



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

FOR SUPPORTING GENDER-SENSITIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE VOLUNTARY PRINCIPLES AND
INCREASING INITIATIVE CAPACITY TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF OTHER VULNERABLE GROUPS

RFP # VPSHR20-2

Issued by

The Secretariat for

The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Association (VPA)

and

The Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Initiative (VPI)

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1.0 Terms, Overview and Purpose

1.1 Terms

ICWG	In-Country Working Groups set up by the Voluntary Principles Initiative
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
RFP:	Request for Proposal
Secretariat:	Responsible for the day-to-day organizational requirements of the VPI & VPA, contracted to Compass Consulting International Ltd., based in Ottawa, Canada
VPA:	Voluntary Principles Association
VPI:	Voluntary Principles Initiative

1.2 Overview

Established in 2000, the Voluntary Principles on Security and Human Rights Initiative (VPI) is an initiative by Governments, NGOs, and Companies that provides guidance to companies on maintaining the safety and security of their operations within an operating framework that ensures respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

The VPI provides a platform for members to engage in dialogue and discussion related to best practice and lessons learned regarding security and human rights, especially in the natural resources sector. The VPI is governed by a Steering Committee composed of representatives from the three membership Pillars: Governments, NGOs, and Companies. The VPI is governed by the Governance rules and the Steering Committee.

For additional information, please visit: <http://www.voluntaryprinciples.org/>

The VPA is governed by the Articles of Association and the Board of Directors. The Secretariat, located in Ottawa, Canada, is responsible for the day-to-day business of both the VPI and the VPA and as such will act as a regular point of contact for the selected Bidder. The Secretariat services are currently contracted out to Compass Consulting International Ltd. The Secretariat will be administering this request for proposal on behalf of VPA.

In early 2020, the Government of Canada approved funding to the Voluntary Principles Association for a project titled “Enhancing Gender Equality through the Voluntary Principles” to be completed over 3 years. The purpose of the project is to address gender inequalities and promote greater accountability for the protection of the rights of women and girls, Indigenous peoples, human rights defenders, and other vulnerable groups in the securing of company staff, operations, assets and work sites, including in conflict-affected settings. The project will also seek to promote greater inclusion of women and other human rights and advocacy organizations in the in-country working groups. The consulting team will implement this project under the supervision of the VPI and Secretariat.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this consultancy is to support the Voluntary Principles Initiative (VPI) to address gender inequality and for responding to the unique human rights risks faced by vulnerable groups including Indigenous peoples by: 1) Undertaking an analysis of the Principles, VPI policies and guidelines, and related VPI tools for integration of gender equality considerations and responsiveness to the unique human rights risks facing vulnerable groups; and 2) Working with VPI members to develop tools and resources to support members to address issues affecting women, girls and vulnerable groups such as Indigenous peoples arising in the context of securing business operations.

1.4 Documents

The documents listed below form part of and are incorporated into this RFP.

- This RFP document
- Appendix A: Statement of Work
- Appendix B: Expression of Interest
- Appendix C: Declarations

2.0 Timeline and Notifications

Publication of RFP	By July 24, 2020
Deadline for Submission of Expression of Interest	August 7, 2020
Deadline for Submission of Questions	August 7, 2020
Publication of Answers to Questions on website	August 21, 2020
Proposal Due date	September 9, 2020
Review and evaluation	immediately upon receipt
Notification of Shortlisted Bidders	week of September 28, 2020
Shortlisted Bidders Interviews	as required
Negotiation and Award notification	October-November 2020
Expected starting date of new contract	November 2020

Please note that these dates are subject to change at the discretion of the Secretariat.

2.1 Expression of Interest

You are asked to acknowledge receipt of the RFP and indicate your interest no later than August 7, 2020 as outlined in section 2.0. Please return Appendix B: Expression of Interest via email (PDF) as indicated in the cover letter. Expressions of interest are not mandatory for bidders, but strongly encouraged, as they will allow the Secretariat to communicate any further information to prospective bidders.

2.2 Submission of Questions & Publication of Answers

If any omissions from or discrepancies in any of the RFP Documents are found, or if Bidder is in any doubt as to the meaning of anything in the RFP, Bidder should immediately e-mail a written question, before submitting a Proposal. All such requests must be received not later than August 7, 2020. The originator of any such request is solely responsible for its timely receipt by the Secretariat. Any further questions will be addressed on a rolling basis.

Replies to all such requests will be posted on the www.voluntaryprinciples.org website, and reasonable efforts will be made to inform bidders once the replies are posted. The VPA shall not be bound by any other interpretations of the RFP Documents.

