



## United Nations Procurement Division

**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)**

This notice is placed by UNPD. The accuracy, reliability and completeness of the contents of furnished information is the responsibility of United Nations Procurement Division. You are therefore requested to direct all queries regarding this RFI to United Nations Procurement Division using the fax number or e-mail address provided below.

**Title of the RFI:**

Warehousing, Order Fulfillment and Customer Service for United Nations Publications for UK, Europe, Middle East, and Africa

**Date of this RFI:** 6 November 2023

**Closing Date for Receipt of RFI:** 8 December 2023

**RFI Number:** RFIUNPD22064

**Beneficiary Country/Territory:** Global

**Commodity/Service category:** Conference & Office Support Services

**Address RFI response by fax or e-mail to the Attention of:** Mr Yacine Gherbi

**Fax Number:**

**E-mail Address:** gherbi@un.org

**UNSPSC Code:**

82120000 - Reproduction services  
73151900 - Industrial printing services  
80160000 - Business administration services  
78000000 - Transportation and Storage and Mail Services  
80140000 - Marketing and distribution



## DESCRIPTION OF REQUIREMENTS

The purpose of this Request for Information (RFI) is to assess market availability for commercial vendors to provide the United Nations with cost-effective and efficient services for United Nations Publications (UNP) in the areas of global print, merchandise and customer service operations, which may include: inventory receipt; warehousing; inventory management, and fulfilment for the UK, Europe, Middle East, and Africa; print on demand; account receivables management; distribution coordination and sales & marketing support for non-North American territories.

The responses to the RFI will be used by the United Nations as the basis to develop a procurement strategy for services related to global order fulfilment and customer service for United Nations Publications for the UK, Europe, Middle East, and Africa.

Since 1945, United Nations Publications (UNP) has been working to promote the United Nations' knowledge, communication, and outreach objectives by publishing, selling, distributing, and licensing print and electronic publications, periodicals and databases that disseminate the United Nations' content, studies, and data. It publishes titles aimed at a broad public, as well as mobile apps and other electronic products and services for individual readers and public and private institutions.

UNP publishes about 500 new titles every year, has approximately 10,000 titles in print and a database of around 5,200 customers. These titles include books and reports predominately in English but also in a variety of other languages, and are distributed to a wide audience, primarily commercially and occasionally on a complimentary basis. Most publications are produced in print, on a print-on-demand basis, and digitally as web PDFs and ePubs.

UNP also has more than 100 items of merchandise which are sold globally. Items are to be individually packaged and barcoded, securely stored in a temperature-controlled environment, and shipped by traceable means worldwide.

Orders are received from a global network of distributors, bookstores, libraries, non-governmental and international organizations, schools and universities, corporate clients, governments, United Nations staff, and individual customers. A substantial number of print books and reports are delivered through standing order plans.

The main difference between UNP's fulfilment and most other fulfilment operations is the nature of the United Nations mission:

- Sales of United Nations publications and merchandise are tax exempt.
- The operation is widespread: sales activities take place both directly and through distributors and agents around the world.
- Customers can subscribe to particular publications (annuals and flagships) or particular publication categories or series. These orders are sent to customers through standing order releases.



## **SPECIFIC REQUIREMENTS / INFORMATION (IF ANY)**

### **Specific Requirements**

Special note: As this is an RFI to assess market availability for commercial vendors for the purpose of developing a procurement strategy, interested vendors are highly encouraged to respond even if they can only meet some of the operational requirements.

#### **General:**

- Can you provide a brief description of your company, its structure, and years in business?
- Can you share details about your company's experience in providing similar services, including notable projects or clients you've worked with?
- Can you share information about your company's past experience in providing services to an international organization (such as the United Nations) or a public sector entity with tax exemption status?
- Can you outline your company's main distributor and / agent network in different regions?
- Can you outline your company's experience managing subscription-based publications and standing order releases?
- Can you list your company's main subcontractors, if any, for the provision of similar services? How could your company ensure all services can be effectively managed through these subcontractors?
- How long does it typically take your company to fully operationalize a contract after it's been signed with a new customer?

#### **Commercial information:**

- What is your company's pricing model for similar services?
- Does your company have any existing Long-Term Agreement within the UN system or other public sector entities?

#### **Existing Physical Infrastructure and related Support:**

- Could you describe the locations of your main warehouses? Are they close to major carrier terminals for operations especially in the UK and Europe?
- Could you describe your company's existing customer service coverage for different time zones and geographical regions?
- Can you detail your company's capabilities in coordinating distribution and providing sales and marketing support across the UK, Europe, Middle East, and Africa, which includes the following: (leaflet/catalogue production, direct mail, digital marketing, bookstore representation, advertising and other publicity, exhibition and conference displays, review copy distribution, the timely dissemination of metadata/updating of required database listings and other promotional and sales activities)?
- Could you explain your company's warehouse's security, environmental controls, and certifications for



storing publications and merchandise?

- Could you provide information on your company's order fulfilment capabilities and quality control procedures?

#### IT Systems and Reporting Capabilities

- Could you provide information on your company's IT Systems including but not limited to client administration portal, especially on its capabilities to provide real-time access to data, generate different types of reports and data interface capabilities?
- Could you provide information on your company's IT Systems' capabilities to accommodate various discounts, payment terms, non-US addresses, multilingual publications, and the management of standing order programs?
- Could you provide information on your IT Systems' capabilities to integrate with clients' e-commerce sites for merchandise sales?
- How do you ensure the provision of complete, timely, and accurate online reports for various financial transactions and accounts receivable related information?

#### Other Administrative Aspects

- Could a follow-up web-based presentation and Q&A session be arranged following the RFI?

