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REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

“For Hiring Resource Agency for a Pilot Project to Install Solar Photovoltaic Charging Station for Rechargeable Solar Lanterns, in Jaunpur, Mirzapur and Sant Ravidas Nagar of Uttar Pradesh, India”

UNDP has launched a project on women’s empowerment with support from IKEA Social Initiative. The project titled “Strengthening Women’s Social, Economic and Political Empowerment in Jaunpur, Mirzapur and Sant Ravidas Nagar of Uttar Pradesh”. This is an add-on component to the IKEA supported UNICEF Child Rights Project, also known as the Bal Adhikar Pariyojana (BAP), implemented during 2000-07. UNDP builds on the social empowerment processes initiated under BAP by adopting an integrated approach to strengthen simultaneously all key dimensions of women’s empowerment –social, economic and political and reach out to 50,000 women in 500 villages in the aforesaid districts. The key objective of the project is to ensure that women supported secure enhanced income levels and effectively participate and contribute to decision-making in domestic and public spheres by 2013.

To overcome economic impediments in the project area such as high poverty levels, depleting livelihood options, out migration, skewed literacy rates and poor asset access of women, one of the critical focus areas planned under this project include economic empowerment of women. The overall aim of this is to ensure that ‘Economic enterprises of women are established and/or strengthened for enhanced household income by 2013’.

The project area covers a large number of rural villages that are not connected to the grid or with very few hours of electric supply every day. In this context, a pilot project aiming at setting up a business model for the rental of rechargeable solar lanterns is envisaged. This will require the creation of solar photovoltaic charging stations for rechargeable lanterns, and the training of a Panchayat Energy Committee (PEC) and Village Technicians in the maintenance of the charging station and the rental and maintenance of the solar lanterns.

In order to link the projects objective of providing economic empowerment through micro businesses, the need for lighting and power in the project area and UNDP's support to alternative energy, UNDP Requests for Quotations from consultants and organisations to implement the above pilot project.

Methodology

The selected organisation will first visit the project area to assess the economic and infrastructure conditions of the villages where the charging stations to be installed. A meeting with the partners in the field will be held to discuss the implementation plan proposed by the selected organisation.

5 SHGs will be identified based on the finalised 5 locations and a few of their members will be identified as potential entrepreneurs to do the business. This exercise will be done with close association with (Community Facilitating Organisation) CFO who are working in the field for the project and Project Monitoring Unit (PMU) based at Varanasi. A common business plan will be developed for the business and this will be shared to all stakeholders and the selected entrepreneurs. The training required for running the enterprise will be provided to the entrepreneurs.

All equipment will be procured and all charging stations will set up in partnership with the local CFOs and their field staff. A Panchayat Energy Committee (PEC) will be set up under the chairmanship of the Panchayat President, having a majority of members belonging to the project Self Help Groups including selected entrepreneurs.

The selected organisation will train the PEC and its members on the maintenance of the charging station and the solar lamps. The selected entrepreneurs will be responsible for the running of the rental of solar lamps micro business. The end user, at household level will be trained initially by the entrepreneurs under the supervision of the selected organisation, and later on only by the entrepreneurs.

Once the project is set up, the equipment supplier will remain responsible for the warranty of all equipment, but the selected organisation will act as the interlocutor and interface with which the project will communicate and interact in order to ensure that any defective equipment will be replaced.

Description of Duties:

The organisation selected to take up this pilot project will have to work in partnership with local CFOs and the UNDP team in Varanasi, to set up 5 solar charging stations in 5 rural villages that are off the grid or very poorly supplied in the project area. These charging stations will have the capacity to charge 20 solar lanterns each. Below are the tasks that the selected organisation will have to take up.

1. Assessment of the field level requirement with Beneficiaries, CFOs, Panchayats, Government officials, organisations working for wide spread use of solar energy and PMU,etc
2. Form 5 Panchayat Energy Committies and organise 5 sensitization workshops to the Panchayat and bring them as potential stakeholders for the project.
3. Develop a strategy for intervention with economically viable business plan for the project locations incorporating schemes or programmes offered by various agencies.
4. Identify, procure and source all equipment to the best standards of the market considering its rural and rough usage.
 - a. Procure all equipment for solar charging stations such as solar panels, sockets, batteries, etc.
 - b. Procure rechargeable lanterns for rental to the local households.
5. Set up charging stations in 5 villages identified in partnership with local CFOs and PMU
 - a. Identify premises
 - b. Set up the charging station
6. Training provided to Panchayat and the selected entrepreneurs to maintain the charging station and the lanterns
7. Provide a guarantee to the charging stations and lanterns set up, and an interface with the supplier's warranty of equipment for a period of two years.
 - a. Monitor the project on a quarterly basis for two years.
 - b. Remain the interface for all equipment failure and claiming of warranty with the suppliers

Specifications

Portable lantern

- Rugged, dust proof design
- Min. 120 Lumen output for 6 hours after full charge
- Light output should not decrease more than 15% from initial value after 1000 hours
- Output for mobile phone charging with appropriate cable adapter
- Charging possible through solar panel as well as 12V back up battery
- 2 years warranty

Solar module

- IEC 61215 certified
- 20 years warranty on energy output performance with not more than 1% degradation per year
- 20 years warranty on overall workmanship

Deliverables and timelines:

The project will have an implementation period of 3 months to set up the charging stations and train the PECs and entrepreneurs. This will be followed by a period of 21 months of monitoring. However, the key deliverables would be:

1. Assessment report and Implementation plan
2. Sensitized 5 Panchayat Energy Committees in
3. Procurement of all equipment required as per the specifications and quality norms
4. Finalisation of 5 locations and installation and setting up of charging stations
5. Training of selected 5 entrepreneurs
6. A report of the process with suggestions for up-scaling

Required expertise:

The organisation must have:

- 5 years minimum experience in the business of installing, maintaining and servicing solar energy systems and system components in India.
- Proven experience and understanding of the context of rural India.
- A solid understanding of sustainable livelihoods, financial inclusion, women's empowerment is an advantage
- Willingness to undertake regular field visits and interact with different stakeholders, particularly primary stakeholders
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills
- Working experiences in Uttar Pradesh an advantage

Documentation Required for Proposal

Interested agencies may submit their proposal to UNDP in the following format:

1. Profile of the organization (1/2 page)

Brief overview of the organization including year of establishment, main areas of expertise (thematic and sector), past client organizations (credentials), financial particulars (revenue size etc), geographic scope of work and contact information of key focal point.

2. Relevant Experience (1 page)

Summary of relevant experience in installing, maintaining and servicing solar energy system components in India

3. CVs of Team Members (attach separately)

Curriculum Vitae of team members from the Agency's own organization or external experts who will be a part of the team. (Note: These members should be available for the assignment.)

4. A separate Financial Proposal (containing details of personal fees, travel, other expected costs, etc.)

How to Apply:-

Technical as well as Financial proposals should be preferably sent by email to bids.india@undp.org Or addressed to the Procurement Division, United Nations Development Programme, 55, Lodi Estate, New Delhi-110003.

Deadline for submission is 1700 hrs India Time on 14th August 2010.

Note: Bidders must mention the RFP Title / RFP Reference No. in their mail.