

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR) FOR INSTITUTIONAL CONTRACTORS

PART I		
Purpose of Assignment	To establish LTA for the provision of reliable, secure, and high-performance internet connectivity services to participating United Nations agencies in Iraq	
Location of Assignment	Iraq (Nationwide), including Baghdad, Basra, the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (Erbil, Sulaymaniyah, and Dohuk), as required by participating United Nations agencies.	
Duration of contract	2 Years, with the possibility of extending to 3 years.	
Start date	From: November 2026	To: 30 October 2028
Reporting to:		
Estimated Budget and Code:	N/A	
Is consultancy assignment in the approved AWP	Yes / No	
If, Yes, attach copy of the approved page		
If No, attach approved NFR/Justification for the consultancy		

Background

United Nations agencies operating in Iraq require reliable, secure, and high-performance internet connectivity across multiple locations, including headquarters, regional offices, and field sites. Given the operational dependency on digital platforms, cloud-based services, and communication systems, uninterrupted connectivity is critical to ensure continuity of operations and service delivery. UNICEF, on behalf of other UN Agencies in Iraq is coordinating this procurement process to establish Long-Term Arrangements (LTAs) for internet connectivity services that meet the evolving operational and technical requirements of UN agencies across Iraq.

Objectives, Purpose & Expected Results

The objective of this Terms of Reference (TOR) is to define the technical and operational requirements for establishing Long-Term Arrangements (LTAs) for the provision of reliable, secure, and scalable internet connectivity services to participating United Nations agencies across Iraq. The expected outcome is the selection of qualified Internet Service Provider(s) capable of delivering resilient, high-quality connectivity services that support business continuity, operational efficiency, and the evolving ICT requirements of participating UN agencies.

Description of the Assignment

The selected service provider(s) shall provide internet connectivity services in accordance with the technical and operational requirements defined below. The scope of work includes the provision, installation, operation, maintenance, monitoring, and support of connectivity services required by participating United Nations agencies throughout the contract period.

1. *The service provider shall deliver the primary internet connection through fiber optic connectivity for all the specified locations to ensure high-capacity, and reliable service.*

Where fiber connectivity is not feasible, the provider may propose an alternative solution, subject to technical justification and approval by the UN Agency. The alternative must demonstrate equivalent reliability, latency, and availability.

The internet connectivity service shall be provided on a Dedicated Internet Access (DIA), always-on basis, with unlimited data usage, traffic-independent flat line fee. The service shall not be subject to restriction of use (e.g. proxy servers, content filtering servers, quotas, etc.), shall support enterprise VPN connectivity, encrypted communication, and cloud-based services. Furthermore, the contracted bandwidth shall be dedicated to the requesting UN agency and shall not be oversubscribed with other customers.

The ISP shall be responsible for obtaining all required licenses and covering any associated activation fees, in accordance with local regulatory requirements. The service provider shall coordinate with relevant local authorities to obtain exemption to maintain connectivity for UN operations during period of enforced internet shutdown (e.g. during final exams period).

2. *The service provider shall provide a secondary (backup) connection for all locations to ensure service continuity in the event of primary link failure*

The backup connection must be independent from the primary link utilizing a different access technology and/or routing path where feasible and ensure redundancy for both last mile infrastructure and the upstream international connectivity. The backup solution shall minimize service disruption during failover and maintain service performance during backup operation.

The service provider shall maintain redundant upstream international internet connectivity through multiple international transit providers to ensure service continuity and optimal routing performance. The provider shall be capable of rerouting traffic through the most suitable available path in the event of upstream service degradation or interruption.

The service provider shall clearly describe the failover mechanism (auto/manual) and specify the estimated service restoration timelines.

3. *Where available, the service provider may propose satellite-based backup connectivity solutions (e.g., VSAT, Low Earth Orbit, or equivalent technologies like Starlink) as an optional tertiary backup service. Such proposals shall comply with all applicable Iraqi licensing and regulatory requirements.*

The service provider may include VSAT/LEO connectivity as an optional service offering, to be utilized by agencies based on operational requirements. VSAT/LEO service is intended for disaster recovery scenarios where terrestrial and wireless connectivity is unavailable. The service provider shall propose VSAT/LEO solution, including specification of bands, equipment types and lease options, and cost per bandwidth unit. The service provider shall propose options for hot standby service, where infrastructure is deployed without committed bandwidth allocation, ready for activation on demand, clearly describing activation procedures and timelines.

The provision of VSAT/LEO service is optional. While the bidders are encouraged to include it in their offers, failure to provide VSAT/LEO service options shall not render the proposal technically non-compliant, and bids will still be considered for other connectivity services offered.

4. *The service provider shall provide sufficient public IP address allocation per site to meet operational requirements. As minimum, the provider shall provide 6 (/29) usable public IP addresses per agency connection with ability to scale upon request.*
5. *The service provider shall provide a free trial period of at least two (2) weeks prior to service acceptance, to validate service compatibility, performance, and stability. During this period, UN Agencies shall verify delivered bandwidth, latency, stability, and compatibility with UN agency systems and applications including those requiring enterprise VPN access. Any issues identified during the trial period shall be rectified by the service provider. Service acceptance shall be subject to successful performance during the trial period and failure to meet the required operational criteria may result in rejection of the service.*
6. *The service provider shall supply all equipment required for the delivery of the connectivity service, including routers, switches, antennas and associated components. All equipment provided shall be fit for purpose and capable of supporting the agreed bandwidth and performance requirements. The service provider is responsible for installation, configuration, maintenance, upgrade and support of the equipment throughout the contract period at no additional cost, while ensuring minimal service disruption during maintenance activities. The equipment shall remain the property of the service provider and shall be retrieved upon the completion of the contract.*
7. *UN agencies shall provide the space for installation of the equipment and coordinate access to data center rooms and communication towers as needed.*
8. *The service provider shall provide 24/7/365 technical support and helpdesk services throughout the contract period, including remote troubleshooting, incident response and onsite support when required. The service restoration timelines and applicable SLA commitments and escalation matrix shall be clearly specified in the technical proposal.*

The service provider shall notify the affected UN agency in advance of any planned maintenance activities that may impact service availability and shall perform such activities during agreed maintenance windows whenever possible.

9. *The service provider shall provide continuous monitoring of the connectivity using tools such as PRTG, MRTG or any equivalent tool, showing service availability, uptime and utilization...etc.*
10. *As part of the technical proposal, the service provider shall submit evidence of network performance and routing quality through testing results (e.g., ping and traceroute) conducted from within Iraq. The submitted results shall demonstrate connectivity to regional and international destinations, including major SaaS providers such as Microsoft, AWS and Google, clearly showing the routing paths used to reach these destinations, along with network performance metrics. The purpose of this requirement is to evaluate the provider's upstream connectivity, routing efficiency, and reliability, as well as to identify any geographical or access restrictions that may impact service quality.*
11. *The service provider shall coordinate with the respective UN agency prior to service activation to confirm bandwidth allocation, equipment deployment, licensing, and activation arrangements.*

In locations where multiple UN agencies operate within shared premises, connectivity infrastructure and related equipment may be shared where feasible, to optimize resource utilization and cost efficiency.

Deliverables, timelines and payment schedule

Deliverables	Timeline	Schedule of Payment
<i>Provision, installation, testing, and activation of internet connectivity services in accordance with the issued Purchase Order/Contract.</i>	<i>As agreed with the requesting UN Agency.</i>	<i>No payment.</i>
<i>Continuous provision of internet connectivity services in accordance with the agreed SLA throughout the contract period.</i>	<i>Monthly during the contract period.</i>	<i>Monthly, upon satisfactory delivery of the services and submission of a valid invoice.</i>
<i>Provision of 24/7 technical support, preventive and corrective maintenance, monitoring, and incident resolution in accordance with the agreed SLA.</i>	<i>Throughout the contract period.</i>	<i>Included in the monthly service fee.</i>

Reporting Requirements

The service provider shall submit reports and information as requested by the participating UN Agency throughout the contract period. Reporting requirements shall be on an as-needed basis and may include, but are not limited to:

- *Incident and outage reports;*
- *Service performance and SLA compliance reports;*
- *Network utilization and monitoring reports;*
- *Planned maintenance notifications;*
- *Root cause analysis (RCA) reports for major incidents; and*
- *Any other technical or operational information reasonably requested by the participating UN Agency.*

All reports shall be submitted electronically in an agreed format and within the timeframe specified by the requesting UN Agency.