Should the Bidder not receive a reply to a question in time to use the reply in writing the Proposal, then the interpretation upon which Bidder relies must be set forth within a cover letter or the Proposal itself.

Additions to the RFP Documents may be issued as written bulletins at any time prior to the Proposal Due Date set forth in Section 2.0 above. All bulletins are to be considered as an integral part of the RFP Documents. Bulletins will be posted to the voluntaryprinciples.org website.

Bidders are required to consider all bulletins received during the bid period in preparing their Proposals and to confirm which bulletins have been received.

2.3 Bidder Interviews

The shortlisted bidders may be invited to an interview with the Secretariat and/or Evaluation Team by video conference. Guidelines and location/platform for this interview will be distributed upon shortlist notification.

2.4 Final Decision and Notification

A final decision and notification will entail the following steps:

- Selection of preferred bidder
- Reference checks
- Contract negotiations with successful respondent
- Notification of successful bidder posted to voluntaryprinciples.org website

2.5 Contract Negotiation

A performance-based contract and payment schedule will be negotiated with the successful Bidder.

3.0 General Requirements

3.1 Communications

The Secretariat is the official point of contact for the bid process. Any questions or other communications must be directed to the Head of the Secretariat at

mora.johnson@voluntaryprinciples.org

Any communication with parties not expressly named in this RFP may result in the disqualification of your organization from further consideration.

3.2 Eligibility

Bidders must meet the following eligibility requirement:

- I. If the bidder is a current VPI member or observer, they must not have participated in the development of this RFP or been privy to any confidential information related to this RFP.

3.3 Proposal Validity

- I. Bidders are required to present their offers in United States Dollars (USD);
- II. Bidders are required to present their offers based on the total project budget inclusive of all costs and fees; and
- III. This RFP and the Scope of Work are for use in the preparation of the Proposal. All such documents remain the intellectual property of the VPA.

4.0 Required Format and Submission

4.1 Proposal Responses

Proposal responses should be organized and submitted in accordance with the instructions in this section. Responses should be organized as follows:

- I. Cover Letter
- II. Technical Proposal
- III. Financial Proposal
- IV. Signed Declaration (Appendix C)

I. COVER LETTER

A one (1) page covering letter should be submitted and include the following:

- a) A reference to the RFP number and RFP title;
- b) A statement confirming that the signatory has read and understood the instructions contained within this RFP;
- c) The primary contact person with respect to this RFP: the individual's name, address, phone number and email address; and
- d) The letter must be signed by person(s) duly authorized to sign on behalf of the Bidder and bind the Bidder to statements made in response to the RFP.

II. TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

The technical proposal should respond to Appendix A: Statement of Work by describing the following:

- a) Description of the consultant team and experience working independently and/or collectively on similar projects, and a statement that the bidder has the qualifications, capacity and experience to carry out the work.
- b) A proposed methodology for carrying out the work described in Appendix A: Scope of Work.
- c) CV for each specialist named in the project bid with proposed team lead identified.

The technical proposal should be 10-12 pages exclusive of CVs.

III. FINANCIAL PROPOSAL

The Bidder should provide a separate document relative to the pricing of its proposal.

All proposals must address the following financial requirements:

- a) The Bidder is to state the assumptions underlying its financial proposal.
- b) All prices should be quoted in USD, excluding VAT and other taxes.
- c) A detailed breakdown of the total costs to deliver the project including level of effort expected of each expert and their daily rate.

The financial proposal must not exceed the maximum funding available for any contract resulting from this RFP. The maximum funding is USD \$90,000. No travel is anticipated.

IV. SIGNED DECLARATION

The Declaration in Appendix C must be signed by a duly authorized representative of the bidder and included in the bid.

4.2 Electronic Submission

Proposals shall be submitted electronically in pdf format to the Secretariat at mora.johnson@voluntaryprinciples.org. Submissions should include the RFP number in the subject line. Please attach Technical and Financial Proposals as separate pdf documents.

4.3 Receipt by Bid Due Date

The Evaluation Team must receive the Proposal no later than 5:00pmEST on the Proposal Due Date set forth in Section 2.0 of this RFP.

4.4 Other Communication

No other communication is to be sent in which the rates/prices composing the Proposal are disclosed.

4.5 References

Bidders must supply at least two references from current or recent clients (within the past 36 months) for either the bidding organization and/or for each of the individual experts proposed, as appropriate, which are able to:

- substantiate claims put forward in the Proposal with regard to previous work completed
- vouch for the quality and scope of previous relevant work completed

Where a reference is supplied, the following details should be provided:

- the name of the client or partner organization
- the name and contact details of an individual from said organization with direct familiarity of the organization and the relevant project(s)
- a brief overview of the nature of the relevant project(s) to which the reference relates

4.6 Declarations

Each Bidder shall include a signed Declarations form (Annex C) confirming that they meet the eligibility requirements and will comply with VPA expectations regarding proper conduct. To avoid any potential conflicts of interest, any successful bidder must disclose any and all commercial relationship(s) with existing VPI participants and VPA members and propose steps for mitigation.

