

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR PROGRAMMING ASSISTANCE

The Bahamas Customs administration wishes to engage external software programming resources to assist the Customs IT department upgrade some components of its existing Customs Automated System (CAS).

Background

Bahamas Customs is the lead agency with responsibility for the regulatory clearance of goods at the point of import and export. The Customs administration is responsible for the collection of customs duties, excise, stamp and departure taxes on behalf of the government.

Persons importing, exporting or warehousing commercial goods are required to complete a formal Customs Declaration. Modes of transport, ships and aircraft carrying commercial goods are required to deposit a cargo manifest with Customs.

Currently the Customs Administration of Bahamas receives Customs declarations by paper. Manifest data is received both in paper format and electronically using a simple EDI solution. This solution is based on bespoke software using host-on-demand services to accept manifest data from shipping companies. These companies send the manifest as a flat file attachment to an email, which Customs manually loads into the CAS system. Consideration needs to be taken of the investment already made by these companies who have modified their systems to provide this email and electronic manifest to Customs. The current usage of EDI is only in one direction from clients to Customs, there is no capability for Customs to send electronic responses to clients.

Customs officers enter the information contained on these forms into the Customs Automated system (CAS). CAS is an IT application designed to carry out data validation and consistency checks, calculate the correct taxes payable and, along with a separate risk management system, manage the regulatory clearance process which allows the commercial operator take goods out of Customs control.

Current Technical Environment

The Bahamas Customs System (CAS) operates in the following environment:

- application written using Visual Age Generator (IBM) in a client environment but compiled to COBOL on the AS/400
- database is IBM DB2
- application runs on an AS400 server.
- Number of database tables for the manifest and customs declarations is 20
- Number of indexes is 15.
- Data entry screens 270

Bahamas Customs has limited in house programming and technical resources available.

A schematic diagram of the database structure is provided as annex I to this document.

Basic facts and figures

Number of manifests processed through CAS annually	10,000
Number of Customs declarations processed through CAS annually	211000
Maximum size of a manifest (kilobytes in database)	90 Kb
Maximum size of a Customs declaration (kilobytes in database)	70 Kb
Number of registered Customs brokers ¹	60

Requirements for software programming

Lot 1

Customs is currently reviewing its IT application requirements with a view to either replacing or carrying out a major upgrade to the CAS system. During this review process it has been decided to carry out a limited number of short term upgrades to the existing system. These upgrades are summarised as follows:

- Make the official tariff goods description available. The official tariff is used to identify commodity codes and their associated tax regimes and other regulatory requirements (licenses, etc.). Currently Customs officers entering data into CAS do not have online access to the goods descriptions linked to each specific commodity code. Input screens will need to be modified to allow this feature.
- Managing letters of guarantee. Adding a reference code to the CAS application to match letters of guarantee to calculated duty and tax amounts for each declaration.
- Manage the writing off of temporary importations that are re-exported. Goods that are temporarily imported are entered in to the CAS application. When these goods are re-exported an export form needs to be completed. Currently there is no way to match the export declaration data against the temporary importation data in CAS. A reference number will need to be added to the export declaration data which corresponds to the temporary importation declaration. In addition a number of consistency checks should be included. Cross-referencing the commodity

¹ Customs Brokers are responsible, on behalf of their clients, for submitting Customs declarations.

codes and numbers of items between the temporary declaration data and the export data.

Lot 2

The CAS system uses “green screen” input forms. Customs would like to convert approximately 270 of these screens to a GUI interface.

Lot 3

In addition to the above Customs would also like to explore the possibility of eliciting ongoing outsourced support for CAS. To this end suppliers are invited to propose a framework contract be based on a set number of man-days per year from which Customs can draw upon as required.

Content requirement in response to this RFP

Respondents' way put forward bids for one or more of the three Lots. The Customs administration will decide, based on budgets constraints, whether to implement all or specific Lots. Respondents' should price each lot separately and identify any discounts which may accrue from implementing two or three Lots.

Respondents to this RFP are requested to submit the following information:

- Resume of programming resource(s) being proposed including experience, training, example of projects worked on, etc
- Proposed method of working, whether on-site or remotely. Please note for remote working uploads to the Customs servers will be required to be carried out during Bahamas Customs working hours.
- Estimated number of man days and costs to carry out the short term upgrades identified in Lot 1.
- Estimated number of man-days and cost for migrating “green screens” to GUI as outlined in Lot 2.
- Concerning a proposed framework contract outlined in Lot 3 any minimum engagement fee should be indicated. In addition if there is a minimum number of man-days required for a framework contract, these should also be indicated.

Commitments to guarantee the quality of work carried out should clearly indicated. For example, level of testing that will be conducted, the time limits within which Customs must sign-off for work delivered. Respondents should indicate clearly how software bug reporting will be handled and whether the cost of fixing reported and verified bugs is included in the man-days indicated for Lots 1, 2 and 3.

Costs

Costs associated with Lot 1 and Lot 2 should cover the following:

- Fee per man-day of work
- Estimated costs for any travel and accommodation in the Bahamas.

Costs associated with Lot 3 should cover the following:

- Fee per man-day based on a specific range of days, for example engagement of 1 to 10 days, 10 to 20 days etc.
- Details of terms and conditions associated with the establishment of a framework contract should also be provided in detail.

Costs associated with fixing software bugs identified both during testing and in production should be specified. For example, if a software bug is discovered in code that is in production will charges be levied for time spent fixing and retesting.

Respondents should indicate if the prices quoted above will remain the same if it is decided to only proceed with individual Lots covered in this document.

Project Planning & Implementation

Respondents to this RFP should indicate the lead time, after notification of acceptance of an offer, necessary before commencement of work and the expected time frame in which Lot 1 and Lot 2 modifications would be completed.

Respondents should state clearly the boundaries of this project vis-a-vie the work which will be carried out by the company and the anticipated work to be carried out by the Customs IT department.

Deadline for responses

The **extended deadline** for submission of responses to this RFP is **Friday, 28th November, 2008 at 5:00 p.m.** at the Ministry of Finance, Cecil Wallace Whitfield Centre (3rd Floor), West Bay Street, Cable Beach.

Tenders will be opened at 10:00 a.m. on Tuesday, 2nd December, 2008 at the meeting of the Tenders Board at the Ministry of Finance.

Response Submission

Respondents' should note that replies to this RFP are to be submitted delivered in triplicate (3) in a sealed envelope to the addresses indicated below.

**The Chairman
Tenders Board
c/o Ministry of Finance
P. O. Box N-3017
Nassau, N.P.
The Bahamas
Telephone Nos.: 327-1586 or 327-1530**

E-Mail: www.mofgeneral@bahamas.gov.bs

E-Mail: subrennahiggs@bahamas.gov.bs

Please mark all responses with the following subject: Customs Programming tender

The Ministry of Finance reserves the right to reject any or all Tenders.

Contact for additional information or clarification

For any additional questions on technical matters please contact:

Mrs. Subrenna Higgs
Director IT
Bahamas Customs IT Department
Phone:1.242.302.3321
E-mail: subrennahiggs@bahamas.gov.bs