



**“INFORMATION MEMORANDUM FOR EXECUTION  
OF THE RURAL COMMUNICATIONS  
PROGRAMME: PHASE - VI”**

**Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority  
Royal Government of Bhutan  
Thimphu: Bhutan**

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1 The implementation of the Rural Communications Programme (RCP) is in accordance with the provisions of Section 193 and 194 of the Bhutan Information, Communications and Media Act, 2018 (Act) wherein it is stated that the Universal Service Fund (USF) shall be utilized to compensate ICT facility and service providers in providing universal service.
- 1.2 The main objective of RCPs is to provide nationwide ICT services to both households and public places at affordable prices with particular emphasis on the last mile national coverage for provision of ICT services and facilities in unconnected areas.
- 1.3 Till date, five phases of the rural communication programme have been completed with connectivity provided to over 742 villages at the cost of Nu.865 million.
- 1.4 The implementation of the RCP Phase VI has reference to the approval of the Hon'ble Minister, MoIC (M) – 5A/2020-21/158 dated 27th August, 2020.

## **2. Information Memorandum (IM)**

- 2.1 The Authority invites Bids from the two licensed mobile service providers (*hereinafter referred to as "Bidder"*) to implement and execute the RCP Phase VI as per the provisions of the ICM Act 2018 and the Rules and Regulations Governing the Establishment and Administration of the Universal Service Fund.
- 2.2 This Bid document shall be called as *"Information Memorandum (IM) for Execution of Rural Communication Programme Phase VI"* and the purpose of this IM is to provide clarity on the scope of the work in the designated areas (list of unconnected villages/areas) along with the timeline to enable the Bidders for proper planning of the work including details on costing.
- 2.3 Any doubts and clarification with regard to this IM may be submitted in writing to the Authority at the following address either in hard copy, fax or through email;

**Director**  
**Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority**  
**Olakha: Thimphu**  
**Telephone: 321506/321507**  
**Fax: 326909**  
**Email: bicma@bicma.bt**

### 3. Description of the Programme

3.1 **Aim:** The aim of this programme is to achieve the Royal Government’s objective of “Universal Connectivity” of communications services in the country.

3.2 **Objective:** The objectives of this programme is to connect those remaining villages that have been identified as unconnected with the mobile communication services to enhance the following;

- Accelerate and support the socio-economic development in these designated communities through the use of Information and Communications Technology (ICT),
- Promote social cohesion through the integration of isolated communities into the mainstream society,
- Improve the delivery of government services to the communities,
- Eliminate the social and economic disparities between the rural and urban population, and
- Increase access to information for greater empowerment of citizens,

3.3 **Scope of this Programme:** The scope of this programme is to provide basic public voice telephony, Short Messaging Services (SMS), together with free calls to emergency services and minimum of 3G data services in those designated rural areas.

### 4. Instructions to the Bidders

This Section provides information to assist the Bidders to prepare their Bids. The information also provides details on the submission, opening, and evaluation criteria of Bids and the award of Programme.

#### 4.1 Schedule of Events

(a) The tentative schedule of events for the execution of the RCP Phase VI is given below:

Sl. No	Activities	Timeline
1.	Float the IM and also make it available on BICMA website ( <a href="http://www.bicma.gov.bt">www.bicma.gov.bt</a> )	30th October, 2020
2.	Queries, questions, clarifications on IM to be sent to Authority	30th December, 2020
3.	Submission of Bids (Both technical and financial proposal)	29th January, 2021 before 2pm.
	Opening of Bids (in presence of Bidders)	2:30pm on 29th January, 2021
4.	Evaluation of the Bids including technical presentations by the service providers	1st to 5th February, 2021
5.	Notification of Award	8th February, 2021
6.	Complaints if any on the evaluation	8th to 10th February, 2021
7.	Signing of Agreement	11th February, 2021

8.	Award of the Programme	
9.	Tentative completion of the RCP Phase VI	11th August, 2022

- (b) The Authority reserves the right to change or modify this schedule or the funding mechanism described below. However, the Authority shall not be responsible for any expenditure incurred by the bidder due to modification or change of schedule for award of the programme.

