Bidders' Questions Regarding the Procurement Process:

Provision of psychosocial support services for Heinrich Böll Stiftung's staff in the international offices

Serial number	**Question**	***Answer***
1	Would a small team of two to three practitioners be eligible to apply, or is the tender primarily intended for larger, internationally established service providers?	*The tender is indeed intended for larger, internationally established service providers as we ask to cover a multitude of languages, contexts and time zones.*
2	Could you please share a breakdown of your staff headcount by country?	*The Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung is running 36 country offices. The average size of an office is around 10 persons.*
3	Do you currently work with a psychosocial support provider? If so, could you share what works well, what you would like to see improved, and your current utilization rate or approximate annual number of counselling sessions, if available?	*Until now, a handful of country offices have found tailor made solutions for PSS services within their contexts. A total number of sessions is not centrally recorded. What we intend to change with this service provision globally is to have one solution for all staff internationally that spans the institution as a whole. That would also allow for this kind of centralized tracking of service provision in terms of numbers.*
4	Can a self-employed accredited psychotherapist apply as an individual provider, or is the tender intended exclusively for established organisations?	*The tender is intended for larger, internationally established service providers as we ask to cover a multitude of languages, contexts and time zones*
5	Must the required five years of experience supporting NGO staff in high-stress environments be demonstrated by the bidding organisation itself, or can relevant professional experience gained by the individual provider through previous employment and cooperation arrangements be taken into account?	*This can be taken into account, if well explained in the narrative of the offer.*
6	Are three international NGO references a mandatory eligibility requirement? Can references from previous professional engagements,	*No, this is part of the verification method of one of the additional criteria, as opposed to the minimum criteria, that will be used to evaluate and compare bids from potential providers.*

	including work carried out as an employee or external consultant, be accepted where the provider did not hold the contract directly?	
7	Can an individual provider meet requirements for language coverage, continuity of service, backup during illness or leave, and relevant organisational experience through formally committed cooperation partners such as the ZTK or IFT? If so, can such partners' experience and references be considered in the evaluation?	*We do not know precisely what ZTK and IFT are. However, backup staff, who ideally are deployed only rarely, cannot be considered in the evaluation.*
8	Would it be possible to propose a hybrid pricing model consisting of a fixed monthly availability and coordination fee, covering the provision of an international counselling network, scheduling and administrative coordination, combined with a fee per counselling session delivered?	*This pricing model would be a possibility, please break this down clearly in the offer so we can review this in comparison to other service providers' pricing models.*
9	Section 1.4 of the Terms of Reference requires a minimum of five years of experience, while Document 2 scores this criterion at 10 percent. For a recently incorporated organization whose key personnel have more experience, can the combined experience of the organization and its key personnel be taken into account?	*It would be important to describe the experiences of the individual staff members and how they balance out the required minimum experience of the organisation as a whole.*
10	Where a provider does not itself hold ISO 27001 certification or a SOC 2 report, can the certificates of the processors that host its data, together with its data protection policy, satisfy the verification method for data security?	*Please describe the other processes of data protection and share the policy as part of your offer in order for this question to be assessed.*

11	Is the provider required to cover all languages spoken in HBS offices from the start of the contract, or may it set out a plan to extend language coverage during the contract, including through subcontracted counselors?	*We are looking for a provider to cover all offices of hbs worldwide, which is why we are seeking a provider who can at least offer services in English, Spanish, Arabic and French. Providers not able to cover those languages, must at least cover 2 out of them at the start of the contract and offer services in the remaining 2 languages within 6 months of the start of the contract. If you do not cover all languages, please specify which ones are missing and describe how you would subcontract counselors. hbs expects that subcontracted counselors meet the same requirements as stated in the call for tenders.*
12	Section 3.2 of the framework agreement provides for quarterly invoicing. Would HBS accept monthly invoicing?	*We highly prefer quarterly invoicing, even though monthly invoicing would also be possible.*
13	Can the HBS Code of Conduct, which will be Appendix 3 of the framework agreement, be shared before the deadline?	*We will add the Code of Conduct to the tender page on the website.*
14	Where a counselor practices in a country that does not regulate psychotherapy, or holds a license issued in another jurisdiction, does registration with a recognized professional body satisfy the requirement to be licensed or accredited in the country of practice?	*In this case, the counselors' experience should be made very clear, especially regarding their experience supporting NGO/human rights/activist staff working with high-stress, high-stakes environments. This can be accepted as long as it is transparently communicated before any sessions are held.*
15	We offer in addition to in-person sessions with specially trained psychologists, an app that can make access significantly more accessible. There are also potentially additional resources (videos, courses, etc.) available on a dedicated content platform that could serve as a useful supplement. In this regard, it would be important to determine whether or how such resources could be meaningfully incorporated into the call for proposals or if they are even feasible.	*Such resources are meaningful and can be understood as a supplementary resource for hbs staff worldwide. Please include it in the proposal and briefly describe the kinds of resources, the usages of the app and the costs.*

16	In order to calculate the “flat fee” you mentioned for a number of people exceeding the number specified in the documents, it would be helpful to have an understanding of the expected monthly case volume.	*The Heinrich-Böll-Stiftung is running 36 country offices. The average size of an office is around 10 persons. We do not have a concrete expectation of how many staff members will use the service, therefore it is not feasible at this point to determine an expected monthly volume of cases.*
17	We understand that the tender covers approximately 340 employees globally, with an average of around 10 employees per international office. However, our pricing team requires a country-level breakdown to accurately assess service delivery costs and prepare a competitive proposal. Would it be possible to share this information, even as an approximate breakdown? We fully understand that exact figures may not be available.	*At this moment, we cannot provide a detailed breakdown of the number of staff in all countries. Please make 10 active staff per country the basis for your calculation.*
18	We were unable to locate the complete tender documentation, particularly the Terms of Reference, Key Criteria for Provider Selection, and Contract Template referenced in the announcement. Would you kindly provide us with the complete tender package or direct us to where these documents can be downloaded?	*All of this information is in the first pdf on the same website: https://eu.boell.org/sites/default/files/2026-10/tender-documents-psychosocial-support-service-for-hbs-staff.pdf*

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