Location and Duration

The services shall be provided at the premises of participating United Nations agencies across Iraq, including headquarters, regional offices, and field locations, as specified in individual service requests or purchase orders issued under the resulting Long-Term Arrangement (LTA).

To ensure optimal performance and cost-effectiveness, the ISP can submit offer/s to provide Internet service/s for specific geolocation and connection type as listed below, the indicated figures are estimates for planning purposes only and may be adjusted based on operational requirements, they do not constitute a commitment by participating UN agency to procure the indicated bandwidth volume:

Location	Type	Total Estimated Bandwidth (Mbps)
<i>Baghdad</i>	<i>Terrestrial (Fiber Optic/Wireless Link)</i>	<i>850</i>
	<i>VSAT</i>	<i>10/10</i>
<i>KRI (Erbil, Suli, Dohuk)</i>	<i>Terrestrial (Fiber Optic/Wireless Link)</i>	<i>400</i>
	<i>VSAT</i>	<i>5/5</i>
<i>Basra</i>	<i>Terrestrial (Fiber Optic/Wireless Link)</i>	<i>40</i>
	<i>VSAT</i>	<i>-</i>

The locations listed above represent current known requirements only. During the validity of the resulting LTA, participating UN agencies may request services in any governorate within Iraq, including newly established field offices, temporary locations, or emergency response sites. Such requests shall be subject to technical feasibility, agreed timelines, and applicable quotation under the LTA.

The resulting Long-Term Arrangement (LTA) shall be valid for three (3) years from the effective date of contract award. The duration of individual service orders shall be determined by the participating UN Agency in accordance with its operational requirements.

Qualification Requirements

1. *Valid company registration documents and all applicable licenses required to provide internet connectivity services in Iraq, with permanent technical and managerial presence within the country.*
2. *Minimum five (5) years of experience in providing and managing internet connectivity services in Iraq, demonstrated through similar projects for government, private sector, or international organizations.*
3. *Demonstrated financial capability through recent audited financial statements or equivalent financial documentation.*
4. *Adequate technical resources, qualified personnel, and relevant expertise to deliver, operate, maintain, and support the proposed services throughout the contract period.*

Evaluation process and methods

Initial Mandatory Evaluation Pass/Fill approach:

Bidders shall meet all mandatory requirements below to qualify for the detailed technical evaluation. Failure to comply with any mandatory requirement will result in the proposal being considered non-responsive.

Mandatory Requirements	Supporting Documents	Score
<i>Lead bidder is a legal entity regulated and licensed Internet Service Provider in Iraq.</i>	<i>Registration with the relevant governmental authorities in Iraq (e.g., CMC, ITPC, KRG MoTC, as applicable).</i>	<i>Pass/Fail</i>
<i>Service Level Agreement</i>	<i>Confirm maintaining the connection availability for maximum throughput guaranteed through SLA of 99.5% or above. Evidence from previous similar projects is required</i>	<i>Pass/Fail</i>
<i>Support and Monitoring</i>	<i>The bidder shall demonstrate the capability to provide:</i> - <i>24/7/365 technical support;</i> - <i>Continuous service monitoring;</i> - <i>Remote incident response within one (1) hour;</i> - <i>Onsite support within two (2) hours for Baghdad locations and within twenty-four (24) hours for all other service locations;</i> - <i>An escalation matrix;</i> - <i>Designated operational and technical contact details;</i> - <i>Remote technical assistance for vendor-supplied equipment.</i>	<i>Pass/Fail</i>

Then Bid shall be evaluated based on technical and financial criteria. The ratio weight between technical and financial criteria is (60:40).