5.0 Evaluation Criteria

Proposal evaluation will be weighted 70% technical and 30% financial. Financial proposals will only be scored if the bidder receives a minimum score of 70% upon evaluation of the technical proposal. Proposals not complying with the mandatory requirements will receive no further consideration.

The following criteria is mandatory:

- I. The proposed team must possess a proven ability to work and communicate in English with a very high degree of proficiency.

- II. The proposed team must demonstrate significant expertise in (but not limited to) the areas of gender equality, Indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups.
- III. The team must also demonstrate knowledge and experience in applying international human rights standards, in particular, standards relating to human rights in public and private security provision.

		Weighting
Technical		70%
	Proposed methodology for completing the work including level of detail, thoroughness, and achievability.	30%
	Quality of proposed team of experts assessed on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Team leader’s proven ability to design and manage a project and project team • Relevance and level of education of each expert and any relevant personal background that enhances their suitability • Proven knowledge and recognized subject matter expertise in areas of gender equality, rights of Indigenous peoples, and rights of other vulnerable and marginalized groups • Proven knowledge and experience in applying binding and/or non-binding international human rights instruments and standards, in particular, standards relating to human rights in public and private security provision. • Any additional skills, knowledge, or experience that may be considered an asset, such as additional languages, especially those spoken by VPI in-country working groups; familiarity with the VPI and/or other multi-stakeholder initiatives; experience researching or working in the area of business and human rights; experience conducting conflict analysis; etc. 	20%
	Capacity for developing and delivering high quality training, tools, and other implementation resources, as demonstrated through past work experience and confirmed by references.	20%
Financial		30%
Total		100%

6.0 Reservation of Rights

During proposal evaluations, the VPA reserves the right to contact or meet with any individual bidder in order to obtain clarification of its submission or to gain insight into the quality and scope of relevant services. A bidder will not be allowed to add, change or delete any information during the process. The VPA is in no way obligated to meet with any or all bidders for this purpose.

The VPA reserves the right to reject any or all responses to this RFP. The VPA reserves the right to cancel in whole or in part the RFP at its sole discretion.

The VPA reserves the right to alter the timeframes published in this RFP, as required to effectively administer the RFP.

This RFP should in no way be construed as an offer of purchase, but rather it is a request for services, products, fees and expenses information to assist the Evaluation Team on behalf of the VPA in selecting a vendor for supplying the scope of services listed in the RFP.

The VPA hereby assumes no financial responsibility, direct or indirect, for the cost of preparing any proposals, or amendments thereto. The VPA has the right to retain all proposals submitted in response to this RFP.

The VPA makes no commitment in or by virtue of this RFP to purchase any services and expressly reserves the right to alter or waive the RFP requirements or to cancel or re-issue the RFP at any time.

7.0 Debriefing

An unsuccessful bidder may request a debriefing within 10 business days of award notification.

Appendix A: Scope of Work

Part 1:

1. Review Voluntary Principles documents, policies, and tools for gender equality integration and responsiveness to the unique human rights risks facing vulnerable groups including Indigenous peoples, and others as required by members or recommended by the consulting team (see below). This should include a review of existing tools and guidance pertaining to vulnerable groups such as the *Child Rights and Security Checklist* and accompanying *Child Rights and Security Handbook* developed by UNICEF. Note: Project work on human rights defenders will be covered by a separate contract outside this RFP. The consultant team may be asked to exchange information and to collaborate with the expert on human rights defenders on some elements of the project.
2. Develop and administer a survey to understand VPI member interactions with women, girls and vulnerable groups, the types of problems and issues that arise for which members may benefit from greater guidance, as well as any preferred forms of guidance/tools and training. The survey should also measure VPI members' general knowledge of gender equality issues and the risks facing the other vulnerable groups identified and assess member capacity to recognize and respond to these issues and risks. This survey should be supplemented through interviews with members of each pillar (minimum of three per pillar – Government, Corporate and NGO).
3. Develop and administer a survey to understand VPI in-country working groups' secretariat and member interactions with women, girls and vulnerable groups, the types of problems and issues that arise for which members may benefit from greater guidance, as well as any preferred forms of guidance/tools and training. The survey should also measure VPI in-country working groups' members' general knowledge of gender equality issues and the risks facing the other vulnerable groups identified and assess member capacity to recognize and respond to these issues and risks. This survey should be supplemented through interviews with members of each in-country working group (minimum of three per group).
4. As necessary, undergo other desk-based research and interviews with other women's and human rights advocacy organizations in order to better understand how women, Indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups are impacted differently by security activities around company sites, especially in the natural resources sector.
5. Prepare a full VPI gender analysis and assessment of VPI responsiveness to the unique risks facing other vulnerable groups including Indigenous peoples and any other relevant populations based on document review, desktop research, survey results and interviews. This should include recommendations for improving existing resources, developing additional tools and other suggested approaches. The consulting team is encouraged to consult with relevant women's and human rights advocacy organizations in the preparation of this analysis.
6. Present analysis and survey/interview findings to membership. This can be facilitated by webinar or teleconference.

