SUBJECT: Solicitation for U.S. / Personal Service Contractor (US/PSC) – Certifying Officer

Dear Prospective Offerors:

The United States Government, represented by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), is seeking offers from qualified persons to provide personal services under contract as described in this solicitation.

Offers must be in accordance with Attachment1, Sections I through VIII of this solicitation. Incomplete or unsigned offers will not be considered. Offerors should retain copies of all offer materials for their records.

This solicitation in no way obligates USAID toward a PSC contract, nor does it commit USAID to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of the offer.

Any questions must be directed in writing to the Point of Contact specified in the attached information.

Sincerely,

Shelby Hunt
Supervisory EXO
Solicitation for U.S. Personal Services Contractor (USPSC)
Certifying Officer
USAID/Ethiopia, Addis Ababa

1. GENERAL INFORMATION

1. SOLICITATION NO.: 72066319R00015

2. ISSUANCE DATE: 5/7/2019

3. CLOSING DATE/TIME FOR RECEIPT OF OFFERS: 6/6/2019 (5:00pm Ethiopia’s local time.)

4. POSITION TITLE: Certifying Officer

5. MARKET VALUE: $53,805–$69,951 per annum equivalent to GS-11. The final compensation will be negotiated within the listed market value based on the successful candidate’s salary history, work experience, and educational background. **Salaries over and above the top of the pay range will not be entertained or negotiated.** U.S. Resident-Hire PSCs are not eligible for any fringe benefits (except contributions for FICA, health insurance, and life insurance), including differentials and allowances.

6. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE: Two years, with options to extend for three (3) additional years, one year at a time. Extensions will be contingent on satisfactory performance, continued need for the services and availability of funds. No PSC contract may exceed a five year period of performance.

7. PLACE OF PERFORMANCE: Addis Ababa, Ethiopia with possible travel as stated in the Statement of Work.

8. SECURITY LEVEL REQUIRED: Facility Access. The final selected candidates must obtain both the appropriate security and medical clearances within a reasonable period of time. If such clearances are not obtained within a reasonable time or negative suitability issues are involved, any offer made may be rescinded.

9. STATEMENT OF DUTIES

1. General Statement of Purpose of the Contract

The Contractor/incumbent serves as a Payment Specialist (PS) and principal Authorized Certifying Officer (ACO) for the Office of Financial Management (OFM) at USAID/Ethiopia. Incumbent is charged with the responsibility of final review and authorization of vouchers for payment and is held accountable for public funds. Has no public funds in their physical possession but is personally accountable for and required to make good to the U.S. Government the amount of any illegal or improper payment. The PS/ACO has a serious burden to avoid liability or to qualify for relief from
an erroneous payment, and must rely upon the financial controls system in place to ensure the propriety of payments. To avoid personal liability, must be knowledgeable of financial controls systems and comply with established procedures, and is responsible to ensure that funds are legally available for payment; services for which bills have been presented have been rendered; advancement of funds prior to rendition of services is legally proper; vouchers are correct; computations are correct; and the amount of any illegal, improper, or incorrect payment is not certified for payment. The PS/ACO can have a definitive impact on the outcome of vouchers relating to internal (employees) or external (contractors, grantees, vendors) payments. Must use sound judgment and refer to frequently complex government guidelines when examining and reviewing vouchers and considering or disallowing all or parts of payments funded with USD and Trust Funded appropriations.

The incumbent may also be required to act as the payment section supervisor during the absence of the supervisor.

2. Statement of Duties to be Performed
The Contractor’s responsibilities include the following:
1) (70%) Review for correctness and certify for payment complex invoices and/or claims for payment involving program funded contracts, grants, host country contracts, PASAs, PILs and Commodity Import Program letters of commitment. Also review and certify a full range of complex administrative claims, including a substantial number of international travel vouchers and other entitlement payments. Claims reviewed include a variety of payment provisions including payroll claims, fixed price, cost reimbursement and variable cost contracts and require judgment in adapting USAID procedures to Ethiopian business customs and laws. Review and analysis includes:
   • Ensuring that the obligation contains appropriate authorizations and administrative approval, and is supported by proper evidence showing that a valid, binding agreement has been executed and properly recorded;
   • Ensuring that the request for payment is in accordance with the provisions, terms, and conditions of the obligating document;
   • Verification that funds are available and that established controls to prevent improper or duplicate payment are in place and effectively working;
   • Ensuring proper application of the Prompt Payment Act by processing vouchers within the correct time frame;
   • Ensuring that disbursements comply with USG and host country laws and regulations;
   • Preparing and communicating rationales concerning any portions of a claim where payment is suspended or disallowed;
   • Communicating with payees and other mission staff to provide guidance, interpret the agency’s voucher auditing requirements, and/or request clarifying information regarding proposed payments.

2) (10%) Function as the primary mission liaison with the USDO local banks to transmit payment files, provide procedural guidance, identify system issues, operate complex payment system interfaces, and troubleshoot local bank payment issues as they arise. Incumbent is responsible for ensuring the physical security of computers and sensitive banking information. The system houses and transmits sensitive banking information of nearly $500 million per year to local banks and regional finance centers; the ACO is responsible for controlling access to the equipment for use by others. The ACO is also responsible for communicating with Citibank
and downloading and distributing monthly statements for items procured using the government credit card.

3) (10%) Projects as assigned by the Controller / Deputy Controller, including identifying and assisting in the development of Phoenix reporting and system applications for use by the FM payments section to maintain financial controls.

4) (5%) Monitor program and OE advances to ensure conformity to advance aging regulations, and take action as necessary to bring excess amounts into compliance.

5) (5%) Assist the Deputy Controller and the Controller to review and ensure that appropriate procedures and internal controls are in place and are adhered to, including review and clearance of bank reconciliations and travel authorizations.

C. MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS

The following specific qualifications are necessary:

1. **Education:** Bachelor's Degree in Accounting, Finance, Business Administration or related field required. Master’s Degree in Accounting preferred.

2. **Work Experience:** Bachelor’s degree and 8 years of practical experience in applying accounting principles and accepted financial management practices is required. Alternatively, Master’s degree in business or accounting and 6 years of practical experience in applying accounting principles and accepted financial management practices is required. Prior financial management experience with USG/USAID regulations, laws and procedures is desirable. Professional certification such as CPA or ACCA (UK) preferred.

3. **Language:** Excellent spoken English skills required.

4. **Knowledge, Skills and Abilities.** The incumbent serves as a Payment Specialist (PS) and principal Authorized Certifying Officer (ACO) for the USAID/Ethiopia Office of Financial Management (OFM). Incumbent is charged with the responsibility of final review and authorization of vouchers for payment and is held accountable for public funds. Has no public funds in their physical possession but is personally accountable for and required to make good to the U.S. Government the amount of any illegal or improper payment. The PS/ACO has a serious burden to avoid liability or to qualify for relief from an erroneous payment, and must rely upon the financial controls system in place to ensure the propriety of payments. To avoid personal liability, must be knowledgeable of financial controls systems and comply with established procedures, and is responsible to ensure that funds are legally available for payment; services for which bills have been presented have been rendered; advancement of funds prior to rendition of services is legally proper; vouchers are correct; computations are correct; and the amount of any illegal, improper, or incorrect payment is not certified for payment. The PS/ACO can have a definitive impact on the outcome of vouchers relating to internal (employees) or external (contractors, grantees, vendors) payments. Must use sound judgment and refer to frequently complex government guidelines when examining and reviewing vouchers and considering or disallowing all or parts of payments funded with USD and Trust Funded appropriations. The incumbent may also be required to act as the payment section supervisor during the absence of the supervisor.
3. **Supervisory Relationship**

The Certifying Officer will directly report to the Deputy Controller.

4. **Supervisory Controls**

The Certifying Officer is delegated wide latitude in exercising judgment. Based on a general agreement with the OFM as to priorities and annual objectives, the Certifying Officer is delegated complete responsibility and authority to establish work objectives and/or performance targets for all supervised employees and/or units. Work results are reviewed only for attainment of objectives and conformance with Agency regulations.

10. **AREA OF CONSIDERATION**: Resident-Hire. Resident Hire U.S. Personal Services Contractor means a U.S. citizen or resident alien who, at the time of hire as a PSC, resides in the cooperating country: (1) For reasons other than employment that provides repatriation to the U.S., including – (A) with a U.S. government agency; (B) under any U.S. government-financed contract or agreement; or (C) under any other contract or employment arrangement. (2) As a spouse or dependent of a U.S. citizen with employment that provides for repatriation to the U.S., including – (A) with a U.S. government agency; (B) under any U.S. government-financed contract or agreement; or (C) under any other contract or employment arrangement. A U.S. citizen for purposes of this definition also includes persons who at the time of contracting are lawfully admitted permanent residents of the United States.

11. **PHYSICAL DEMANDS**: The work requested does not involve undue physical demands.

12. **POINT OF CONTACT**: Supervisory Executive Officer, Shelby Hunt and HR Specialist, Fekadu Tamirate at addisusaidjobs@usaid.gov.

II. **MINIMUM QUALIFICATIONS REQUIRED FOR THIS POSITION**

Applications will be initially screened by the Human Resources Office to determine whether applicants have met the advertised minimum qualifications. A list of qualified applicants will be referred to the hiring office for further consideration and screening.

**EDUCATION: REQUIRED**: Bachelor's Degree in Accounting, Finance, Business Administration or related field required. Master’s Degree in Accounting preferred.

**WORK EXPERIENCE: REQUIRED**: Bachelor’s degree and 8 years of practical experience in applying accounting principles and accepted financial management practices is required. Alternatively, Master’s degree in business or accounting and 6 years of practical experience in applying accounting principles and accepted financial management practices is required. Prior financial management experience with USG/USAID regulations, laws and procedures is desirable. Professional certification such as CPA or ACCA (UK) preferred.
III. EVALUATION AND SELECTION FACTORS

The following evaluation factors for evaluating applications are established. The Technical Evaluation Committee will establish the competitive range/cut-off points per the evaluation factors listed below. Applicants are encouraged to provide a narrative for each selection criteria listed below in this section. This information will be used for evaluating and scoring each criterion. *The TEC will conduct interviews with all offerors in the competitive range and provide the final rating and ranking of the offerors based on the interview. The CO will consider findings from the reference checks as part of the responsibility determination.* Be sure to include your name and the solicitation number at the top of each page.

**EDUCATION (15 points):** Bachelor’s Degree in Accounting, Finance, Business Administration or related field required. Master’s Degree in Accounting preferred. Additional evaluation points will be given to offerors who exceed the minimum requirement.

**EXPERIENCE (35 points):** Bachelor’s degree and 8 years of practical experience in applying accounting principles and accepted financial management practices is required. Alternatively, Master’s degree in business or accounting and 6 years of practical experience in applying accounting principles and accepted financial management practices is required. Prior financial management experience with USG/USAID regulations, laws and procedures is desirable. Professional certification such as CPA or ACCA (UK) preferred.

**LANGUAGE (15 points):** Native English (reading, writing and speaking) at the full professional level. Candidate must have the ability to present analysis and recommendations in clear written and oral format.

**KNOWLEDGE, Skills & Abilities (35 points):** The incumbent serves as a Payment Specialist (PS) and principal Authorized Certifying Officer (ACO) for the USAID/Ethiopia, Office of Financial Management (OFM). Incumbent is charged with the responsibility of final review and authorization of vouchers for payment and is held accountable for public funds. Has no public funds in their physical possession but is personally accountable for and required to make good to the U.S. Government the amount of any illegal or improper payment. The PS/ACO has a serious burden to avoid liability or to qualify for relief from an erroneous payment, and must rely upon the financial controls system in place to ensure the propriety of payments. To avoid personal liability, must be knowledgeable of financial controls systems and comply with established procedures, and is responsible to ensure that funds are legally available for payment; services for which bills have been presented have been rendered; advancement of funds prior to rendition of services is legally proper; vouchers are correct; computations are correct; and the amount of any illegal, improper, or incorrect payment is not certified for payment. The PS/ACO can have a definitive impact on the outcome of vouchers relating to internal (employees) or external (contractors, grantees, vendors) payments. Must use sound judgment and refer to frequently complex government guidelines when examining and reviewing vouchers and considering or disallowing all or parts of payments funded with USD and Trust Funded appropriations. The incumbent may also be required to act as the payment section supervisor during the absence of the supervisor.
IV. APPLYING
For your application to be considered, the following documents must be submitted:


2. Offers must be received by the closing date and time specified in Section I, item 3, and submitted to the Point of Contact in Section I, item 12.

3. To ensure consideration of offers for the intended position, Offerors must prominently reference the Solicitation number in the offer submission.

4. Letter of Application and current resume.

5. Application must be submitted ONLY via addisusaidjobs@usaid.gov and the email subject must say –: 72066319R00015 – Certifying Officer

6. Please submit the application only once; and

7. Late and incomplete applications will not be considered; the application must be submitted before or on the closing date at local Ethiopia time 5 p.m. (Local Ethiopia, Addis Ababa Time).

V. LIST OF REQUIRED FORMS FOR PSC HIRES
Once the CO informs the successful Offeror about being selected for a contract award, the CO will provide the successful Offeror instructions about how to complete and submit the following forms.

1. Medical History and Examination Form (Department of State Forms)
2. Questionnaire for Sensitive Positions for National Security (SF-86), or
3. Questionnaire for Non-Sensitive Positions (SF-85)
4. Finger Print Card (FD-258)

VI. BENEFITS
As a matter of policy, and as appropriate, a PSC is normally authorized the following benefits:

1. BENEFITS:
   (a) Employer's FICA Contribution
   (b) Contribution toward Health & Life Insurance
   (c) Pay Comparability Adjustment
   (d) Annual Increase (pending a satisfactory performance evaluation)
   (e) Eligibility for Worker's Compensation
   (f) Annual and Sick Leave

VII. TAXES
USPSCs are required to pay federal income taxes, FICA, Medicare and applicable state income taxes.
VIII. USAID REGULATIONS, POLICIES AND CONTRACT CLAUSES PERTAINING TO PSCs

USAID regulations and policies governing USPSC awards are available at these sources:


4. Ethical Conduct. By the acceptance of a USAID personal services contract as an individual, the contractor will be acknowledging receipt of the “Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch,” available from the U.S. Office of Government Ethics, in accordance with General Provision 2 and 5CFR2635. See https://www.oge.gov/web/oge.nsf/OGE%20Regulations.

END OF SOLICITATION

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY: The U.S. Mission in Ethiopia provides equal opportunity and fair and equitable treatment in employment to all people without regard to race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, political affiliation, marital status, or sexual orientation. USAID/Ethiopia also strives to achieve equal employment opportunity in all personnel operations through continuing diversity enhancement programs.

The EEO complaint procedure is not available to individuals who believe they have been denied equal opportunity based upon marital status or political affiliation. Individuals with such complaints should avail themselves of the appropriate grievance procedures, remedies for prohibited personnel practices, and/or courts for relief.