#### 4.2 Address for Correspondence

- (a) All correspondences relating to submission of the Bids should be addressed to:

**Director  
Bhutan InfoComm and Media Authority  
P.O Box: 1072  
THIMPHU, BHUTAN**

#### 4.3 Allocation of Fund / Funding mechanism

- (a) The fund for implementing this programme shall be allocated based on the “Minimum Subsidy” method. *The “Minimum Subsidy” means the bid for seeking minimum subsidy to provide communications services in the designated rural areas.*

#### 4.4 Submission of the Bids

- (a) The Bids must be submitted to the Authority on or before 2pm of 29th January, 2021. The Bids must be signed and sealed in an envelope and shall contain both the financial and technical proposals.
- (b) The late submission of Bids shall not be considered and shall be returned unopened.
- (c) The Bidder shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of its Bids and the Authority shall in no case be responsible or liable for any costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the bidding process.
- (d) Incomplete submission of the bidding documents shall result in the rejection of the Bids.

#### 4.5 Modification, Substitution or Withdrawal of Bids

- (a) The Bidders may modify, substitute or withdraw their Bids after it has been submitted by sending a written notice before the deadline for submission of Bids.

#### 4.6 Information to be submitted in the Bids

- (a) The Authority shall not be responsible for the incomplete submission of the Bid document, which may result in the rejection of the Bids.
- (b) The Bidder shall be responsible to read all the instructions and obligations of this IM. Failure to furnish all information or documentation required by the IM may result in

rejection of the Bids.

(c) The Bid shall contain the following information;

**(i) Financial Proposal**

The financial proposal must contain the following information but not limited to;

- a. The entire cost of implementing the programme including the cost for connecting the specified villages/areas or a group of villages identified in each Chiwog/Geog of respective Dzongkhags.
- b. The cost of connecting the specified village or a group of villages identified in each Chiwog/Geog of respective Dzongkhags should be further subdivided into costs per BTS.
- c. The cost of each BTS site should include details on the cost involved for technical equipment including power system and the cost of civil works mentioned below but not limited to the following;
  - Cost of BTS,
  - Cost of transmission equipment or radio-link,
  - Cost of shelter and related costs,
  - Cost of tower equipment and installation,
  - Cost of power system and backup,
  - Cost of civil works,
- d. The financial proposal shall include the subsidy required against each BTS network cost and it should be projected both in terms of percentage as well as lump-sum figure.
- e. Wherever applicable, the cost for installation of BTS shall also include the cost of installing additional link equipment on the already existing backhaul network, to provide link to the BTS site. However, the details of such costs must also be presented separately to justify for inclusion.

**(ii) Technical Proposal**

The detailed technical proposal for connecting the designated villages must contain the following information but not limited to;

- a. Each proposed BTS site against the designated villages to be covered with communication services,
- b. The number and proposed BTS/repeater/link locations to be constructed to connect the designated villages/areas;
- c. The location of each proposed BTS/repeater station/link including geo-coordinates and the cell sector configuration to be deployed in each BTS,

- d. The description of each proposed BTS/repeater station/link site location in terms of distance from the nearest village and the nearest available road,
- e. Clearly differentiate whether the proposed site is BTS or repeater station or link,
- f. Specification on the type of network technology for each proposed BTS site to be used along with its pictorial representation,
- g. The system design of the network station, the system type and configuration of the site including the type of tower, network shelter, GSM antenna, power system, backup power system etc to be deployed,
- h. Inventory of the list of equipment and its number to be installed for each proposed BTS, repeater and links. The inventory shall be provided for the following but not limited to;
  - BTS equipment and related materials,
  - Transmission or radio-link equipment,
  - Shelter,
  - Power system and backup (including solar modules/panels, Batteries pack, battery capacity, generators and other power equipment if applicable) and
  - Height of the tower
- i. The image of network coverage simulation of each BTS in order to assist the Authority in understanding the estimate of network coverage in the designated villages,
- j. The total time frame required for completion of the programme including the time frame and work schedule required for installation of each proposed BTS network infrastructure.
- k. Wherever applicable, identify villages/areas under different Chiwogs/Gewogs/Dzongkhags, which can be connected through the construction of a single BTS.
- l. In the event, the tentative given geo-coordinates of designated villages/areas in the IM do not match with actual villages/areas, the Bidder should inform the Authority in written with correct geo-coordinates.

#### **4.7 Format and Signing of the Bids**

- (a) The Bid document shall be typed or written in indelible ink and shall be signed by the person duly authorised to sign on behalf of the Bidder.
- (b) Any interlineations, erasures, or overwriting shall be valid only if they are signed or initialled by the person(s) signing the Bid.