Part 2:

Based on the outcomes of Part 1,

7. In consultation with the VPI membership, develop specific tool(s) and training for the VPI and make recommendations for updating and improving existing tools to integrate gender equality considerations and enable members to identify and respond to the specific human rights risks affecting women and girls, Indigenous peoples, and other vulnerable groups. Where appropriate, this work should be done in consultation with relevant women's and other human rights advocacy organizations.
8. Develop additional resources and training for in-country working groups as required.
9. Present tools/toolkit/training to membership and deliver training to members and in-country working groups as appropriate.
10. Provide recommendations on how to disseminate and promote project findings, new tools and resources, and training modules beyond the VPI membership both online and in-person and contribute to such advocacy as appropriate.

*The selected consultant team will be required to prepare a proposal outlining the tools/training to be developed for approval prior to beginning this work and upon satisfactory performance of Part 1 of the contract.

Appendix B: Expression of Interest

Reference: RFP # VPSHR20-2

Proposal Closing Date: September 9th, 2020

Dear Secretariat:

We hereby acknowledge that the referenced Request for Proposal issued by the Voluntary Principles Association has been received.

This letter confirms this organization's intent to submit a response to this Request for Proposal.

The Bidder acknowledges that to the best of its knowledge, based on the individual indexes provided in the RFP package, it has received the entire RFP. (Exceptions should be listed below)

Organization Name

Contact Name and Title

Contact Telephone (include country code):

Contact Telephone (include country code)	Contact Email
+	

Street Address			
City:	State/Province:	Country:	Postal Code:

Mailing Address (if different from Above)			
City:	State/Province:	Country:	Postal Code:

PLEASE RETURN PROMPTLY BY EMAIL TO: mora.johnson@voluntaryprinciples.org
Attention: Voluntary Principles Association Secretariat - RFP # VPSHR20-2

Appendix C: Declaration

We, the undersigned, offer to provide the services for Gender and Vulnerable Groups Expertise in accordance with your Request for Proposal No. VPSHR20-2 and our Proposal. We are hereby submitting our Proposal, which includes the Technical Proposal and Financial Proposal.

We hereby declare that we meet all eligibility requirements as set out in section 3.2. We declare that we have a corporate sexual harassment policy in place or will have one before entering any contract that may result from this process.

We hereby declare that our firm, its affiliates or subsidiaries, including any joint venture/consortium /association members (as applicable):

- a) will comply with all applicable laws in our jurisdictions of registration and operation, including, without limitation, laws against bribery of foreign officials;
- b) have no conflict of interest and/or any potential conflict has been declared and proposed steps for mitigation provided;
- c) have not declared bankruptcy, are not currently engaged in bankruptcy or receivership proceedings, and there is no judgment or pending legal action against them that could impair their operations in the foreseeable future;
- d) undertake not to engage in illegal practices, including but not limited to corruption, fraud, coercion, collusion, obstruction, funding of terrorism, or any other practice that exposes the VPA to undue financial, operational, reputational or other risk;
- e) are not under sanction for an offence involving fraud, bribery or corruption imposed by a government or an international organization; and
- f) are not engaged in practices or transactions that would violate the sanctions laws and regulations of the United Nations, the European Union, or the United States.

We declare that all the information provided and statements made by us in this Proposal are true and we accept that any misinterpretation or misrepresentation contained in this Proposal may lead to our disqualification and/or sanctioning by the VPA. We offer to provide services in conformity with the Bidding documents and in accordance with the Statement of Work. Our Proposal shall be valid and remain binding upon us for 120 days upon receipt. We understand that you are not bound to accept any Proposal you receive.

We declare that any supplier or subcontractor to be used in connection with this project shall be contractually required to make representations substantially similar to the declaration set out herein.

I, the undersigned, certify that I am duly authorized to sign this Declaration on behalf of the Bidder.

Name:
Title:
Date:
Signature: