Kokoda Initiative Partnership

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
KI–2020-052

For

Kokoda Track Authority – Ranger Capacity Development Project

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue date:</th>
<th>07/12/2020</th>
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<tr>
<td>Closing time and date for enquiries:</td>
<td>08/01/2021, 5:00 PM, PNG local time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Closing time and date for submission:</td>
<td>17/01/2021, 5:00 PM, PNG local time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abt contact officer:</td>
<td>Dimo Peter</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><a href="mailto:procurement@amspng.org">procurement@amspng.org</a></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
STRUCTURE OF REQUEST DOCUMENT

This Request Document is made up of the following information:

- Part 1 – Request For Proposal (RFP) Particulars
- Part 2 – Statement of Requirements (SoR)
- Part 3 - Request For Proposal (RFP) Conditions
- Part 4 - Evaluation Process
- Part 5 - Response Schedule (separate document)
- Part 6 - Draft Form of Contract (separate document)
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1. **PART 1 - RFP PARTICULARS**

1.1. **Important dates**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Request date of issue:</th>
<th>07 December 2020</th>
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<tr>
<td>Enquiries closing date and time:</td>
<td>Any enquiries or requests for clarification must be made in writing by email and directed to the Contact Officer. Abt Associates will not respond to enquiries received after <strong>08 January 2021, 5:00 PM - PNG local time.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>RFP closing date and time:</td>
<td><strong>17th January 2021, 5:00 PM - PNG local time.</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>RFP Briefing details:</td>
<td><strong>16 December 2020 from 2:00pm - 3:00pm PNG Local Time</strong> at Abt Associates Office, Ravalian Haus Level 2, Harbour City, Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. Respondents should register their interest in attending the RFP briefing with the Contact Officer. Registration must include the full name of the Respondent’s nominated representative, email address and contact number(s). Respondents can be dialled in on tele/video conference for the meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site visit:</td>
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1.2. **Indicative timetable**

| Completion of evaluation: | 27 January 2021 |
| Approvals: | 28 January 2021 |
| Notification to successful Respondent: | 29 January 2021 |
| Contract executed: | 12 February 2021 |
| Notification to unsuccessful Respondent(s): | 15th February 2021 |
| Contract commencement: | 17th February 2021 |

1.3. **Proposals and Lodgement**

| Form of lodgement: | ☒ Electronic ☐ Hard Copy |
| Lodgement address: | In electronic copy to: procurement@amspng.org |

Proposals must be received in pdf format by the above RFP closing date and time in the inbox of the email address designated above. Proposals lodged by email cannot exceed **10 MB** per email. Proposals exceeding 10
MB must be lodged in separate emails clearly titled as being part of the Proposal submitted in response to the RFP.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Respondents should reference the following subject in their Offers: RFP: KI-2020-052_Kokoda track Authority – Ranger Capacity Development Project</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Offer validity period</td>
<td>3 months from the Closing date of the RFP.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alternative Proposals</td>
<td>□ Yes ☒ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 1.4. Contact

| Contact Officer | Name: Dimo Peter  
|                 | Email: procurement@amspng.org |
| Registration:   | Respondents should register their interest in submitting a Proposal with the Contact Officer to ensure they receive any additional information, modifications and/or addenda that may be released by Abt Associates.  
|                 | Registration must include the full name of the Respondent’s nominated representative and email address. |

### 1.5. RFP Details

| Specifications | See Part 2 - Specifications. |
| Location       | Papua New Guinea. |
| Contract type  | Sub-contract. Type of Contract Agreement may be changed depending on the preferred Proposal in response to this RFP. |
| Evaluation Criteria | Proposals will be assessed by an Evaluation Panel comprising representatives from the Kokoda Track Authority and Abt Associates. Assessment of service provider’s proposals will be based upon the following criteria:  
1. **Criterion 1 – Weighting -15%**  
   Demonstrated experience in the delivery of services relevant to the Scope of Works, including the establishment of a consortium.  
2. **Criterion 2 – Weighting -15%**  
   Demonstrated expertise of nominated key personnel (identify key personnel).  
3. **Criterion 3 – Weighting -15%**  
   A sound understanding of the PNG context and the historical significance of the Kokoda Track Region  
4. **Criterion 4 – Weighting -35%**  
   An approach and methodology that reflects:  
   - The delivery of classroom and field-based (basic and advanced) training in accordance with the competencies outlined in the RFQ.  
   - The application of gender equality principles in the delivery of similar services.  
   - Lessons learned and their application from Indigenous Australian Ranger operations. |
• A partnership with an Australian-based Recognised Training Organisation with potential linkages to PNG institutions for future training and sustainability of the program.