#### **4.8 Sealing and Marking of the Bids**

- (a) The Bid should be addressed to the Authority and bear a statement on the cover as “DO NOT OPEN BEFORE 29th January, 2021” the time and date for the Bid opening as specified in the IM.
- (b) If all or any envelopes are not sealed and marked as required above, the Authority shall not reject the Bid but assume no responsibility for the misplacement or premature opening of the Bid.

#### **4.9 Duration of the Programme**

- (a) The Bid should explicitly specify the tentative duration for executing this programme including the tentative duration for each site.

#### **4.10 Site Visit for Planning**

- (a) The Bidder, at their own cost, is encouraged to undertake the field visit to the designated villages for better network planning and preparation of the Bid.
- (b) In the event, Bidders during the site study and survey determine that the designated villages/areas have communication services, Bidders are obliged to inform the Authority.

#### **4.11 Presentation of Technical Proposal**

The Bidders shall be required to present technical proposals to the Authority. The date and time of presentations shall be intimated to the Bidders.

#### **4.12 Selection Criteria**

- (a) The proposal shall be examined and selected based on the minimum subsidy sought for installing network infrastructure to provide communication services in the designated villages/areas.
- (b) However, in the event, the amount of subsidy sought by the Bidders is same for covering the same designated areas, the proposed duration and other relevant technical aspects shall be considered for the selection of the bid.

#### **4.13 Confidentiality on Evaluation**

- (a) After the opening of Bids, the information relating to the examination, clarification, and evaluation of Bids and recommendations for award will not be disclosed to Bidders or other persons not officially concerned with the evaluation process until the announcement of the contract award.

#### **4.14 Clarification on the Programme submitted**

- (a) The Authority may ask Bidder to provide clarification on their Bid in order to facilitate the evaluation. The request for clarification and the response shall be in writing.

- (b) The Authority shall not seek or entertain any changes in the price or substance of the Bid, except to confirm the correction of arithmetical errors discovered by the Authority during the evaluation of the Bid.

#### **4.15 Bidders Contacting the Authority during Evaluation**

- (a) Following the opening of the bids and till the Contract is awarded and signed; no Bidder shall make any unsolicited communication to the Authority or try in any way to influence the Authority's examination and evaluation of Bid that may result in the rejection of the same. If any Bidder wishes to contact the Authority on any matter related to the Bidding process, it should be communicated in writing.

#### **4.16 Notification of Award**

- (a) After the completion of the evaluation process, the Authority shall issue the notification of award to the successful Bidder intending to award the programme

#### **4.17 Complaints after the Notification of Award**

- (a) If there are any complaints with regard to the evaluation and the award of the contract, the Bidder shall submit the complaints in writing to the Authority within 2 working days from the date of issuance of the notification of award. The complaints submitted after the due date shall not be entertained.

#### **4.18 Award of the programme**

- (a) The Authority shall award the programme to the Bidder(s) through an "Open Competitive Bidding Process" based on Minimum subsidy method, seeking the lowest subsidy per designated villages/areas and meeting all the requirements of the Authority as mentioned in this IM.

#### **4.19 Amendment of the IM**

- (a) At any time prior to the deadline for submission of the Bids, the Authority reserves the right to amend the IM by issuing the addenda and extending the deadline of the IM at its discretion.
- (b) Any amendment issued shall become an integral part of the IM and shall be communicated in writing to the Bidders.



## **5. Payment Terms**

The payment for implementing this programme shall be released under three tranches;

- (a) The first tranche of 50% of the total subsidy grant as an advance payment after the date of signing the Programme Implementation Agreement or the letter of Programme Award and completing the formality with the Department of Public Accounts, Ministry of Finance, Royal Government of Bhutan,
- (b) The second tranche of 25% of the total subsidy grant upon submission of the detailed proforma invoice indicating the proof of dispatch equipment/goods from the manufacturer,
- (c) The third tranche of 25% of the total subsidy grant after the completion of the Programme and field verification and certification of the network coverage in the designated areas and technical details of the network infrastructures duly verified by the officials of the Authority or the concerned local Government.

## **6. Verification of the completion**

- 6.1 After receiving the completion report, the Authority shall carry out verification of the programme or request the concerned local government to verify and certify the programme.
- 6.2 The verification exercises shall consist of carrying out the following activities but not limited to;
  - (a) Verify that all the households in the designated villages/areas receive full network coverage as specified under the scope of the work. The acceptable network signal strength should be more than -110dBm.
  - (b) Take inventory of equipment, number of BTS/repeaters including technology and any other network structures.
  - (c) Any other additional verification activity that the Authority may feel necessary.

## **7. Obligations**

The selected Bidder shall be obliged to or adhere with the following conditions but not limited to;

- 7.1 Submit the detailed work plan for carrying out this programme within a month from the date of signing the Programme Implementation Agreement with the Authority.
- 7.2 Any change from the initial proposal must be informed to the Authority in writing

- 7.3 The USF grant shall be exclusively used for the purpose of financing the activities of the Programme.
- 7.4 Provide any information required by the Authority for monitoring of the implementation of this programme.
- 7.5 Submit at regular intervals, the implementation progress reports of the Programme to the Authority.
- 7.6 Submit the detailed final report to the Authority no later than one (1) month after the completion of the Programme.
- 7.7 Support the Authority by designating an official or a team to accompany the team from the Authority to carry out the monitoring and verification of the programme after the completion of the programme.
- 7.8 Designate an official or a team to accompany the team from the Authority for carrying out the monitoring of the programme as and when required.
- 7.9 The USF grant shall be for one-time capital cost for setting up the communication services in those designated areas.
- 7.10 Provide and maintain the full mobile network coverage in the entire households under the designated villages shown in Annexure A.
- 7.11 Ensure and maintain the future continuity of communication services in the designated areas connected under the programme after the completion of the establishment of the communication systems.
- 7.12 Share any infrastructure built through this programme with other licensed service providers. In order to facilitate infrastructure sharing, the towers should be built of a minimum 25m in height for below 3500m altitude.
- 7.13 Complete the work to provide connectivity in the designated areas as per the deadline. Should the Bidder fail to complete the project for reasons beyond the operator's control, then a detailed report specifying the reasons and duration of extension must be submitted to the Authority, at least one (1) month before the completion deadline for approval and other necessary considerations.

## **8. Penalties**

- 8.1 If the selected Bidder does not comply with these conditions specified above or any other conditions that may be specified in the Programme Implementation Agreement, the selected Bidder shall be liable for the penalty of maximum 10% of the total subsidy grant issued for designated areas including the need to refund the balance amount remaining which is the difference between the subsidy granted and the actual expenses incurred for

connecting the designated areas.

**9. Force Majeure**

- 9.1 The Bidder shall not be held liable for any delay in providing network coverage if the delay is caused by circumstances that are beyond the reasonable control of the Bidder, such as natural calamities and vandalism, and any like event of force majeure, provided that such exemption for liability is limited to a period equivalent to the duration of the force majeure.
- 9.2 The Bidder shall inform the Authority as soon as possible about the occurrence of the events in 9.1.

## Annexure A

*The lists of villages to be connected in this programme are mentioned in the table below. In the event, the operator during the site study and survey determines that the villages mentioned below have communication services, the network operators are obliged to inform the Authority.*

Dzongkhag	Gewog	Chiwog	Village	Tentative Geo-coordinates	Total no. of HH	No. of HH with no mobile coverage
Chukha	Bongo	Togtokha	Totogongm	27°02'45"N 89°36'40"E	24	24
		Beayeul Kunzang	Gadaphu	26°49'20"N 89°42'45"E	14	14
Haa	Sangbaykha	Shaba Shebji	Shebji	27°10'42.33"N 89° 9'29.87"E	11	11
			Anakha Gonpa	27°10'9.66"N 89° 9'10.70"E	5	5
Gasa	Laya	Wokala Yak Herding areas	Bangtakha	28°11'21.7'' 89°50'29.2''	16	16
			Sengtaphu	28°10'50.9'' 89°49'59.9''		
			Zomzhang	Somewhere near wokila (28°12'22.02'' 89°51'24.48'')		
			Malatang	28°09'04.5'' 89°48'06.0''		
		Shingchenla Yak Herding areas	Mangthangka	28°03'40.2'' 89°35'42.4''	4	4
			Man Maru	Between Tshering Jatha and Laya		
			Nangdo			
				Tshering Jathang	28°58'45.7'' 89°30'49.9''	12
Mongar	Saling	Droksar	Droksar	27°11'34.78"N 91° 6'22.56"E	24	21
Paro	Naja	Wanakha	Thasazingkha	27° 04'23.85"N 89°26'03.69"E	14	14
Samdrupjongkhar	Serthi	Menjong	Denphu	27° 1'48.41"N 91°58'59.46"E	29	7
			Tokaphung	26°57'4.10"N 92° 4'10.44"E	7	7
	Martshala	Galingkhar Wangphu	Wangphu	26°56'25.60"N 91°43'37.01"E	15	15
			Khaling Dangray	26°56'4.86"N 91°44'3.58"E	13	13