#### INSTRUCTIONS TO RESPOND TO THIS RFI:

Please respond to this RFI by the indicated deadline directly by email to Mr. Yacine Gherbi at gherbi@un.org. You can also register on the link provided on page 4 for information purpose (recommended). To send documents and files you have to respond by email to gherbi@un.org. Thank you.

#### NOTE

Information on tendering for the UN Procurement System is **available free of charge** at the following address: <https://www.ungm.org/Public/Notice>

Only the United Nations Global Marketplace (UNGM) has been authorised to collect a nominal fee from vendors that wish to receive automatically Procurement Notices or Requests for Expression Of Interest. Vendors interested in this Tender Alert Service are invited to subscribe on <http://www.ungm.org>

***Vendors interested in participating in a potential future solicitation process should submit the Vendor Response Form of this RFI electronically (through the link available on the next page) before the closing date set forth above.***



# VENDOR RESPONSE

## NOTICE

- Companies can only participate in solicitations of the UN Secretariat after completing their registration (free of charge) at the United Nations Global Marketplace ([www.ungm.org](http://www.ungm.org)).
- Please verify that your company is registered under its **full legal** name on the United Nations Global Market Place ([www.ungm.org](http://www.ungm.org)) and that your application for registration as vendor has been submitted to the **UN Secretariat** in the same site, to be able to participate in any potential solicitation process as a result of this RFI.
- While companies can participate in solicitations after completion of registration at Basic Level, we strongly recommend all companies to register at least at **Level 1** under the United Nations Secretariat prior to participating in any solicitations.
- Companies are reminded of the restrictions of employment of former UN personnel that were involved in the procurement process during their last three years of service as per [ST/SGB/2006/15](#), including (a) employing those personnel for one year after separation of service and (b) allowing those personnel to communicate with, or appear before, active UN personnel for matters related to the procurement process for two years after separation of service. Violation of the provisions of ST/SGB/2006/15 may lead to suspension of the registration of the company as a UN vendor.

**PLEASE NOTE: You should submit your response to this RFI electronically at:**

<https://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/node/add/interest-expressed?EOI=RFIUNPD22064>

**In case you have difficulties submitting your response electronically, please contact [gherbi@un.org](mailto:gherbi@un.org) directly for instructions.**



## RFI INSTRUCTIONS

### 1) Registering as a Vendor with the United Nations

Vendors interested in fulfilling the requirement described above must be registered at the UN Global Marketplace ([www.ungm.org](http://www.ungm.org)) with the UN Secretariat in order to be eligible to participate in any solicitation. Information on the registration process can be found at <https://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/vendors>.

#### **Prerequisites for Eligibility**

In order to be eligible for UN registration, you must declare that:

- A. Your company (as well as any parent, subsidiary or affiliate companies) is not listed in, or associated with a company or individual listed in:
  - I. the Compendium of United Nations Security Council Sanctions Lists (<https://www.un.org/securitycouncil/content/un-sc-consolidated-list>), or
  - II. the IIC Oil for Food List website or, if listed on either, this has been disclosed to the United Nations Procurement Division in writing.
- B. Your company (as well as any parent, subsidiary or affiliate companies) is not currently removed or suspended by the United Nations or any other UN organisation (including the World Bank);
- C. Your company (as well as any parent, subsidiary or affiliate companies) is not under formal investigation, nor have been sanctioned within the preceding three (3) years, by any national authority of a United Nations Member State for engaging or having engaged in proscribed practices, including but not limited to: corruption, fraud, coercion, collusion, obstruction, or any other unethical practice;
- D. Your company has not declared bankruptcy, are not involved in bankruptcy or receivership proceedings, and there is no judgment or pending legal action against your company that could impair your company's operations in the foreseeable future;
- E. Your company does not employ, or anticipate employing, any person(s) who is, or has been a UN staff member within the last year, if said UN staff member has or had prior professional dealings with the Vendor in his/her capacity as UN staff member within the last three years of service with the UN (in accordance with UN post-employment restrictions published in ST/SGB/2006/15).
- F. Your company undertakes not to engage in proscribed practices (including but not limited to: corruption, fraud, coercion, collusion, obstruction, or any other unethical practice), with the UN or any other party, and to conduct business in a manner that averts any financial, operational, reputational or other undue risk to the UN.

**For Registered Vendors:** Vendors already registered at the UN Global Marketplace with the UN Secretariat must ensure that the information and documentation (e.g. financial statements, address, contact name, etc.) provided in connection with their registration are up to date in UNGM. Please verify and ensure that your company is registered under its full legal name.

**For Vendors Interested in Registration:** Vendors not yet registered should apply for registration on the United Nations Global Marketplace (<http://www.ungm.org>); information on the registration process can be found at <https://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/vendors>. Vendors must complete the registration process prior to the closing date of the RFI. Vendors who have not completed the UNGM registration process with the UN Secretariat before the closing date of the RFI are not considered eligible to participate in the potential solicitation process related to the RFI. We strongly recommend all companies to register at least at Level 1 under the UN Secretariat prior to participating in any solicitations.

**IMPORTANT NOTICE:** Any false, incomplete or defective vendor registration may result in the rejection of the application or cancellation of an already existing registration.

### 2) RFI Process

Vendors interested in participating in the potential solicitation process should forward their information (as requested in the RFI) to United Nations Procurement Division (UNPD) by the closing date set forth in this RFI. *Due to the high volume of communications UNPD is not in a position to issue confirmation of receipt of RFIs.*

Please note that no further details of the potential solicitation can be made available to the vendors prior to issuance of the solicitation documents.

This RFI is issued subject to the conditions contained in the RFI introductory page available at <https://www.un.org/Depts/ptd/rfi>.