5. **Criterion – Weighting -20%**

Financial Proposal (the financial proposal must fully address this RFP but can additionally identify any enhancements believed appropriate) & Value for Money (VfM).

Respondents should note that it is a pre-condition of assessment that respondents or a member of their consortium are qualified as a Recognised International Training Organisation (RTO) to develop and deliver the classroom-based course curriculum leading to:

1. A Certificate of Completion (or similar) for basic training - Level 1 Rangers; and
2. A full accreditation of a Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management (CaLM Cert III) for advanced training graduates.

**Proposal format**

The Proposal must be provided in accordance with Part 5 – Proposal Response Schedules.
2. **PART 2 – SPECIFICATIONS**

2.1 **Background**

2.1.1 Abt Associates on behalf of the Australian Government through the Kokoda Initiative Partnership (KIP) is seeking submissions from suitable organisations (consulting firms, non-profit organisations, academic institutions etc.) with the expertise and capability to provide a Ranger Capacity Development Project (RCDP) for the Kokoda Track Authority (KTA).

2.1.2 The project requires a service provider with a breadth of expertise across the various facets of an integrated RCDP required to develop and deliver the Activity. The service provider will be required to work closely with Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services (QPWS) technical expertise, managed by the KIP.

2.1.3 This pilot project will focus on building the capacity and the skills of the KTA Rangers allowing them to develop a range of competencies across all areas of their work. Through the RCDP they will become better skilled to repair, stabilise, and protect the Kokoda Track and better enabled to repair infrastructure such as, walking tracks, water crossings and stairways. They will become more actively engaged in monitoring and reporting Track conditions and other assets that require attention. They will learn basic report writing, project management and communication skills, with Senior Rangers being trained in performance management, project development and long-term planning.

Rangers will work more closely with local communities and the tourism industry to support and grow trekking and other tourism opportunities. By targeting both male and female applicants this activity will showcase gender equity across the region and provide a broader pathway to skills and employment opportunities and demonstrates role modelling for younger generations. The RCDP will reserve 30 per cent of places for women with the aim of demonstrating gender equity in the KTA to communities and to key stakeholders operating across the Kokoda Track Region.

2.1.4 The RCDP is an investment in the long-term protection of the Kokoda Track and envisages a staged approach towards **formal, internationally recognised accreditation** with a cohort of Rangers being recruited and trained in the **basic and advanced** skills required relating to a range of competencies used for track stabilisation, monitoring, and reporting.

It is expected that full accreditation will take two years (end of 2022), with formal lessons spaced to accommodate Rangers’ normal duties on the Kokoda Track as required for the trekking season, and to give Rangers time to absorb and implement the information. The timeframe also allows for peer-to-peer learning and an ongoing assessment of each Ranger’s competency and aptitude enabling fair recruitment processes at the completion of the basic and advanced training stages.

**2.1.4.1 Queensland Parks and Wildlife Service (QPWS) Relationship.** In November 2019 the KTA and the QPWS entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to work together to improve the management and governance systems of the Kokoda Track including policy development, capacity building, and track maintenance and stabilisation. In 2020 QPWS deployed two officers to PNG to begin the process of developing long term approaches to the issues above, and QPWS have been closely involved with developing the current methodology of improving Ranger capability. Under this MoU, officers from QPWS will continue to offer technical assistance to the KTA, including with this project.

The diagram below illustrates the relationship between the key players in this project; the KTA, QPWS and Managing Contractors playing a support and guidance role to the consortium, through an RTO. The consortium will deliver basic classroom and field-based lessons to a
cohort of up to 20 trainee rangers in the first half of 2021. For the remainder of 2021 and into 2022 a smaller group of the top performing trainees will receive advanced training leading to a Certificate III in Conservation and Land Management.

### 2.1.5 Ranger Structure and Duties

Up to 20 Ranger trainees will be recruited for basic training and, upon completion and merit-based performance assessment, there will be three options offered to those that pass:

- **Full-time Ranger positions. (Level 1 Rangers)**
- **Reserve Ranger positions.** Reserve rangers will be employed part-time and employed for track maintenance, bridge-building and other work as required.
- **Higher performing Rangers will be offered advanced tuition to become Senior Rangers.**

Rangers are critical for the competent and effective management of the Kokoda Track protected area, on behalf of the PNG government and in conjunction with the Australian Government. The roles and responsibilities of the rangers can be grouped into six categories:

- **Compliance:** Ensure compliance with PNG Government policy documents such as the Tour Operators Code of Conduct, the Military Heritage Management Plan, the PNG National Protected Areas Policy and the Guesthouse and Accommodation Accreditation Scheme.
- **Maintenance:** Ensure that the Kokoda Track is sustainably maintained and repaired.
- **Protection:** Protect the natural, cultural, and military values of the Kokoda Track region, including site protection and artefacts.
- **Projects:** Developing and supporting agency projects as applicable.
- **Community:** Provide information and services to communities and landowners, including support to conflict resolution.
- **Administration:** Monitoring, reporting and accountability. Providing information to counterpart agencies on KIMP priorities through reciprocal reporting protocols.

The revised Ranger structure will improve Kokoda Initiative Master Plan (KIMP) outcomes and reform the way Rangers work with KTA management, communities, tour operators and other key stakeholders. The new structure is intended to address the shortfalls within the current
Ranger model, proposing two levels of management and accountability and allowing for career progression for individuals who exhibit potential and commitment to the work.

2.1.6 Senior Rangers

A Senior Ranger will each be situated at Kokoda Station, Owers Corner and Efogi village to provide coverage across the Kokoda Track. The Senior Rangers will be directly responsible for implementation of projects in the field and will provide reports on a range of issues directing the work of the KTA on the Kokoda Track and in the surrounding region, including:

- Supervising the Level 1 Rangers working under them.
- Monitoring and reporting on issues impacting the special biodiversity, natural and historical values of the region.
- Facilitating a safe passage across the Track for tourists by working with tour operators, accommodation suppliers, local communities, and other stakeholders.
- Collaborating with local communities to implement activities that address the needs of the people and the functions of a protected area.

2.1.7 Rangers

Reporting directly to each of the Senior Rangers (including women Rangers) will be three Level 1 Rangers who live and work in a specific section of the Kokoda Track. These Rangers will be recruited locally, but within that context they will be recruited on merit regarding their ability to meet the selection criteria of the position. Their primary responsibilities will be to:

- Carry out track maintenance and stabilisation work.
- Work with campsite and guest house owners to ensure these facilities meet standards.
- Liaise directly with tour operators and trekkers to ensure their safety.
- Liaise directly with community members to inform them of the work of the KTA and to in turn convey any community concerns back to the KTA through the Senior Ranger.

2.2 Objective

The RCDP will enable effective management of the Kokoda Track, including the protection of its special military significance and its natural values. The RCDP promotes the institutional strengthening of the KTA, through improved Ranger capacity, to manage the Kokoda Track more effectively. The role of the Rangers is central to ensuring the Kokoda Track remains safe and accessible for communities and tourists, and its special military significance is protected. PNG does not have any formal or recognised training for Rangers working in protected area, making this project the first of its kind. This approach has the potential to deliver wider benefits and act as a model for effective protected area management across the country. The project will incrementally build and implement an RCDP for the KTA over a two-year period as a pilot.

2.3 Specified personnel

2.3.1 This request for proposal requires a lead service provider to work in concert with experts experienced in both tailoring curriculum appropriate to the KTA ranger capacity development needs and the technical expertise in the delivery of both field-based and classroom-based tuition.

2.3.2 Given the broad scope of works and deliverables required, the preferred service provider may form or be required to form a consortium to deliver the full range of required services.

The service provider/consortium will include:

1. A Recognised International Training Organisation (RTO) to develop and deliver the classroom-based course curriculum leading to:
2.4 Scope of Services

2.4.1 The RCDP requires a services provider to deliver a package of services including development and delivery of a locally relevant ranger training curriculum, a basic training package and an advanced training package both with field and theory-based competencies. Training and coaching will be face-to-face field-based and classroom-based learning. It is intended that the RCDP will lead to formal, internationally recognised accreditation and a long-term staff development platform for the KTA rangers. In so doing, it will provide the potential to establish a model for other legislated protected areas within PNG.

2.4.2 Development of Basic and Advanced Training Curricula

- Detailed curriculum for Basic training package.
- Project Plan of basic training curriculum delivery, including the Kokoda Track repair and stabilisation requirements.
- Draft curriculum for Advanced training package.

2.4.3 Delivery of Basic Training package in field-based and classroom-based learning - 3 month time frame (April-June 2021)

Field training (monitoring, track repair and stabilisation).

The field-based work will focus on already identified works required on the Kokoda Track, thus achieving the dual objectives of hands on training, and delivering maintenance and improvements. The consortium will ensure the conferring of internationally recognised accreditation on RCDP graduates. The consortium’s approach and methodology will promote opportunity for national-led delivery in the future.

Classroom training (theory, role reinforcement and the Kokoda Initiative), including;

- Pre-fieldwork training including remote first aid, OH&S, Infection control, chainsaw operations and safety, basic reporting and monitoring etc,
- Track stabilisation, vegetation management, minor infrastructure repair etc,
- Project management, team coordination, park visitor activity coordination, and additional field-based competencies including:
  - monitoring campsites according to the TPA accreditation standards,
  - basic monitoring military heritage sites according to NMAG standards,
  - basic monitoring of environmental impacts (clearing and litter management)
  - monitoring compliance with trekking permit conditions
  - basic planning and implementing field-based activities (e.g. track works)

2.4.4 Delivery of Advanced Training to Level 1 Ranger Graduates assessed on performance - June 2021 to July/August 2022.

At the end of Basic Training, Rangers that demonstrate proficiency, commitment and promise will be invited to participate in advanced training and, if successful, promoted to the level of KTA Senior Ranger.

The advanced cohort of Rangers selected on merit will receive additional training leading to the CaLM Cert III. The classroom-based units will be a combination of general natural resource management units and those specific to managing the special values of the region as advised by NMAG, CEPA and TPA, with advanced office-based, project management and staff management training. A proposed revised set of CaLM courses applicable to this phase is at Attachment A. The core competencies and responsibilities of Senior Rangers can be grouped into the following categories:

- Compliance – tourism, trekking support, and safety.
- Maintenance – repair and improvement of the Kokoda Track.
- Protection – environmental and military site protection and management.
- Projects – field logistics and agency projects.
- Community – services to the people, including conflict resolution.
- Administration – reporting and accountability.
- Education – imparting knowledge to trekkers on the unique cultural and environmental values of the Kokoda Track.

This phase of training will achieve:

- A group of Senior Rangers trained in advanced track management techniques including the development and implementation of long-term management plans for the Kokoda Track.
- The Senior Rangers will be competent in interpreting, reporting, and implementing key policy documents such as the KTA Code of Conduct, the NMAG Military Heritage Management Plan, CEPA’s Protected Area Management Plan, and the TPA Guesthouse Accreditation Standards.

2.4.5 As one of the key outcomes of this pilot project is to ensure long-term sustainability of the capacity development approach being trialled, the consortium will be required to develop a sustainability strategy. Early in their engagement the Consortium will form linkages with an appropriate PNG training institution to support delivery in the longer term. The aim of this approach is to foster knowledge and information sharing and to consider the prospects of the PNG training institution taking a central role in delivering Ranger training into the future. This issue will be addressed by the Consortium in the Final Pilot Review to be produced in November 2022.
2.5 Activities

2.5.1 Phase 1: Curriculum Development
- Procurement of contractor and formation of consortium (which may be selected by an evaluation panel from amongst the proposals to form the strongest team).
- Consortium develops detailed curriculum for Basic training package for approval.
- Consortium develops 2021 Project Plan of curriculum delivery, including the Kokoda Track repair and stabilisation requirements.
- Consortium develops concept curriculum for Advanced training package.

2.5.2 Phase 2: Ranger Recruitment
- Procurement of Port Moresby recruitment agency – this will be carried out by the Managing Contractors
- Recruitment of up to 20 trainee rangers (including 30% of placements for women)

2.5.3 Phase 3: Ranger Training - Basic
- Delivery of basic training package in 2021 (3-month timeframe: March 2021 to May 2021)
  o Standard induction for public officers including dress code, hygiene, communication, ethical conduct, cross-cultural awareness, tourist interaction etc.
  o Delivery of DFAT Policy Safeguard Training.
  o Pre-fieldwork training including remote first aid, OH&S, Infection control, chainsaw operations and safety, basic reporting and monitoring etc.
  o Track stabilisation, vegetation management, minor infrastructure repair etc.
  o Post-fieldwork training including project management, team coordination, park visitor activity coordination, and additional field-based competencies including:
    ▪ monitoring campsites according to the TPA accreditation standards,
    ▪ basic monitoring military heritage sites according to NMAG standards,
    ▪ basic monitoring of environmental impacts (clearing and litter management)
    ▪ monitoring compliance with trekking permit conditions
    ▪ basic planning and implementing field-based activities (e.g. track works).
- Draft Curriculum completed for Phase 4: Advanced Ranger Training.
- Graduation of trainees to KTA Level 1 Basic Ranger (and Reserve Rangers identified).
- Merit-based selection of graduated Level 1 Rangers for Advanced Ranger Training.

2.5.4 Phase 4: Ranger Training – Advanced
- Advanced Ranger Training curriculum approved.
- Delivery of advanced training package (from July 2021 to July/August 2022).
  o Protected area management including cultural sites
  o Military heritage management including special site monitoring
  o Remote communication and reporting techniques
  o Site interpretation and visitor interaction
  o Project management, staff management, project development
  o Advanced field techniques including complex infrastructure such as bridges
  o Long-term planning for track protection
- Merit-based promotion to Senior Rangers (and Reserve Senior Rangers identified).
- Senior Rangers commence 6-month probation

2.5.5 Phase 5: Review
- Sustainability/mid-term review conducted November 2021
- Final Pilot Review conducted November 2022
2.6 Deliverables

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<th>Deliverable</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Contract Signing and Work Plan</td>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>12/2/2021</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Development of Basic Training Curricula – includes implementation schedule,</td>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>1/3/2021</td>
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<td>approach, methodology for field and theory/classroom-based activities.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Development of Advanced Training Curricula – includes implementation schedule,</td>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>1/6/2020</td>
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<td>approach, methodology for field and theory/classroom-based activities.</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Satisfactory delivery and completion of Basic Training</td>
<td>Kokoda Track communities and Port Moresby</td>
<td>30/6/2021</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Mid Term Report</td>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>30/11/2021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Satisfactory delivery and completion of Advanced Training Package</td>
<td>Kokoda Track Communities and Port Moresby</td>
<td>30/6/2022</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Completion report</td>
<td>Remote</td>
<td>30/11/2022</td>
</tr>
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</table>

2.7 Implementation Schedule

Indicative only and to be updated as agreed with KIP and KTA and based on preferred Respondent’s proposal.
2.8 Management and Monitoring

The project will be managed by Abt in close consultation with the Acting KTA CEO, with progress reported regularly to DFAT and the Kokoda Initiative Technical Working Group. Abt will manage, monitor, and report on implementation progress.

Following discussions with QPWS an experienced Ranger may be temporarily contracted to Abt to provide expert advice and oversight of the project as it is implemented in the field, assisting the contracted service provider directly with the specialist training required, and working closely with the KTA and the Managing Contractor. It is anticipated that QPWS will provide assistance with technical and quality assurance role to the program reviewing curricula, field and classroom-based activities and lesson plans, program reports and assessment of ranger competency.

2.9 Milestone Payment Schedule

The successful service provider will be contracted in accordance with the indicative Milestone Payment Schedule below.

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<th>Milestone No.</th>
<th>Milestone Deliverable</th>
<th>Means of Verification</th>
<th>Milestone Delivery Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Tranche 1</td>
<td>Contract Signing and Work Plan</td>
<td>Fully Executed Contract and approved Work Plan</td>
<td>12/2/2021</td>
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<td>Tranche 2</td>
<td>Development of Basic Training Curricula – includes implementation schedule, approach, methodology for field and theory/classroom-based activities.</td>
<td>Technical review of curriculum and approval</td>
<td>1/3/2021</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<td>Tranche 3</td>
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<td>Technical review and approval</td>
<td>1/6/20</td>
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<td>Technical review and assessment of field and classroom based training delivery</td>
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<td>Tranche 5</td>
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<td>Tranche 6</td>
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<td>Final Payment 7</td>
<td>Completion report</td>
<td>Technical review and Approval</td>
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<td>10%</td>
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**TOTAL:** 100%
3 PART 3 - RFP CONDITIONS

3.1 About this Request DOCUMENT

This Request for Proposal (RFP) is an invitation to treat and shall not be construed, interpreted, or relied upon, whether expressly or impliedly, as an offer capable of acceptance by any professional, firm or organisation or as creating any form of contractual, quasi-contractual, restitutionary or other relationship.

No binding legal relationship will arise out of this process until execution of a contract with the Preferred Respondent.

3.2 QUERIES

Up to and including the Queries Closing Date, Respondents may submit a query or request for clarification arising from this RFP to the nominated Contact Officer set out in Part 1.4 – RFP Particulars. Abt Associates does not guarantee that it will respond to any query, particularly queries received after the Queries Closing Date. All such queries are to be via email only. Telephone enquiries will not be taken.

3.3 BRIEFING AND SITE INSPECTIONS

RFP briefing details are included in Part 1.1 – Important Dates. Suppliers should register their intention to attend the briefing with the Contact Officer. If a Respondent is unable to attend the briefing, they will be provided with the information supplied to all attending Respondents along with responses to any requests for information raised during the briefing.

Site inspection details are included in Part 1.1 – Important Dates. If no site visit is nominated, it is assumed that Respondents have familiarised themselves with any site conditions and have taken them into consideration in the preparation of their Proposal. Site inspections can be requested in writing to the Contact Officer prior to the deadline for enquiries nominated in Part 1.4 – Contact.

3.4 PROPOSAL MODIFICATION PROCEDURE

Abt Associates may, in its absolute discretion, issue modifications to this RFP before the Offer Closing Date and Time and may extend the Offer Closing Date and Time to enable Respondents to amend their Proposal.

If Abt Associates elects to issue modifications, Abt Associates will issue a formal addendum via email to all registered Respondents. It is the responsibility of Respondents to ensure they have registered their interest and contact details with the Contact Officer so that they are able to receive all modifications.

All conditions and rules of this RFP will apply to all addenda unless modified by the addenda. Any such addenda will become part of the RFP.

3.5 CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

The following conditions must be met by the Respondents;

a. the Respondent must exist as a legal entity at the Offer Closing Time and Date

b. at the time of lodgement of their Proposal, the Respondent must not have been:

   i. precluded from bidding for Australian Government funded work or

   ii. subject to a judicial decision against them relating to employee entitlements (not including decisions under appeal, and have not paid the claim
c. the Respondent must be solvent and financially capable to undertake the proposed contract work and to perform such work and to undertake the necessary expenditure without anticipated financial difficulties and must be able to so demonstrate prior to contract award.

Abt Associates will exclude from consideration any Proposal if the Respondent or one of its related entities is listed by:

a. the Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs under the Charter of the United Nations Act 1945 and/or listed in regulations made under Division 102 of the Criminal Code Act 1995. Further information about listed persons and entities is available from the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade website at www.dfat.gov.au

b. the World Bank on its “Listing of Ineligible Firms” or “Listing of Firms Letters of Reprimand” posted at www.worldbank.org (the “World Bank List”); or

c. any other donor of development funding on a list similar to the World Bank List; or

d. the Workplace Gender Equality Agency as not complying with the Australian Government Workplace Gender Equality Act 2012 (Cth).

3.6 MINIMUM CONTENT AND FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

Abt Associates will exclude a Respondent from further consideration if Abt Associates considers in its absolute discretion that the Respondent’s response does not meet the minimum content and format requirements listed in this clause:

a. the Proposal must be lodged in accordance with the instructions provided in Part 1.3 – Proposals and Lodgement;

b. the Respondent must submit a complete Offer in the format as set out in Part 1.5 – Proposal Details;

c. the Respondent must complete Part 5 – Offer Response Schedules and include all specified attachments;

d. the Proposal, including all attachments and supporting material, must be written in English, or if in a foreign language, must be correctly translated into English; and

e. Alternative Proposals will only be considered where the Supplier also provides in its Proposal a response that conforms to the specified requirements of this RFP.

3.7 LATE LODGEMENT POLICY

Abt Associates will exclude late Proposals and will not admit them to the evaluation process unless Abt Associates has caused or contributed to the failure to lodge by the Offer Closing Date and Time. The Proposal response is considered late if:

a. it is submitted after the Offer Closing Date and Time (specified in Part 1.1 – Important Dates); or

b. it is incomplete as at the Offer Closing Date and Time (including where the Offer response includes electronic files that cannot be read or unencrypted).

3.8 UNINTENTIONAL ERRORS OF FORM

If an unintentional error of form in a Respondent’s response is identified prior to award of a contract, Abt Associates may in its absolute discretion allow correction of that error by the Respondent by the submission of a correction, variation or additional information.

An unintentional error of form is an error that Abt Associates is satisfied in its absolute discretion:
a. represents incomplete information not consistent with the Respondent’s intentions and, if relevant, capabilities at the time the submission was lodged; and

b. does not materially affect the competitiveness of the Respondent’s response.

3.9 OWNERSHIP OF RESPONSE MATERIAL

All material submitted in response to this RFP becomes the property of Abt Associates. By submitting a Proposal, the Respondent allows Abt Associates to copy and do anything necessary to material, including the Respondent’s intellectual property contained in the response, for the purpose of evaluating the Respondent’s response and negotiating a Contract if the Respondent proceeds to that phase of the process.

3.10 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

During the RFP process, the Respondent must immediately advise Abt Associates in writing of any circumstances or relationships constituting an actual, potential or perceived Conflict of Interest in respect to its Offer, or the Respondent’s obligations under the Contract if the Respondent is awarded the Contract. Abt Associates may in its absolute discretion:

a. enter into discussions to seek to address such Conflict of Interest;

b. exclude the Respondent from the process and further evaluation; or

c. take any other action it considers appropriate.

3.11 HEALTH, SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Respondent, if appointed, must at all times, identify, comply with and exercise all necessary, duties and precautions for the health, safety and security of all persons including the Respondent’s employees, subcontractors, subcontractor’s employees, employees of Abt Associates and other persons who may be affected by the delivery of the contract work.

The Respondent will inform itself of all workplace health, safety and safety duties, codes of practice, policies, procedures or measures applicable to the Location detailed in 1.5 RFP Details. The Respondent will comply with all such duties, codes of practice, policies, procedures or measures; and in the event of any inconsistency, will comply with such duties, codes of practice, policies, procedures or measures that produce the highest level of health, safety and security. The Respondent must comply with any and all directions by or on behalf of Abt Associates relating to safety and security.

3.12 INSURANCE

All potential Respondents must have appropriate insurance cover as a condition of submitting a Proposal and, at a minimum, the insurance requirements specified in Part 6 - Draft Contract. If the Respondent is not yet covered by any of these insurances, Abt Associates requires the Respondent to provide a certification that it is willing to get coverage of these insurances once selected as the successful Respondent.

3.13 ETHICAL DEALING, FINANCIAL AND PROBITY CHECKS

Abt Associates’ policy is to engage in the highest standards of ethical behaviour and fair dealing throughout the Offer process. Abt Associates requires the same standards from those with whom it deals. Respondents must compile responses without improper assistance of employees or former employees of Abt Associates and without the use of information improperly obtained or in breach of an obligation of confidentiality. Respondents should not:

a. engage in misleading or deceptive conduct in relation to the procurement process;
b. engage in any collusive submissions, anti-competitive conduct, or any other unlawful or unethical conduct with any other Respondent, or any other person in connection with the procurement process; or

c. attempt to influence improperly any officer, employee or agent of Abt Associates, or violate any applicable laws or Abt Associates policies regarding the offering of inducements in connection with the procurement process.

Abt Associates may exclude from consideration any Proposal lodged by a Respondent which, in Abt Associates' reasonable opinion, has engaged in any behaviour contrary to this section in relation to the procurement process.

Abt Associates (or its agents) may perform such security, probity, and financial investigations and procedures as Abt Associates may determine are necessary in relation to any Respondent, its employees, officers, partners, associates, sub-contractors or related entities including consortium members and their officers, employees and sub-contractors.

Respondents should promptly provide Abt Associates with such information or documentation that Abt Associates requires in order to undertake such investigation. A Proposal may be rejected by Abt Associates if the Respondent does not promptly provide, at its own cost, all reasonable assistance to Abt Associates in this regard or based on the outcomes of the investigations or procedures.

Abt Associates may also make independent enquiries about any matters that may be relevant to the evaluation of a Proposal.

3.14 CHILD PROTECTION

The successful Respondent must have appropriate child protection policies in place and/or be willing to comply with Abt Associates and DFAT’s latest Child Protection Policy. DFAT’s Child Protection Policy is available on its website and Abt Associate's policy is attached to the Draft Contract at Part 6. The successful Respondent will be required to work with Abt Associates to implement any necessary Child Protection Implementation Plan for medium and high-risk activities.

3.15 PSEAH

The successful Respondent should be aware of the DFAT Preventing Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy available on the DFAT website. The successful Respondent may be required to submit a narrative response and risk assessment in relation to this policy and to work with Abt Associates to implement any requirements for medium and high-risk activities.

3.16 ALTERNATIVE PROPOSALS

Abt Associates may, at its discretion, consider a Proposal that does not comply fully with RFP only if the Respondent:

a. also provides a Proposal that fully conforms to the requirements in Part 2 – Specifications;

b. proposes a solution that satisfies the functional requirements of the Specifications;

c. is otherwise a complete Proposal;

d. fully describes the advantages, disadvantages, limitations and risks of the alternative approach; and

e. includes sufficient information to enable a comparison of the Alternative Proposal with Proposals that comply with the Specifications.
3.17 RIGHT NOT TO PROCEED

Abt Associates is not bound contractually, or in any other way to the Respondents who respond to this RFP. Abt Associates reserves the right not to proceed with this RFP or any part of it, and to suspend or vary the RFP and/or its requirements at any stage.

3.18 COSTS BORNE BY SUPPLIER

All costs and expenses incurred by Respondents in any way associated with the development, preparation and submission of the Proposal, including but not limited to attendance at meetings, site visits, discussions, presentations and providing any additional material required by Abt Associates, will be borne exclusively by the Respondents.

3.19 SUPPLIER ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Respondents are considered to have:

a. examined this RFP, any documents referenced in this RFP and any other information made available by Abt Associates to Respondents for the purpose of responding;

b. examined all further information which is obtainable by the making of reasonable enquiries relevant to the risks, contingencies, and other circumstances having an effect on their Proposal;

c. undertaken their own professional advice in respect of this RFP, any other information provided to Respondents and the procurement process generally, as appropriate;

d. satisfied themselves as to the correctness and sufficiency of their Proposal response including submitted prices; and

e. satisfied themselves as to the terms and conditions of the Draft Contract and its ability to comply with the Draft Contract.

Responses are submitted on the basis that Respondents acknowledge:

a. they do not rely on any representation, letter, document or arrangement, whether oral or in writing, or other conduct as adding to or amending these conditions other than addenda; and

b. they do not rely upon any warranty or representation made by or on behalf of Abt Associates, except as are expressly provided for in this RFP, but they have relied entirely upon their own inquiries and inspection in respect of the subject of their Proposal.

3.20 RIGHTS OF ABT ASSOCIATES

Without limiting any other rights contained in this RFP, Abt Associates may do any or all of the following at any time:

a. not proceed with the procurement activity;

b. suspend, defer or change the structure and timing of the procurement activity;

c. determine at any time a short list of Respondents;

d. seek amended Proposals or call a new request for Proposal;

e. forward any clarification about this RFP to all known Respondents on a non-attributable basis and without disclosing any confidential information of a Respondent;

f. allow or not allow another legal entity to take over a Proposal in substitution for the original Respondent where an event occurs that has the effect of substantially altering the composition or control of the Respondent or the business of the Respondent;
g. negotiate with one or more persons who have not submitted Proposal responses or enter into a contract or other binding relationship for similar Specifications outside of this procurement process; and/or

h. terminate any negotiations being conducted at any time with the Respondents.

3.21 NOVATION OF CONTRACT

Respondents should be aware that Abt Associate's Head Contract with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade under which the funding for this engagement is provided, is currently due to end on 4 April 2022. In the event that the Head Contract is not extended beyond this date, Abt Associates may at its sole discretion either terminate the engagement in accordance with Clause 16.2 of the sample Contract at Part 6 or novate the Contract to DFAT or a nominated third party in accordance with Clause 20.7 of the sample Contract at Part 6.
4 PART 4 – EVALUATION PROCESS

4.1 RFP RESPONSE

The Respondent is to provide a written response to the RFP requirements in accordance with the requirements set out in Part 1.5 – Proposal Details and Part 5 – RFP Response Schedules.

The proposal will be assessed by an Evaluation Committee (EC) comprising of Abt Associates, the Kokoda Track Authority and Queensland Parks and Wildlife Services.

The Respondent’s written Proposal to the requirements set out in Part 2 – Specifications will be used by the Evaluation Panel to evaluate Proposals against the evaluation criteria.

The Evaluation Panel may also use any relevant information obtained in relation to the RFP (whether from the Respondent as part of clarification, reference checks, negotiations, presentations or by any other independent inquiry) in the evaluation of Proposals.

4.2 EVALUATION PROCESS

The purpose of the evaluation process is to identify and select the Respondent that represents the best value for money to Abt Associates, consistent with the Commonwealth Procurement Rules and Abt Associates procurement standards and procedures.

Proposals will be assessed in accordance with the evaluation criteria to determine which Respondent provides the best value for money. In evaluating each Proposal, Abt Associates will have regard to:

a. Each of the specific evaluation criteria identified in Part 1.5 - Proposal Details; and
b. The overall value for money proposition presented in the Proposal.

In this context, value for money is a measurement of benefits represented by a Respondent’s submission, including:

a. The quality of goods and/or services;
b. Fitness for purpose;
c. Relevant experience and performance history;
d. Innovation and adaptability over the life-cycle;
e. Environmental sustainability of the proposed goods and services;
f. Risk and compliance; and
g. Whole of life costs.

Respondents should ensure that they provide all required information in their Proposals to fulfil each evaluation criteria by submitting all requirements set out in Part 1.5 - Proposal Details and Part 5 – RFP Response Schedules.

The Proposal evaluation process will be divided into the following phases:

a. Receipt and registration of Proposals;
b. Screening of Proposals for compliance with RFP requirements and conditions of participation;
c. Technical proposal assessment;
d. Financial proposal assessment;
e. Due diligence checks;
f. Evaluation of value for money and risk; and
g. Evaluation Report.
As part of, and in addition to the evaluation process, Abt Associates may:

a. Require clarifications and/or presentations from Respondents at any time during the evaluation process. Should such presentations be required, dates, times and venues for presentations will be notified to all Respondents participating in the evaluation or the shortlisted Respondents from the evaluation process. A list of areas and issues for Respondents to address will be provided prior to the presentations; and

b. Conduct reference checks (including site visits, if relevant) on Respondents. Reference checks may be conducted with any referee proposed by the Respondent in its Proposal response or with any other organisation selected by Abt Associates at its discretion. Abt Associates may also request further information from Respondents during the evaluation process.

4.3 NEGOTIATIONS WITH RESPONDENTS

Abt Associates may engage in discussion with one or more Respondent for the purpose of clarifying its Proposal response. Where information of a material nature is provided to one Respondent, it will also be provided concurrently to all other Respondents who are currently participating in the evaluation process.

Abt Associates reserves the right to, at any time conduct post-Proposal negotiations with any or all of the Respondents on any aspect of their RFP. This may involve conducting parallel negotiations with several Respondents. These post-RFP negotiations may result in changes to the terms of the Draft Contract.

4.4 DEBRIEFING

Respondents may request a debriefing following the award of a contract. Respondents requiring a debriefing should contact the Abt Associates Contact Officer.