Technical Evaluation (60)

Technical Evaluation Criteria	Calculation of Points	Max. Points Obtainable
Company experience in delivering and managing internet connectivity services of similar scope and complexity, demonstrated through successful project implementation and client portfolio. Evaluation shall consider the relevance, complexity, and successful delivery of similar projects, as well as the diversity and profile of the client's portfolio.	Evaluation will consider number of years in business, number of successful projects, and portfolio and size of previous clients - Limited relevant experience (e.g. small offices, small enterprise customers. Projects of limited complexity). = 3-4 Points - Adequate relevant experience (e.g. governmental, international organizations of comparable scope) = 5-7 Points - Extensive experience (e.g. multiple comparable large-scale projects, multi-site deployments, different mission critical sectors, supported by positive client references, and proven success of similar contract execution. = 8-10 Points	10
Experience in delivering similar internet connectivity services to government entities, international organizations, or enterprise customers. Bidders shall provide at least two (2) client references, including contact details, for contracts of similar scope and complexity. Client reference including organization name, project description, contract period, scope of services, and contact details of the client representative.	- No clients = 0 Points - 2 clients = 5 points - 3-4 clients = 8 points - 5+ Clients = 10 Points	10
Guaranteed service availability (SLA) for the proposed internet connectivity service. The minimum acceptable guaranteed uptime is 99.5%. Bidders shall provide evidence of SLA performance through reports or references from similar contracts.	- Below 99.5% = 0 Points - ≥99.5% = 10 Points - ≥99.6% = 11 Points - ≥99.8% = 13 Points - ≥99.9% = 15 Points	15

<i>Technical approach and implementation methodology, including the proposed network architecture, backbone and upstream connectivity, last-mile solution, redundancy, routing quality, and overall compliance with the technical requirements defined in the Description of Assignment.</i>	- Implementation approach is incomplete or does not adequately address the TOR requirements. = 0-5 Points - Implementation approach addresses most technical requirements with an acceptable network design and implementation methodology = 6-10 Points - Comprehensive implementation approach demonstrating a robust network architecture, resilient backbone and upstream connectivity, appropriate last-mile design, redundancy, routing quality, and full compliance with the TOR requirements. = 11-15 Points	15
<i>Technical resources and support capability, including the qualifications, experience, and availability of the proposed technical personnel responsible for implementation, operation, maintenance, monitoring, and support of the services.</i>	- Limited technical resources or unclear support structure = 3-4 Points - Adequate technical resources with qualified personnel and acceptable support coverage = 5-7 Points - Strong technical resources with experienced personnel, clear support structure, 24/7 availability, escalation matrix, and proven operational capability = 8-10 Points	10
<i>Total out of 60 Technical Score (Minimum Passing Score is 42)</i>		60
<i>Total out of 40 Financial Score</i>		40
SUMMARY OF TECHNICAL & FINANCIAL SCORE		100

Minimum technical score: 70% of 60 points = 42 points

FINANCIAL EVALUATION (40 points)

Only those financial proposals for bidders which have been technically accepted according to the above criteria will be opened. The Financial proposal will be weighted based on the clarity and appropriateness.

The price should be broken down for each component of the proposed work. The total amount of points allocated for the price component is **xx**. The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price proposal that is opened and compared among those invited firms/institutions which obtain the threshold points in the evaluation of the technical component. All other price proposals will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price; e.g.:

$$\text{Score for price proposal X} = \frac{\text{Max. Score for price proposal} * \text{Price of lowest priced proposal}}{\text{Price of proposal X}}$$

The Contract shall be awarded to a bidder obtaining the highest combined technical and financial scores. Proposals not complying with the terms and conditions contained in this ToR, including the provision of all required information, may result in the Proposal being deemed non-responsive and therefore not considered further.

Please **note: The financial offer must remain valid for 120 days from the closing date of the tender.**

Administrative issues

- *Bidder should provide an all-inclusive cost in the financial proposal.*
- *Bidder should factor in all cost implications for the required service / assignment*

Project Management

The day-to-day activities of the contract shall be coordinated by the participating UN agency utilizing the services under the LTA. The ISP shall designate technical and commercial focal points to ensure effective communication and timely resolution of operational matters throughout the contract period.