



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FOR EXTERNAL AUDIT OF EAST AND HORN OF AFRICA HUMAN RIGHTS DEFENDERS PROJECT (DEFENDDEFENDERS)

PROCUREMENT REFERENCE NO: DD/SERVICES/2025-2026/001

Client: DefendDefenders (East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project)
Lotis Tower, Plot 16, Mackinnon Road Nakasero
P.O.BOX 70356.

FEBRUARY 2025

Request for Proposals

The DefendDefenders, requests for proposals/bids for External Audit of East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders.

The request for proposal document is attached to this call.

In response to this request, the bidder must submit a technical and financial proposal.

Both the technical and financial proposals should be addressed to and sent to:

Head of Procurement

DefendDefenders

Lotis Tower, Plot 16, Mackinnon Road Nakasero

P.O.BOX 70356,

Email: procurement@defenddefenders.org,

Proposals/bids should be submitted before **17:00hrs** (Ugandan local time) **on Monday, March 03, 2025**

Late submissions shall not be accepted.

Thank you.

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Head Procurement

1.0 Instructions to Proposers

The bidder is to read carefully the instructions set out below. No claim will be entertained on the grounds of failure either to read or comply neither with the instructions nor for any alleged misunderstanding of their meaning.

1.1 Request for Clarifications

For any inquiries regarding this request write to the Procurement Team on email address procurement@defenddefenders.org, cc Alexl@defenddefenders.org provided your request does not concern the prices for these services. This request must be sent prior to 17:00hrs on **Friday 21st March 2025**.

Should there be any doubt or obscurity as to the meaning of any word or phrase or terms or conditions in the request for proposals document or anything to be done or not to be done by the eventual contractor, or to these instructions, or as to any other matter or anything pertaining to the eventual contract, the bidder must submit such doubt or obscurity in writing. Any clarification so issued will form part of the contract documents.

DefendDefenders is not obliged to provide explanations regarding requests made after the closing date. Results will not be made public. **Any lobbying will lead to automatic disqualification.**

1.2 Cost of Preparing the Proposals

The proposer shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of his/her proposal and DefendDefenders will in no case be responsible or liable for these costs regardless of the conduct or outcome of the proposal's solicitation process.

1.3 Taxes and Duties

DefendDefenders will withhold 6% tax for Ugandan based consultants or 15% for foreign consultants except for those with WHT exemption from Uganda Revenue Authority. Your offer should, therefore, be inclusive of all taxes and any other levies.

1.4 Format and Signing of Proposals

The proposer shall prepare the **Technical Proposal** and the **Financial Proposal**. The proposals shall be typed and signed by the person or persons duly authorised to bind the bidder to the eventual contract. The **Proposal** shall be signed as per the prescribed **Proposal Submission Form** without alterations, except those in accordance with instructions issued by DefendDefenders.

1.5 Examination and Evaluation of Proposals

Information relating to the examination, clarification, evaluation and comparison of proposals and recommendations for award shall not be disclosed to bidders or any other persons not officially concerned with such processes until the award to the successful proposer has been announced. Any effort by the proposer to influence DefendDefenders' processing of the proposals or award decisions will result in automatic rejection of his proposal.

To assist in the examination, evaluation and comparison of the proposals, DefendDefenders may, at its discretion, ask any proposer for clarification of their proposal including breakdown of the unit rates. The request for clarification and the response shall be in writing, but no change in the price or substance of the proposal shall be sought, offered or permitted except as required to confirm the correction of arithmetic errors discovered by DefendDefenders in the evaluation of the proposals.

1.6 Evaluation Methodology

The evaluation methodology to be used for the evaluation of bids received shall be the Quality and Cost Based selection (QCBS) methodology. The Quality and Cost Based selection methodology recommends the highest scoring bid, which is substantially responsive to the technical and financial requirements of the Bidding Document where Technical Shall be 70% and financial 30%. The evaluation shall be conducted in two sequential stages-

- a) The technical quality of bids against set criteria on a merit point system, to determine the technical score of each technical bid.
- b) A financial comparison to determine the financial score of each financial bid, and to determine the total score of each bid.
- c) For any financial proposals that shall not be in Ugandan Shillings the Prevailing info Euro rate for the deadline day shall be used to convert the proposal for purposes of evaluation.
- d) The **minimum technical score** required to pass the technical evaluation is: 50 points. **Bids scoring less than this will be rejected.**

1.6.1 Determination of Best Evaluated Bidders

That bid achieving the highest combined technical and financial score shall be the Best Evaluated Bid.

1.6.2 Determination of responsiveness

Prior to the detailed evaluation of the proposals, DefendDefenders will determine whether each proposal is substantially responsive to the requirements of the request for proposals. A substantially responsive proposal is the one, which conforms to all the terms, conditions and terms of reference of the request for proposals without material deviation or reservation. A material deviation or reservation is one:

- a) Which affects in any substantial way the scope, quality, or performance of the services.
- b) Which limits in any substantial way, inconsistent with the request for proposals, DefendDefenders rights or the proposer's obligation under the eventual contract?
- c) Whose rectification would affect unfairly the competitive position of other proposers presenting substantially responsive proposals.

If a proposal is not substantially responsive, DefendDefenders will reject it.

1.7 Correction of Errors

Proposals determined to be substantially responsive will be checked by DefendDefenders for any arithmetic errors in computation and summation. Errors will be corrected as follows: The corrected errors, with the concurrence of the proposer, shall be binding upon the proposer. If

the proposer does not accept the corrections made of the proposal, his/her proposal will be rejected.

1.8 Technical and Financial Proposals

The technical proposals shall be submitted guided by the Terms of Reference and Application Format for the technical Proposal in the RFP. The financial proposal shall be submitted guided by the budget format.

DefendDefenders reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal and to annul the solicitation process without incurring any liability to the affected bidders or any obligation to inform them of the grounds for DefendDefenders' action.

1.9 Signing of the Contract

After DefendDefenders notifying a successful proposer that his/her proposal has been accepted, DefendDefenders will send a copy of the contract to the successful bidder and within **five days** of receipt of the contract, the bidder shall sign and date the contract and return it to DefendDefenders.

1.10 Proposal Validity

The proposals shall remain valid and open for acceptance for a period of **30 days** from the date of closing.

1.11 CURRENCY OF PROPOSAL

Offers are to be made in **Uganda Shillings**.

Please note that the prospected contract will be in Uganda Shillings, any proposals or offers that shall be made is a currency other than the one specified shall be converted to Uganda shillings using the info Euro exchange rate on the Date of Bid closing.

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Schedule of events is as follows:

Activity	Date
a. Issue of invitation to bid letter	10 th February 2024
b. Request for clarifications	<i>10 working days from issue date</i>
c. Proposal closing date (Receipt of bids)	3 rd March 2025 at 17:00hrs
d. Evaluation process	12 th March 2025
e. Display and communication of award	20 th March, 2025

Proposals Submission Form

We understand and agree to the request for proposal with all the terms and conditions as stipulated in the instructions to bidders, the terms and conditions of the contract and the Annexes.

We undertake that if our proposal is accepted, and the contract is awarded to us, we shall start offering the services immediately in accordance with the contract commencement date and shall render the whole services required in this contract.

We understand that DefendDefenders is not bound to accept the lowest financial proposal or any proposal you may receive and DefendDefenders shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by us in the preparation of these proposals.

We agree that the prices we have quoted are to be fixed and valid from the date of submission of the proposals and not subject to variation throughout the eventual contract period.

We further agree that we shall follow all the security and other DefendDefenders requirements as will be directed by DefendDefenders in the implementation of the contract.

Signed:

Name:

Title.....

For and on behalf of.....

(Name of Proposing Firm).

Dated thisday of2025.

(Affix Company seal or official stamp)

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Terms of Reference for the External Audit of East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Project (DefendDefenders).

(1) Background to DefendDefenders

DefendDefenders was established as a regional non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Uganda in 2005, as a result of an extensive field research in the sub-region. The research identified vulnerability and complex challenges faced by Human Rights Defenders (HRDs), and the need for strong structures to promote and protect their work and well-being. DefendDefenders serves as the secretariat of East and Horn of Africa Human Rights Defenders Network (EHAHRD-Net) representing hundreds of HRDs and human rights organisations. DefendDefenders is also a member of AfricanDefenders (the Pan-African Human Rights Defenders Network).

The NGO strengthens the work of HRDS throughout the region by reducing their vulnerability to the risk of persecution and by enhancing their capacity to effectively defend human rights. DefendDefenders focuses its work on Burundi, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Somali (together with Somaliland), South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania and Uganda. DefendDefenders also does work elsewhere in Africa.

DefendDefenders wishes to engage a reputable licensed audit firm to provide annual external audit services for the year 2025.

(2) Objective and Scope of Work

(a) Audit Objective

To audit annual financial statements and provide an independent professional opinion on the financial statements prepared by management as to whether they comply with the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). These financial statements shall be a consolidation of all donor activities carried out during the financial year.

The audit firm will also be required to perform specific project audits when required. Specific project audits shall be performed based on specific ToR's provided by each donor these may require applying ISA 800/805 and ISRS4400.

The additional assignment according to agree upon procedures ISRS 4400 shall be reported separately in a "Report of factual findings". The size of the sample of reviewed audit reporting shall be stated in the report. The reporting shall be signed by the responsible auditor (not just the audit firm) and shall include the title of the responsible auditor.

(b) Specific Activities to be undertaken

The specific activities to be undertaken by the auditor shall include:

- Plan and perform audit tests to obtain reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatements and comply with donor agreements
- Provide a schedule for information requests in time for management to compile and provide this information, ready for the assignment to proceed seamlessly. This should be done before the fieldwork starts
- Audit the financial statements of DefendDefenders and express an opinion as to whether the financial statements present fairly in all material respects and in

conformity with the basis of accounting, the use of funds in accordance with policies and procedures of the organisation.