	Langchenphu	Jangsa	Jangsa Gom	26°52'43.03"N 92° 5'50.67"E	21	11
			Jangsa Wom	26°52'36.30"N 92° 6'2.59"E	22	10
		Rongchuthang	Rongchuthang	26°52'2.74"N 92° 2'56.70"E	12	10
Zhemgang	Phangkhar	Pongchula	Ridijong	26°57'32.33"N 90°45'14.17"E	12	12
			Chabgoen	26°56'57.90"N 90°46'33.76"E	5	5
		Edi	Daling	26°54'04.71"N 90°42'34.08"E	19	19
			Bakaling	26°52'41.75"N 90°41'49.31"E	2	2
			Dangkhar	26°53'45.79"N 90°41'09.98"E	4	4
			Jaikhar	26°52'54.60"N 90°42'10.06"E	7	7
			Tambar	26°52'49.94"N 90°41'55.44"E	2	2
			Tamala	26°54'27.27"N 90°42'50.74"E	8	8
			Lakamen	26°53'24.06"N 90°43'03.16"E	2	2
			Khaila Brangsa	26°56'39.39"N 90°44'57.53"E	2	2
			Barzhong Tsobrang	26°56'03.42"N 90°43'49.50"E	6	6
			Trong	Tama-Berti	Berti Eco-Camp	27°9'29.17"N 90°40'1.99"E
	Bermo Botanical Garden	27°9'33.84"N 90°40'10.12"E			700+ visitors in a year	
Dagana	Karmaling	Lapsakha	Basani	26°80'52"N 89°83'46.37"E	3	3
			Keranee	26°80'52"N 89°83'88.01"E	5	5
		Omchhu	Dungay	26°48'59.52"N 89°55'9.32"E	12	8
	Tsangkha	Gungpa Sumchu	Gungpa Sumchu	27°1'27.14"N 90°1'26.62"E	35	15
		Tshangkha/GC	Tshangkha/Tsangkha MSS	27°1'27.14"N 90°1'26.62"E	100	50
		Gelechhu	Upper Gelephu	27°3'42.36"N 90°2'45.89"E	23	5
			Lower Gelephu	27°2'39.22"N 90°2'75"E		
	Tshendagang	Samarchu	Dharey	26°52'39.16"N 89°54'51.42"E	15	12
			Samerchhu	26°50'34.65"N 89°53'55.56"E	39	33

			Peping	26°48'49.78"N 89°57'9.02"E	3	3	
			Gumti	26°49'41.67"N 89°58'54.24"E	7	7	
			Doban	26°48'8.72"N 89°56'17.50"E	4	4	
			Gabring	26°48'54.91"N 89°55'48.13"E	9	5	
			Gaharati	26°49'24.76"N 89°57'48.95"E	3	2	
	Tseza	Peling	Peling	27° 9'21.31"N 89°50'11.47"E	5	2	
			Tongsho	27° 7'14.12"N 89°50'46.02"E	14	14	
			Dawazimpa	27° 8'40.88"N 89°50'17.92"E	2	2	
			Khijo	27° 8'16.55"N 89°50'17.09"E	3	3	
Thimphu	Naro	Tagsidthang_Zho mthang	Gunglona	27°38'49.34"N 89°27'1.65"E	4	4	
			Lhayul	27°37'32.71"N 89°29'29.83"E	5	5	
			Chagophu	27°39'9.35"N 89°26'21.22"E	4	4	
			Thangtoed	27°37'13.97"N 89°29'39.07"E	3	3	
			Takey	27°46'33.41"N 89°33'11.02"E	2	2	
		Barshong _Mentsiphu	Zomphu	27°43'27.90"N 89°33'51.72"E	6	6	
	Lingzhi	Sharyul	Tando Gonpa	27°52'44.09"N 89°24'36.40"E	4	4	
			Raulum	27°52'11.91"N 89°24'55.35"E	4	4	
			Lhakhaten	27°51'33.64"N 89°23'52.94"E	4	4	
			Yontey (Nalungphu)	27°54'32.64"N 89°24'44.35"E	2	2	
	Tsirang	Semjong	Tashiling toed	Niel Pokhari	27°06'24.40"N 90°19'55.73"E	3	3
	Trashiyangtse	Jamkhar	Ninda Pachhu	Nachhu	27°41'07.83"N 91°51'49.598"E	4	4

