:** | 05:00 pm, Day (14-Aug-2025) (Ramallah local Time) |
| **Description:** | Mid-Term evaluation for the Tasdeer programme |
| **For:** | Trade Facilitation and Customs Support Programme (Tasdeer), funded by UK Foreign and Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and implemented by Cowater International |
| **Point of Contact:** | HR & Operations Department – [procurement@tasdeer.ps](mailto:procurement@tasdeer.ps) – [+970 2 292 9287](tel:+970%202%20292%209287) |

**Section 1: Introduction and Instructions to Offerors**

1. **Introduction**

Cowater International, acting for the Trade Facilitation and Customs Support Programme (Tasdeer), is soliciting proposals from an eligible company (or companies) to conduct a mid-term evaluation of the programme as described in Annex 1 (Detailed Terms of Reference and Requirements).

The Trade Facilitation and Customs Support Programme (Tasdeer) is a programme funded by the United Kingdom’s Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), with activities being implemented in the West Bank and Gaza. The objective of Tasdeer programme is to improve the Palestinian private sector’s competitiveness and the PA’s capacity in the fields of trade, customs and import policy regulation and administration. More details on Tasdeer are provided within Annex 1.

Offerors are responsible for ensuring that their offers adhere to the instructions stated herein. Failure to adhere with these instructions may lead to disqualification of proposals, at Cowater’s discretion.

1. **Ethical and business conduct requirements**

Tasdeer adheres to Cowater and FCDO’s ethical and business conduct requirements. Cowater is committed to integrity in procurement, and only selects offerors based on objective criteria such as price and technical merit.

Within their proposal submission, offerors must:

* Disclose any close, familial, or financial relationships with Cowater or programme staff.
* Disclose any family or financial relationship with other offerors submitting proposals.
* Certify that the prices in the offer have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other offeror or competitor 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 Cowater prohibitions against fraud, bribery and kickbacks.

Please contact [procurement@Tasdeer.ps](mailto:procurement@Tasdeer.ps) with any questions or concerns regarding the above information or to report any potential violations. Potential violations may also be reported directly to Cowater at to [codeofconduct@cowater.com](mailto:codeofconduct@cowatersogema.com).

1. **Questions and Requests for Clarifications**

Questions regarding the RFP may be submitted no later than **05:00 pm on 7-Aug-2025** (Ramallah local Time) **by email to** [**procurement@tasdeer.ps**](mailto:procurement@tasdeer.ps). Questions must be submitted in writing, and only written answers issued by Cowater will be considered official. Cowater may, at its sole discretion, make questions and responses to requests for clarification available to all RFP recipients who have indicated an interest in bidding. We will not disclose the organization that submitted a given request.

1. **Offer Deadline**

Offers must be received no later **than 05:00 pm, Day (14-Aug-2025)** (Ramallah local Time)**.** Offers received after this date or time will be considered late and will be considered only at the discretion of Cowater.

1. **Instructions for Submission of Offers**

Cowater will only accept proposals submitted over email to [[**procurement@tasdeer.ps**](mailto:procurement@tasdeer.ps)]. Each offeror must submit its proposal in two separate volumes: the Technical Volume and the Cost Volume. Each Volume must be submitted in a separate email.

All offers and related documents must include offeror’s name and address, with the RFP number **(“RFP No. TFCS-RFP-2025-04”**) clearly marked. Emails must be clearly marked either “Technical Volume” or “Cost Volume”.

All offers must be prepared in English. All documents must be in PDF, Microsoft Word or Microsoft Excel format.

* 1. **Technical Volume**

The Technical Volume should describe the offeror’s proposed plan to deliver the services described in the technical specifications (Annex 1). It should demonstrate a clear understanding of the work to be undertaken and the responsibilities of all parties involved. The plan should include details on equipment, personnel, and subcontractors that the offeror will make available to carry out the required activities. The plan should also provide details on the anticipated delivery schedule, including an estimated completion date.

At a minimum, the Technical Volume must contain:

1. Completed Technical Requirements (see Annex 1), including:
   1. A detailed methodology
   2. A detailed implementation plan
   3. Other information the offeror deems relevant for the technical response
2. CVs for proposed staff with identified roles (maximum 2 pages per CV)
3. Evidence of Responsibility Statement (see Annex 2)
4. Past Performance Form (see Annex 4), including at least three client references for recently offered services of similar technical scope and/or capacity.
5. In addition, offerors responding to this RFP are requested to submit the following:

* A copy of their official registration or business license.
* A copy of their identification card.

Note that the 1. Completed Technical Requirements should be no longer than 20 pages maximum – excluding annexes. Acceptable annexes are: CVs, Annex 2, Annex 4, and official documents (e.g., official registration/business license and copy of ID card).

***Subcontracting arrangements*:** If the offeror plans to use subcontractors for the work, the proposal must clearly identify the subcontractor(s), their contact information, and the work they will perform. Cowater retains the right to approve or reject the specific subcontractors selected.

The Technical Volume should not contain any cost- or price-related information.

* 1. **Cost Volume**

The Cost Volume must be submitting using the Price Schedule format given in Annex 4. It must include a unit cost breakdown for every line item described in Annex 4 any other costs involved. The offer must preserve and clearly indicate the line-item numbers. All items, services, transportation costs, etc. must be clearly labeled and included in the total price. Prices must be quoted on a lump-sum, all-inclusive basis. No other costs, taxes, and/or fees may be added later.

Tasdeer Programme is exempt from VAT. Any award issued by Cowater on behalf of the Tasdeer Programme, an official programme of the Government of the UK in the OPTs, is free and exempt from VAT.

Quotations must be fixed price, expressed in **GBP**.

* 1. **Basis for Award**

The following criteria will be used to appraise bids.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Description** | **Marks** |
| 1. Technical Approach | An evaluation of the offeror’s responsiveness to the technical specification, including their proposed methodology and work plan. Offerors are expected to demonstrate:   * Understanding of the OPTs context * Understanding of the services’ scope and objectives * A strong methodology that integrates qualitative and quantitative methods * A suitable workplan | 30 |
| 2. Past Experience | An evaluation of the offerors’ capacity to perform the work, including review of past performance on similar assignments. | 10 |
| 3. Consultant Composition | An evaluation of the qualifications of proposed consultants, including their experience working on comparable evaluations in OPTs. | 30 |
| 4. Cost Proposal | The overall cost presented in the offer | 30 |
| **Total** | | **100** |

Bids will first be reviewed against Technical Criteria (1-3). Only bids which pass these technical criteria will pass to financial review (criteria 4).

**5.4 Other requirements**

**Validity Period**: Offers must remain valid for at least 90 calendar days after the offer deadline.

**Negotiations**: Best and final price quotations are requested from all offerors. It is anticipated that awards will be made solely on the basis of these original quotations. However, Cowater reserves the right to conduct negotiations and/or request clarifications prior to awarding a subcontract.

**Cancellation or alteration:** Cowater reserves the right to cancel this RFP at any time, or issue a partial award or split the award among various offerors.

**ANNEX 1: Detailed Specifications and Requirements**

**Terms of Reference**

**About Tasdeer**

The Trade Facilitation and Customs Support programme (Tasdeer) is funded by the United Kingdom’s Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and aims at improving the trade performance and customs capabilities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). It has been running since end 2020 and is currently planned to end in September 2026. Tasdeer will ultimately contribute to private sector-led economic growth and fiscal sustainability in the OPT’s. The programme is designed to be flexible and adaptive and will work politically and technically to make progress across four-key interrelated Workstreams:

* Work Stream 1 (WS1): Support to expedite the movement of goods and reduce transaction costs.
* Work Stream 2 (WS2): Support to improve Palestinian trade-related institutions and business enabling environment.
* Work Stream 3 (WS3): Support to improve the private sector’s skills and innovation to export and create jobs.
* Work Stream 4 (WS4): Support to improve PA’s Customs readiness to assume functions from Israel to collect revenues from trade-related taxes.

The programme is implemented by a Cowater-led consortium on behalf of FCDO.

**Background:**

The mid-term evaluation of the Trade Facilitation and Customs Support programme (Tasdeer) will assess the programme's progress and performance. Funded by the Foreign, Commonwealth, and Development Office (FCDO), the programme aims to improve trade performance and customs capabilities in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). By enhancing and expediting the movement of goods, enhancing trade-related institutions, fostering private sector innovation, and supporting the Palestinian Authority's customs readiness, Tasdeer seeks to promote private sector-led economic growth and fiscal sustainability in the OPTs.

Beyond the current phase, this evaluation will provide valuable insights to guide the upcoming extension phase of the programme. As the programme prepares for this new phase, the findings will inform strategies, enhance interventions, and ensure continued success. The evaluation will highlight key lessons learned and offer recommendations for improving future programme implementation, contributing to the programme’s long-term impact and sustainability.

**Objectives and Scope of Work:**

The objectives of this midterm evaluation are to provide accountability and transparency through an independent assessment of progress by: i)highlighting successes and identifying areas for improvement, ensuring that key lessons are learned; ii) informing the design of future programming funded by FCDO; and iii) delivering timely insights that enable stakeholders to reflect, adapt, and plan effectively for the remainder of the programme.

To achieve these objectives, the evaluation will assess the programme’s performance with a focus on facilitating trade, improving customs capabilities, and promoting private sector-led economic growth and fiscal sustainability in the Occupied Palestinian Territories (OPTs). This evaluation will be conducted against OECD/DAC criteria and will concentrate on interventions implemented in both the West Bank and Gaza. The evaluation will be conducted using conflict-sensitive approaches to ensure that the evaluation process responds to the complex social and political dynamics. It will cover approximately fourteen key beneficiaries and clients from the public sector and trade-related institutions, as well as around 40 companies and clusters from the private sector across both regions. These private sector actors received direct grants aimed at enhancing their competitiveness and, as a result, increasing their exports and local sales. A full list of beneficiaries will be provided upon the contract award.

The FCDO’s EQUALS unit will have a role in quality assurance, particularly in reviewing the finalised methodology and approach during the inception phase of the evaluation.

**Methodology and Key Questions:**

This midterm evaluation will involve a mix of desk-based reviews and interviews (with public and private sector beneficiaries/clients of Tasdeer, the programme implementers/consultants, and the donor). The key sources for the midterm evaluation (available upon contract signature) will include: i) programme business case/Terms of Reference; ii) annual reviews; iii) logframe and Theory of Change; iv) annual and quarterly progress reports; v) desk-based research on private sector development and trade facilitation programming; vi) interviews with key stakeholders.The evaluators will assess the availability, quality, and limitations of monitoring data used to track outcomes, particularly export performance, revenue collection, and institutional readiness.

The evaluation is expected to involve engagement with a range of stakeholders—including beneficiaries, partners, and relevant institutions—to help inform findings and ensure they reflect diverse perspectives. Bidders should propose appropriate methods for this engagement in their technical proposals, outlining how stakeholder feedback will be collected and used to shape the evaluation conclusions and recommendations. Where applicable, the evaluation should disaggregate data by gender, age, location, and other relevant categories. Evaluators should propose suitable approaches for using available disaggregated data and assess existing data sources to support the evaluation. We expect the evaluators to suggest appropriate data disaggregation methodologies in their bid.

Given the current access limitations, assessment of interventions in Gaza will be based on desk reviews and remote interviews with Tasdeer’s Gaza-based team and accessible beneficiaries or partners. The evaluator will not be expected to conduct direct fieldwork in Gaza but should validate results through available documentation and stakeholder consultations.

The evaluation should cover, but not be limited to, the following questions (to be developed/refined during inception):

1. **Relevance**
   * To what extent are the activities and interventions responding to the needs and priorities of key partners and beneficiaries?
2. **Efficiency**

* Do the programme outputs and outcomes represent value for money, assessed through FCDO’s 4Es framework? *Evaluators will work with Cowater/Tasdeer to access relevant VfM reports by output/workstream.*
* To what extent has the programme been able to pivot or reallocate resources in response to emerging opportunities, risks, circumstances or challenges?

1. **Effectiveness**

* Is the Theory of Change – its logic and assumptions – still valid and working as intended, particularly the causal pathways leading from outputs to intermediate outcomes across workstreams?
* To what extent is the programme delivering its planned outputs and outcomes, as articulated in the logframe, for example:
  + To what extent has the programme been effective in strengthening the Palestinian Authority’s readiness to facilitate trade and prepare for negotiations with Israel?
  + To what extent has the programme been effective in enhancing the capacity of trade-related institutions to better meet the needs of market players?
  + To what extent has the programme been effective in improving the competitiveness and capacity of Palestinian firms/ clusters, to increase their exports?
  + To what extent has the programme been effective in supporting the Palestinian Authority’s customs system to generate revenue from trade-related taxes?
* Were there any exogenous factors – such as conflict, political instability, or economic shocks – that affected the programme’s ability to achieve its intended objectives? If so, how effectively has the programme demonstrated adaptive management in response to evolving political, economic, or operational contexts?
* How has the programme used monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) data to inform decision-making and course corrections?
* To what extent has the programme taken into account local political and institutional dynamics – such as decision-making processes, power structures, and stakeholder interests – and how have these factors influenced the design, implementation, and effectiveness of the interventions?
* How effectively has the programme integrated Gender, Equality, and Social Inclusion (GESI) across the programme, and how effective has this approach been in achieving the intended outcomes?

1. **Coherence:**

* To what extent has the programme aligned with national strategies, regulations, and other development initiatives in Palestine?
* To what extent has the programme coordinated/created synergies with other initiatives (e.g., programmes, donors, and/or stakeholders) to effectively support its objectives and contribute to the overall impact?

1. **Sustainability**
   * How sustainable are the programme’s outcomes beyond its lifespan, and which results are expected to continue?
   * To what extent are the programme’s interventions and/or technical solutions replicable and scalable?
2. **Learning** 
   * What are the challenges and lessons learned so far in the programme?
   * What key lessons should be integrated into future programme phases to ensure effectiveness and impact for future viable, private sector-led economic growth and market development?

In addition, subject to agreement with FCDO and Tasdeer, the mid-term evaluation may also include maximum 2 in-depth case studies of selected programme components. These case studies would explore in detail the factors behind specific successes or challenges, with the aim of identifying lessons that can be replicated into Tasdeer and/or future programming. The selection of these case studies – including exact number and focus area – will be determined jointly with FCDO, Tasdeer, and the evaluators during the inception phase to ensure they provide meaningful and useful insights. The bidders should suggest a proposed criteria for selection of case studies and outline a brief methodology for conducting the case studies.

**Deliverables:**

1. **Inception Report**: Outlining the methodology, work plan, stakeholder list, key questions, and data collection tools
2. **Preliminary Findings Discussion:** Engage with the Tasdeer team to review and discuss initial findings and insights. Incorporate feedback.
3. **Presentation of initial findings** to the Tasdeer programme and FCDO teams (PowerPoint slides). Incorporate feedback from Tasdeer and FCDO.
4. **Draft Evaluation Report**: A draft report detailing findings across the evaluation criteria, including recommendations with clear Executive Summary (max. 40 pages, excluding Annexes). Incorporate feedback from Tasdeer and FCDO.
5. **Presentation of final findings** to the Tasdeer programme and FCDO teams (PowerPoint slides). Ensure this presentation is suitable for non-technical audiences and covers the summary of findings and major recommendations.
6. **Final Evaluation Report**: Based on feedback from programme’s management and stakeholders, incorporating final analysis, finding, recommendations and lessons learned into a comprehensive final output (max. 40 pages, excluding Annexes).

As part of the draft and final findings presentations and reports, the evaluators should present lessons learned clearly and propose actionable recommendations for improving the programme going forward, with suggestions for how recommendations could be communicated to Tasdeer’s stakeholders.

**Qualifications and Experience:**

The evaluation team should possess and demonstrate a combination of relevant qualifications, skills, and experience in the following areas. It is up to the bidder to propose the team composition that they deem best to deliver the assignment.

* **Expertise in Market System Development (MSD) and Trade Facilitation**: Proven experience evaluating programmes focused on market systems, economic growth, and trade facilitation, particularly in conflict-affected or fragile contexts. Strong understanding of market development principles and practices.
* **Evaluation Experience**: Background in conducting evaluations for donor-funded international development programmes.
* **Data Collection Skills:** The evaluator(s) must have the necessary skills, experience, and resources to efficiently gather relevant data from direct beneficiaries within government and trade-related institutions, direct beneficiaries from private sector firms/clusters. They should demonstrate the capacity to manage and execute the data collection process effectively within the designated time frame.
* **Research and Analytical Skills**: Strong qualitative and quantitative research skills with experience in data collection, analysis, and reporting.
* **GESI and PEA Skills**: Experience in Gender and Social Inclusion and PEA.
* **Knowledge of the Palestinian Context**: Familiarity with Palestinian political, economic, and social contexts, and understanding of the Palestinian Authority's policies on trade and market development.
* **Ability to conduct work and move smoothly within the OPTs.**
* **Communication and Reporting Skills**: Excellent written and verbal communication in Arabic and in English. Ability to write clear, concise, and actionable evaluation reports.
* **Team Collaboration and Programme Management**: Experience in team coordination and stakeholder management, ensuring timely and high-quality deliverables and ability to adapt to changing contexts.
* **Professional Integrity**: High ethical standards in conducting evaluations, ensuring integrity, confidentiality, and impartiality throughout the process.

**Geographical Location:**

This evaluation will be conducted in OPTs. The evaluator(s) will be expected to demonstrate an ability to coordinate with relevant stakeholders and programme staff within the country as necessary.

**Duration of Contract:**

The contract for the midterm evaluation is expected to last approximately 13-15 weeks, with the evaluation is estimated to commence on 24-Aug-2025 and conclude by 10-Dec-2025.

**Duty of Care:**

The evaluator(s) is responsible for the safety and well-being of their personnel and third parties affected by their activities under this contract, including appropriate security arrangements and briefing of all their personnel working under this contract. They will also be responsible for the provision of suitable security arrangements for their domestic and business property. Travel advice is also available on the FCDO website, and the Service Provider must ensure they (and their Personnel) are up to date with the latest position. Bidders must develop their proposal on the basis of being fully responsible for Duty of Care in line with the details provided above and the security context in OPTs.

Bidders must confirm in the Tender that:

* They fully accept responsibility for Security and Duty of Care.
* They understand the potential risks and have the knowledge and experience to develop an effective risk plan.
* They have the capability to manage their Duty of Care responsibilities throughout the life of the contract.

If a bidder is unwilling or unable to accept responsibility for Security and Duty of Care as detailed above, their Tender will be viewed as non-compliant and excluded from further evaluation.

**Data Protection:**

*General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR):* Implement and maintain appropriate technical and organisational measures to ensure a level of security appropriate to that risk, including, as appropriate, the measures referred to in Article 33(1)(a), (b) , (c) and (d) of the GDPR, and the measures shall, at minimum, comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Legislation, including Article 32 of the GDPR.