- Plan the audit to give reasonable assurance that the financial statements are free from material misstatement and that all payment vouchers and their supporting documents are present. And that there is a clear audit trail for the expenditure items charged to respective budget lines.
- Review the internal controls in order to determine whether the organisation's management has put in place satisfactory controls aimed at preventing, detecting, reducing or eliminating errors and irregularities. Identify any material weaknesses in accounting and financial processes/control systems.
- Provide a report on the financial statements for all the projects and include recommendations where any weaknesses are found.
- Report and alert DefendDefenders to relevant technical accountancy and financial issues which affect routine basis. The auditor may be required to attend meetings with DefendDefenders senior management, for an understanding of the approach to the audit and DD to have some input into that.
- Upon completion of the draft audit report and management letter, the auditor will be required to meet with DefendDefenders management to debrief them on major findings from the audit and recommendations for future improvements, as well as to seek their feedback thereon.
- Provide timely preferably daily feedback to management on the status of the audit findings that have come to the auditor attention during the period of execution.
- Verify that in cases of country-specific work, Sida funds can only be used for activities in countries included in the DAC-list of ODA Recipients, in accordance with what is stipulated in the Grant Agreement article 3.6
- Verify that DefendDefenders` follows their routines for emergency grants and general protection grants expressed in DefendDefenders` Grants Procedure according to what is stipulated in Grant Agreement article 7.10.
- Verify that Sida funding is not used to build up organizational reserve funds and for purchase of an office house.

(3) Key Deliverables

(a) Audit Report

This shall include the audited financial statements and auditor's opinion as to whether the financial statements are presented fairly, in all material respects, in accordance with international audit standards (ISA) issued by The International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board (IAASB).

(b) Management Letter

The auditor shall issue a management letter detailing the main observations and recommendations arising from the audit. The management letter shall contain the audit findings made during the audit process, measures that have been taken as a result of previous audits and whether measures taken have been adequate to deal with the reported shortcomings.

The auditor is expected to make recommendations to address any internal control weaknesses identified and present such recommendations in priority.

(4) Audit Time Frame

The Auditor should be able to comply with the timelines of the Audit as shall be agreed during the pre-audit meeting

(5) Assignment Coordination

The Auditor will be assisted by management working closely with the DefendDefenders Finance Team.

(6) Qualifications of the Firm

The Audit firm should possess the following minimum qualifications:

The audit firm should be registered by the Institute of Certified Accountants of Uganda (ICPA-U).

a. Audit Team Experience and Qualifications:

- The Audit Partner should have more than 15 years leading audit engagement involving institutional audits of NGOs that receive funding from multiple donors
- The Audit Partner should be licenced by the Institute of Certified Public Accountants of Uganda (ICPAU), able and present to practice in Uganda, and should attach a copy of the current Practicing License for the firm for the year 2025.
- The Audit Manager should have more than seven years audit experience of NGOs and should be a full member of ICPAU;
- Audit firm should confirm availability to execute the Audit assignment, and this confirmation should be attached to the proposal;
- The Audit Teams should have experience for carrying out institutional audit of NGOS funded by multiple donors;
- The firm should demonstrate ability to deliver the assignment within the agreed timelines.

b. Competencies

- Knowledge of Microsoft office applications
- Good communications skills
- Proficiency in English, but French and/or Arabic will be an added advantage
- Demonstrated analytical skills
- Teamwork

(7) Evaluation Criteria

Technical evaluation will carry a weight of 70%. Financial evaluation will carry a weight of 30%

No	Item	Maximum number of points obtainable
1.	<p>Proposed Methodology, Approach and Implementation Plan</p> <p>a) Understanding of the requirement - 5 points</p> <p>b) Description of the Audit Firm approach and methodology for meeting or exceeding the requirements of the Terms of Reference - 20 points</p> <p>c) Assessment of the proposed work plan- 5 points</p>	30
2.	Bidder's Qualification, Capacity and experience/Expertise of the Firm in similar assignments	10
3.	Management Structure and Key Personnel composition and structure of the team proposed. Are the proposed roles of the management and the team of key personnel necessary for the provision of services?	30
4.	Total	70

(8) Financial proposal

Scope of price proposal and Schedule of payments

- i. Summary of the total fees
- ii. Detailed Breakdown of the professional daily fees, disbursements and any other fees

(9) Request for clarifications and Submission details:

Proposals should be submitted in English in hard copy or soft clearly marked "**Proposal for External Audit Services**" to be delivered in a written form to the Physical address or email below in person or courier to reach not later than 17:00 pm (Local time) on 21st February 2025 to procurement@defenddefenders.org

All requests for clarification should be in writing

Addressed to.

Executive Director
DefendDefenders
Arie tower, Plot 16, Mackinnon Road
Nakasero P.O.Box 70356 Kampala
4TH Floor

Request for clarification should be directed to the email: procurement@defenddefenders.org

The technical and financial proposals should be separate and clearly labelled.

Defend Defenders reserves the right to alter the Schedule of Events. Alterations shall be communicated to Bidders by email. In addition, bidders have full responsibility for the costs of preparation and submission of the proposals.

MANAGEMENT