



Government of Papua New Guinea
National Information and Communications
Technology Authority

NATIONAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY
UNIVERSAL ACCESS AND SERVICE (UAS)

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
BLACKSPOT PROJECT

NATIONAL INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY
UNIVERSAL ACCESS AND SERVICE (UAS)

STRATOS AVENUE
RANGEVIEW PLAZA (LVL 3)
PORT MORESBY

JULY 2024

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SUMMARY AND BACKGROUND

The National Information & Communication Technology Authority, (NICTA), is seeking proposals from qualified mobile network operators (MNOs) to partner in developing solutions to enhance 4G coverage in areas that have pockets of poor to nil 4G signal quality (blackspots) within Papua New Guinea. This initiative aims to improve 4G mobile network access for all citizens, fostering greater connectivity and digital inclusivity across the nation.

Limited mobile network coverage, particularly 4G service, significantly hinders Papua New Guinea's (PNG) digital development. Blackspots, or areas without reliable network coverage, restrict access to essential services, information, and communication technologies. This exacerbates the digital divide already existing between those with and without connectivity.

Lack of 4G mobile coverage and reliable services has major impacts on access to essential services and overall economic development, including access to health and education services, and participate in a range of economic activities.

Addressing the issue of limited mobile network coverage is essential for PNG's digital development. By ensuring more inclusive access to digital technologies, the country can promote equitable economic growth, improve health and education outcomes, and enhance overall quality of life for its citizens.

1. PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

All proposals are to include the following:

- Contact information
- Number of years of experience proponent has in similar projects.
- Description of methodology to be utilized in the analysis/discovery, design, implementation and maintenance of project locations.
- Understanding of the blackspot coverage challenge in Papua New Guinea and the projects' objective
- Proposed approach to identify and prioritizing blackspot locations.
- Experience and expertise in deploying mobile network infrastructure in remote areas
- Recommendation of specific solutions to address blackspots, considering cost-effectiveness and innovation.
- An implementation plan for network rollout in blackspot areas, including timelines and resource allocation.
- A strategy for ensuring ongoing network quality and maintenance in blackspot regions.

- Cost estimations for deploying solutions at respective locations based on section 4 and 5. All costs must be itemized on a per-site basis, to include an explanation of all fees and costs.

Contract terms and conditions will be negotiated upon selection of the winning bidder for this RFP. All contractual terms and conditions will be subject to review by NICTA and will include scope, budget, schedule, and other necessary items pertaining to the project.

2. PROJECT PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

Project Purpose:

The Blackspot Project aims to improve mobile broadband coverage in selected areas in the country that have weak mobile broadband signals. The project will be funded by or through NICTA, which will use the funding from the Universal Access and Service Fund. Payments made by NICTA will be subject to any continuing and applicable terms of this Bid, the NICT Act, and the terms and conditions of a contract to be entered into with the successful bidder.

Project Description:

Qualified MNOs are required to provide a cost-effective solution that is capable of improving mobile broadband service in certain blackspot areas in the selected areas in the country. In the context of mobile networks, "blackspots" refer to areas where mobile signal coverage is weak or nonexistent. The solution is expected to extend the current MNO's network using the same resources like spectrum and numbering, allowing users who live in or travel through the identified blackspots to obtain clear and consistent mobile broadband service.

3. PROJECT SCOPE

The project will cover blackspot areas in the following Provinces/Districts. The precise location, size, and quantity of blackspots to be covered will be determined jointly by the selected operator and NICTA, based on detailed review of locations in each District, and the selected MNO's plans and available budget. Bidders should provide preliminary estimates of the coverage they expect to provide in their proposals. This will be confirmed and refined during contract negotiations and project implementation.

Province	District
NCD	Moresby North East
	Moresby North West
	Moresby South
Central	Hiri-Koiari
Morobe	Lae
Western Highlands	Mt Hagen
East New Britain	Kokopo

The MNO awarded this contract will be responsible for the following tasks:

- Identify blackspot areas in the above selected districts together with geographical locations;
- Propose innovative technical solutions that will be deployed;
- Detail scope of work on task deliverables required to achieve successful implementation;
- Provide cost breakup for the deliverables described above for each respective proposed site location and
- Roll out and improve 4G services in the identified blackspot areas.

4. METHODOLOGY, PROPOSAL CONTENT, AND SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Bidders should include the following key information in their proposals:

- Preliminary indicative list of proposed project locations with geographical coordinates, based on initial survey and data regarding potential blackspots. To the extent possible, include detailed maps and geo-reference information, including proximity to existing network(s). Show current signal coverage and gaps.
- Detailed description of design, deployment and commissioning of the proposed infrastructure to be established in each location. Describe interconnection plans to existing network(s).
- Projected cost estimates of implementation on a per-site basis, and also for the entire project, broken down by Capex and Opex for a 5-year period.

5. REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL AND PROJECT TIMELINE

Request for Proposal Timeline:

All proposals are to be submitted via email ONLY to uas@nicta.gov.pg

Evaluation of proposals will be conducted within two weeks from the deadline of the submission. If additional information or discussions are needed with any bidders during this two-week window, the bidder(s) will be notified.

The selection decision for the winning bidder will be made one week after the evaluation of the proposals. Upon notification, the contract negotiation with the winning bidder will begin.

Notifications to bidders who were not selected will be done after the completion of the evaluation.

Project Timeline:

Bidding MNOs are to propose reasonable project timelines with respect to scope required to deliver this project.

6. BUDGET

The project will be funded by NICTA through the UAS Fund. A project amount of K990,000.00 has been set aside for this project.

The cost of the project will be negotiated with the MNO that NICTA agrees to engage. Payment of the project cost will be tied to the delivery of project milestones.

NOTE: All costs and fees must be clearly described in each proposal, dissected on a per site or per location basis.

7. BIDDER QUALIFICATIONS

Bidders should provide the following items as part of their proposal for consideration:

- Existing Mobile Network coverage
- Relevant individual Network and Spectrum licenses
- License compliance certificate from NICTA
- Experience from past or similar projects.
- Anticipated resources you will assign to this project (total site number, engineering parameters, solution description)
- A full testing plan
- Timeframe for completion of the project
- Project management methodology

8. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Price will be a significant factor in our evaluation, but not the sole factor. We are looking for a solution that delivers the best value with respect to investment. Proposals should demonstrate a clear understanding of project objective and how their pricing structure aligns with those objectives. NICTA will evaluate the proposals based on the following criteria:

- Minimum cost for maximum population coverage;
- Comprehensiveness of the MNO's understanding of the blackspot coverage challenge.
- Feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed solutions for addressing blackspots.
- MNO's experience and expertise in network deployment and management
- MNO's commitment to collaboration and achieving the projects objectives.
- Proven experience in deploying and managing mobile network infrastructure.
- Bidder must indicate any contributions to the cost of the project

- A strong track record of innovation in network expansion solution, particularly in remote or challenging environments.
- A commitment to providing high-quality and affordable 4G mobile services
- A willingness to collaborate with NICTA and other stakeholders to achieve the project's objectives.
- Compliance with regulatory obligations.

Proposals must be submitted by email only to uas@nicta.gov.pg.

9. PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATION

Regular communication and updates will be maintained between NICTA and the MNO.

Questions relating to this RFP may be directed to Mr. Roa Velekiri Acting Principal Project Officer Implementation on Telephone 3033 200 or email uas@nicta.gov.pg. Mr. Velekiri will oversee the project and facilitate communication

10. CHANGE MANAGEMENT

Any proposed changes to the project scope, schedule, or budget will be submitted in writing and approved by both parties.

11. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information submitted in proposals will be treated as confidential.