**Safeguarding:**

FCDO’s approach across all its programming is to ‘do no harm’ by ensuring that its interventions do not sustain unequal power relations, reinforce social exclusion and predatory institutions, exacerbate conflict, contribute to human rights risks, and/or create or exacerbate resource scarcity, climate change and/or environmental damage, and/or increasing communities’ vulnerabilities to shocks and trends. FCDO seeks to ensure interventions do not displace/undermine local capacity or impose long-term financial burdens on partner governments, therefore, require partners to lead and robustly consider environmental and social safeguards through their own processes with a view to meet FCDO’s high standards in safeguarding and protection.

**ANNEX 2: Evidence of Responsibility Statement**

Evidence of Responsibility Statement

This statement describes the offeror’s internal policies and procedures, as well as its ability to comply with the terms and conditions of a potential subcontract resulting from RFP No. TFCS-RFP-2025-001. The offeror shall complete the information in this statement as part of its proposal.

Company Name:

1. Authorized Negotiators

The offeror’s proposal in response to RFP No. TFCS-RFP-2025-004 may be discussed with any of the following individuals. These individuals are authorized to represent our company in negotiation of this proposal.

Names of authorized negotiator(s):

These individuals can be reached at the following office:

Address:

Telephone/Email:

2. Adequate Financial Resources

We hereby certify that the above-named company maintains adequate financial resources to manage any subcontract resulting from this offer.

3. Ability to Comply

We certify we are able to comply with the proposed schedule and period of performance, having taken into consideration all existing business commitments, commercial as well as governmental.

4. Record of Performance, Integrity, and Business Ethics

Our record of integrity is outstanding. We have no allegations of lack of integrity or of questionable business ethics. Our integrity can be confirmed by our Past Performance References, contained in the Technical Volume.

5. Organization, Experience, Accounting and Operational Controls, and Technical Skills

All information in our proposal and all supporting documentation is authentic and accurate - we possess all skills, experience, and resources which are claimed within our proposal.

6. Equipment and Facilities

We maintain the necessary facilities and equipment to carry out the subcontract.

7. Eligibility to Receive Award

We are qualified and eligible to receive an award under applicable laws and regulation.

8. Acceptability of Terms and Conditions

We hereby acknowledge and agree to all terms, conditions, special provisions, and instructions included in the above-referenced RFP.

**9. Disclosure of relationships**

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

* We have no undisclosed close, familial, or financial relationships with any Cowater or Tasdeer programme staff members.
* We have no undisclosed close, familial, or financial relationships with any other offerors submitting proposals in response to the above-referenced RFP; and
* 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.
* We understand and agree to Cowater’ prohibitions against fraud, bribery, and kickbacks.

**10. Terms of Contracting**

We understand that prior to issuing a sub-contract for these services, Cowater may require that we pass due diligence checks and accept Cowater’s Supply Chain Code of Conduct.

I hereby certify that the above statements are true and accurate, to the best of my knowledge.

Company Name:

By (Signature): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Title: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**ANNEX 3: Price Schedule**

This a summary table. A detailed budget should also be provided showing positions, rates, and expenses. Detailed budgets should be divided by phase (e.g., Inception” and “Implementation”).

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Item No. | Item Name | Description/Specifications | QTY | Unit Price | Total Price |
| 1. |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 | VAT | Price should not include VAT. | | | |
| GRAND TOTAL IN GREAT BRITISH POUND GBP | | | | | **£** |

|  |
| --- |
| **Delivery Period:** Click here to enter text. |

## *Note: All cost offers must be in GBP.*

## ANNEX 4: Past Performance Form

Include programmes that best illustrate your work experience relevant to this RFP, sorted by decreasing order of completion date.

Programmes should have been undertaken in the past three years.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| # | Programme Title | Description of Activities, including location | Client  Name/Tel No. | Cost in US$ | Start and End Dates | Completed on schedule.  (Yes/No) | Completion Letter Received?  (Yes/No) |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 4 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| 5 |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |