

RFP-2026-001

1. Nature and depth of the country-level demonstration projects

The call refers to the “design and support of the delivery of at least three country-level projects.” Could the UPU clarify the expected level of operational involvement from the Vendor? Specifically, should these projects be understood as:

- primarily analytical and design-oriented demonstrations (concept design, stakeholder alignment, indicative financing and logistics models), or
- partial operational pilots involving hands-on coordination of reverse logistics flows and on-the-ground execution?

Partial operational pilots are expected.

2. Allocation of responsibilities between the UPU and the Vendor

Could the UPU clarify which elements of stakeholder mobilization (e.g. engagement of designated operators, ministries, regulators, recyclers) are expected to be led or facilitated directly by the UPU, and which are expected to be initiated and managed by the Vendor?

The UPU will lead institutional engagement with member countries and designated operators, while the Vendor is expected to support stakeholder mapping, preparatory outreach, and technical facilitation under UPU guidance.

3. Country selection mechanism and readiness criteria

Will the UPU pre-identify interested member countries for the demonstration projects, or should the Vendor propose and validate candidate countries as part of the inception phase? Additionally, does the UPU have minimum readiness criteria in mind (e.g. regulatory maturity, postal operational capacity, existing circular economy initiatives)?

The UPU will identify or validate interested member countries, with the Vendor supporting readiness assessment and scoping during the inception phase based on agreed criteria such as policy context, postal capacity, and stakeholder interest.

4. Interpretation of “delivery” within the budgetary ceiling

Given the budget ceiling of CHF 38,000 inclusive of all costs, could the UPU clarify how it defines “delivery” of pilot activities in this context, to ensure that expectations regarding scale, duration, and depth of engagement are aligned with available resources?

“Delivery” refers to the design, structuring, facilitation of demonstrative activities, and necessary travels and partial operational pilots, with scope and depth calibrated to the available budget.

5. Geographic scope versus scoring on number of countries

The assessment criteria allocate points to the “number of countries the proposal covers.” Could the UPU clarify whether this refers to:

- analytical coverage within the global study component,

- the number of countries included in stakeholder mapping and consultations, or
- the number of country-level demonstrations (noting that the call specifies at least three)?

All the above will be taken into account.

6. Travel expectations and modality of engagement

Does the UPU anticipate that stakeholder consultations and country-level engagement can be conducted primarily through virtual modalities, or should the Vendor anticipate limited in-country missions within the proposed budget?

At least one travel is expected back to back to UPU national or regional events.

7. Data access and traceability considerations

To what extent does the UPU anticipate facilitating access to operational postal data (e.g. logistics flows, tracking systems, or existing sustainability metrics) for the purposes of analysis and pilot design, subject to applicable confidentiality constraints?

Subject to confidentiality constraints, the UPU may facilitate high-level access or introductions to relevant data sources, while detailed operational data access cannot be guaranteed and should not be assumed.

8. Use and dissemination of outputs

Could the UPU clarify how it intends to use the study outputs beyond the immediate engagement (e.g. public dissemination, presentation to member countries, donor engagement, or internal programme development), and whether any such use would involve attribution to the Vendor?

The outputs will primarily support UPU internal programme development, policy dialogue, and partner engagement, and any external dissemination or attribution to the Vendor will be subject to prior agreement with the UPU.

9. Impact measurement expectations

Is the UPU seeking the development of entirely new impact indicators tailored to postal-enabled reverse value chains, or the adaptation and contextualization of existing circular economy, logistics, and climate metrics to the postal sector?

The UPU expects the adaptation and contextualization of existing circular economy, logistics, and climate metrics to the postal sector, rather than the development of entirely new indicator frameworks.

10. Expectations regarding consultant deployment

The tender requires the proposal of at least three consultants. Could the UPU clarify whether it expects all proposed consultants to be substantively engaged throughout the full four-month duration, or whether differentiated, phase-specific engagement is acceptable?

It will be discussed with the selected bidder.

11. What are the expected presentation, demonstration and implementation timelines following the RFP?

Following contract award, the implementation period is six months, including inception, configuration, deployment, testing, training and final demonstration, in line with the indicative timeline set out in the tender documentation.

12. Are you only looking for consulting services?

No. The tender seeks technical integration and demonstration services resulting in a functional pilot platform, not purely advisory or analytical consulting.

13. If not, can you please share additional technical information?

The expected technical scope, functional modules and performance standards are described in Sections 4 of the tender; bidders are invited to propose appropriate technical approaches within that framework.

14. If not, would you accept the service be delivered out of a public cloud?

Yes. Delivery via a secure public cloud environment is acceptable for the pilot, subject to compliance with data protection, security and UPU requirements.

15. In chapter 3.6 you mention "*The budgetary ceiling is 30,000 CHF*". What do you include and exclude for this amount? Is it dedicated for the expected consulting services?

The CHF 30,000 ceiling is all-inclusive and covers all services required under the tender, including technical integration, deployment, testing, training, documentation and reporting; no separate consulting budget is envisaged.

16. Timeline and contract start-date inconsistency. Section 3.7 indicates a service start date of 24 February 2025, whereas sections 2.20 and 4.5 indicate an estimated or expected commencement in April 2026. Could you please confirm the correct contractual start date? Should Bidders assume that all references to 2025 are clerical errors, or is an earlier preparatory phase envisaged outside the formal contract period?

The correct contractual start date is in April 2026, any references to 2025 as start-date should be considered clerical errors.

17. Budget ceiling versus mandated scope feasibility. The call requires full configuration, integration, deployment, testing, training, documentation, and multi-country adaptation of a platform covering: AI-based valuation, hardware–software interoperability, six-country deployment, training and bi-weekly reporting, all within a CHF 30,000 all-inclusive ceiling. Could the UPU clarify whether this budget is intended to cover a fully operational technical pilot, or a demonstrative / proof-of-concept implementation with partial functional depth? Are there predefined expectations regarding which modules are expected to reach production-grade maturity versus demonstrative maturity during the pilot?

The budget is intended to support a demonstrative, pilot-grade implementation with functional depth sufficient for testing, learning and replication, rather than a full production-scale deployment.

18. AI valuation accountability and governance. The AI Valuation Module is expected to support automated device identification and condition assessment, with downstream implications for: financial-payment data flows, recycler bidding, consumer-facing valuation transparency. Could the UPU clarify how responsibility and liability are envisaged in cases of valuation error, dispute, or bias during the pilot? Are there specific expectations regarding explainability, auditability, or human-in-the-loop validation mechanisms for AI outputs, particularly in regulatory or consumer-facing contexts?

The pilot is exploratory in nature; bidders are expected to include appropriate safeguards such as explainability, audit logs and human-in-the-loop validation, with no automated decision-making being final or binding. Exact legalities will be determined during the contract signature (We do not have a clear answer at this time as this is a legal matter that requires more detailed information from our legal department)

19. Data ownership, sovereignty, and cross-border flows. Given the multinational deployment across six member countries and the handling of device-level, transactional, and potentially personally identifiable data: Who is envisaged as the ultimate data controller for data generated by the platform during the pilot (UPU, designated operators, or a joint model)? Are Bidders expected to design for country-specific data localization or sovereignty constraints, or may centralized data architectures be assumed for the purposes of the pilot? Will the UPU provide guidance on alignment with relevant national data-protection regimes beyond general UN privileges and immunities?

For the pilot, the UPU is envisaged as the primary coordinating entity; bidders should design flexible architectures that can accommodate country-specific data requirements if needed, while centralized pilot configurations are acceptable. Exact legalities will be determined during the contract signature (We do not have a clear answer at this time as this is a legal matter that requires more detailed information from our legal department.)

20. Hardware integration depth expectations. The documentation requires interoperability with smart lockers, kiosks, IoT sensors, QR/UID tagging systems, and postal IT environments. Is live physical hardware integration expected in each pilot country, or is protocol-level/API-level integration and simulation acceptable where physical assets are not uniformly available? Are there reference hardware standards or preferred vendors already identified by the UPU or participating designated operators?

Protocol-level or API-level integration and simulation are acceptable where physical hardware is not available; live hardware integration may be implemented selectively depending on country readiness.

21. Country selection and configurability assumptions. Will the six pilot countries be selected solely by the UPU after contract award, or are Bidders expected to demonstrate readiness for a predefined set of operational contexts at tender stage? Should Bidders assume significant heterogeneity in postal IT maturity, regulatory environments, and recycler market structures across the pilot countries?

The six pilot countries will be selected by the UPU after contract award; bidders should assume heterogeneous operational, regulatory and IT contexts and propose adaptable, modular solutions.

22. Evaluation methodology clarification. Section 2.18 states that price is evaluated after quality and experience, yet section 3.6 establishes strict disqualification for exceeding the CHF 30,000 ceiling. Could the UPU clarify whether technically superior proposals with phased or modular delivery approaches

within the ceiling will be evaluated differently from minimal-scope proposals that merely meet baseline requirements?

Only proposals within the CHF 30,000 ceiling will be evaluated; within that constraint, technically robust and well-structured approaches will be assessed on quality and feasibility, not on minimal scope alone.

23. Reporting granularity versus effort allocation. The requirement for bi-weekly reporting, combined with detailed documentation, training delivery, and multi-country deployment, represents a non-trivial effort load. Is there an indicative reporting template or expected level of granularity that Bidders may reference to balance delivery effort against administrative overhead?

Bi-weekly reporting is expected to be concise and proportionate; detailed templates will be agreed after contract award to balance delivery effort and administrative requirements.

24. Is the application described in this document, Web App (responsive, browser-first approach) , PWA or native mobile app ?

A web-based approach is anticipated for the pilot.

25. What would be the ideal method for executing the training sessions (remote, in person, hybrid) ? And what would be the target of cadency of the training sessions ?

Remote training is preferred; cadence to be agreed."

26. Can the solution be cloud based? Or it needs to be on premises on each country individually?

Cloud-based delivery is acceptable for the pilot.

27. Can you please describe the systems/APIs/infrastructure/workflows mentioned on the component.

Integration will align with available postal systems and workflows.

28. Can you please describe the hardware and software mentioned on the ""Enable connectivity with relevant hardware and software ecosystems"", and what is the functionality available to connect with them (eg: custom connector, web service).

Interoperability will be addressed at interface or protocol level.

29. Is test automation required for the end-to-end testing?

Is load/pressure testing required for the end-to-end testing?

Should each individually country have their own separated and segregated database?

Pilot-appropriate testing approaches are sufficient

30. Could you clarify whether an in-house LLM model is already available? If there isn't none available and we need to train a new one, is there any dataset or set of business rules available for training and validation? Additionally, we would appreciate some examples of the types of evaluations the AI is expected to perform, as well as an estimate of the expected daily volume of AI usage.

AI approach remains open and pilot-oriented.

31. Could you please describe the mandatory certifications or compliance requirements that recyclers must meet, as well as outline the current onboarding process for recyclers? Additionally, could you explain the existing approach to transaction simulation within the Recycler Marketplace and clarify what new improvements or functionalities are expected?

Requirements will reflect pilot contexts and regulatory environments.

32. Could you please clarify how the tickets will be generated and whether this process involves complex business rules? Are the tickets fully digital, and in which format (e.g., PDF) are the labels produced? Additionally, who defines the routing logic, and how is it determined? Finally, regarding the MVP, does it need to support real payment transactions or only financial simulations, and are there any existing integrations already in place?

Processes will follow pilot-grade postal integration logic.

33. Regarding the data related to packaging categorization, hazard flagging, and safe-handling guidance, is this information managed internally (applicational level), or is it expected to be consumed from an external source?

Information sources may be internal or external.

34. The upper limit of CHF 30,000 does not include license fees and operating costs. These costs would be added on top, is that correct?"

The budget ceiling is all-inclusive.

35. With a cost ceiling of CHF 30,000, we are assuming an MVP (Minimum Viable Product), meaning the functionalities do not yet have to be finalized. For example, label printing is desired. In this case, does that mean the application must print a label, but the label content is not yet finalized or homologated?"

Pilot functionality may be demonstrative.

36. The application will be used in 6 different regions firstly. Which languages do we need to support in the MVP?"

English plus one additional language is expected.

37. In what format must the offer be submitted: PPT, Word...?"

Offers should follow the tender's submission requirements.

38. Please confirm the criteria the UPU will apply in selecting the three demonstration countries, and whether any regions or countries (notably emerging economies) are already prioritized or pre-identified.

To be discussed with the selected bidder, please provide your list as a draft for discussion

39. The tender refers to "partial delivery" of country-level pilots. Could you please clarify the expected scope of vendor responsibility, specifically the balance between pilot design, implementation support, monitoring, and documentation?

It will be discussed with the selected bidder.

40. Please confirm whether all three country-level projects are expected to be implemented at a comparable level of depth, or whether differentiated levels of analysis and engagement across pilots are acceptable.

Differentiated depth across pilots is acceptable.

41. Please advise whether the UPU has identified priority packaging streams or reverse value chain (RVC) models of interest, or whether bidders are expected to define and justify these based on country context and feasibility.

Bidders may propose; UPU will validate.

42. Please confirm whether the UPU will facilitate introductions and coordination with Designated Operators and key national stakeholders in pilot countries, or whether bidders should plan for direct engagement independently.

Yes, UPU will be of a help in this matter

43. Please specify which categories of “unavoidable costs” may be considered eligible for reimbursement beyond consultant daily rates, and the applicable approval mechanism for such costs.

Subject to prior UPU approval, case by case.

44. Please confirm any minimum experience or qualification requirements expected for the three proposed consultants, and outline the process and indicative timeline for consultant validation, approval, or replacement if required.

Please provide CVs of anticipated consultants

45. Please clarify whether the assessment of the “number of countries covered” refers to analytical coverage within the study, the number of pilot implementations, or a combination of both.

Refers to combined analytical and pilot-related coverage.

46. Please confirm the expected structure, level of detail, and format for key deliverables (inception report, interim analytical report, final report, and communication package), including any page limits, visualization standards, or templates to be applied.

Standard formats apply; details agreed during inception

47. Regarding the Pilot Projects and Budget: The budget ceiling is set at 38,000 CHF for the entire project, including the support for three country-level pilots. To allow for accurate financial planning, could you please clarify if bidders are expected to include costs for physical, in-country travel for fieldwork and stakeholder workshops? Or should the proposal be based on a fully remote delivery and support model for the pilot projects?

Please include all costs anticipated for delivery of the project

48. Regarding the Country Selection Process: The tender states that the three pilot countries will be selected "jointly with the UPU". What is the expected process for this? Should the bidder propose a justified shortlist of candidate countries for the UPU to choose from, or will the UPU provide a list of preferred countries for which the pilot concepts are to be designed?

Initial draft list will be appreciated

49. Regarding Access to Designated Operators (DOs): The success of the pilot projects will critically depend on the cooperation of the national Designated Operators. Will the UPU actively facilitate introductions to the relevant decision-makers and contacts within the DOs of the selected pilot countries?

Yes, UPU will facilitate the connection.

50. Regarding the Scope of "Packaging": The tender refers to "packaging" in a broad sense. To ensure a focused and impactful analysis, could you specify if there is a pre-existing priority on certain packaging streams (e.g., e-commerce cardboard boxes, plastic mailers, reusable packaging)? Or is the identification and prioritization of these streams intended to be a key output of the study itself?

51. Regarding Existing Data and Studies: To ensure our analysis builds upon existing knowledge and avoids duplication of effort, will the successful bidder be granted access to any relevant internal UPU studies, data, or findings from previous work in the areas of sustainability, circular economy, or reverse logistics?

Yes, subject to the Agreement between the Parties

52. Which of the mentioned objectives of the study does UPU consider highest priority?

All stated objectives are considered equally important.

53. How does the UPU define success for this study - what outcomes would be most valuable to UPU and its members?

Actionable insights supporting UPU policy dialogue and initiatives.

For the targeted stakeholder consultation:

54. When would UPU expect the sessions to take place (throughout the entire project, or possible to schedule them along the project within different phases to gain feedback)?

Sessions may be scheduled across different project phases.

55. Will UPU invite the relevant partners as proposed by KPMG?

Partner invitations will be validated and led by UPU.

56. For how long does UPU expect individual sessions to take place?

Duration agreed on a case-by-case basis.

57. How will UPU decide whether sessions shall take place virtually or in-person?

Based on cost, relevance, and logistics.

58. On what basis will UPU inquire KPMG to prepare more than 3 stakeholder consultations?

Based on study needs and engagement opportunities.

59. Designated Operators generally mean government postal agencies. Would stakeholders include private logistics companies?

Yes, where relevant and appropriate.

60. Which stakeholders are expected during the final presentation of the report?

Relevant UPU teams and selected external stakeholders.

61. What level of detail does the UPU expect in the analysis of current practices (analytical and technical assessment)?

Strategic and analytical, not operationally exhaustive.

62. What level of support does the UPU expect in the development and implementation of the country-level demonstration project?

Design and limited implementation support only.

63. Will the UPU provide access to (anonymized) data from member operators to support the value chain analysis, or is the study limited to publicly available and voluntarily shared information (Desktop research)?

Subject to availability and confidentiality constraints.

64. Are there sensitivities or constraints to consider when proposing roles for the UPU and other stakeholders in the roadmap?

Yes, UPU institutional mandate must be respected.

65. Did UPU already conduct similar studies in the past?

Yes, in related sustainability and circular economy areas.

66. Are there any key deadlines during the project beyond those listed in the RfP?

No additional deadlines are foreseen.

67. Will there be a formal kickoff meeting, and if so, when is it expected?

Yes, timing agreed with selected bidder.

68. For each deliverable (e.g., interim report, draft report, country-level project), what review and approval process will the UPU follow, and how much time should we allocate for feedback cycles in the project plan?

UPU review with iterative feedback cycles.

69. Is there a certain structure or format that the final report and deliverables should follow?

Standard UPU formats apply unless otherwise agreed.

70. Is there a maximum file size for the proposal submission?

No specific file size limit is defined.

71. Regarding the Analytical and technical assessment (4.1), the geographic scope is not given. However the assessment criteria (4.4) mention a number of countries proposed. Does the technical proposal have to include a proposition of countries to analyse? If so, is there a minimum requirement on geographic areas and / or number of countries?

Please provide your draft list

72. It is expected to support the design and partial delivery of 3 country-level projects (4.1). We understand that the vendor should produce a scoping document containing the definition of streams, logistical flow, accountabilities and indicative financial structure sufficient ("design"). What precisely is included in the "partial delivery"?

It will be discussed with the selected bidder.

73. Which costs of country-level partial delivery are covered by the 38 000CHF budget ceiling, and which are not?

Design, structuring, facilitation of demonstrative activities, and necessary travels and partial operational pilots, with scope and depth calibrated to the available budget.

74. The vendor is expected to document the implementation process and preliminary outcomes of pilot projects (4.1). If, at country-level, the pilot projects take longer to deploy than the duration of the tender (four months) due to DOs, will there be a subsequent contract with a dedicated budget?

Future work subject to separate arrangement.

75. What is the meaning of the Abbreviation "DO" in the tender document (first used in chapter 2.3 Scope)?

Designated operator any governmental or non-governmental entity officially appointed by a Universal Postal Union (UPU) member country to operate postal services and fulfill treaty obligations on its territory

76. The Assessment criteria mention that “bidders with networks and staff deployed in emerging economies [...] will be given preference”. Also, the points include “number of countries the proposal covers”. However:

- The Description of Services (4.1) does not include a proposal for specific countries in which to perform a country-level project, only to “assist the UPU in identifying interested members”.
- The Description of Services (4.1) in our opinion do not necessitate travel to the concerned countries

How will these points be assigned? Does the description of services sought need to be included?

At least one travel is expected back to back to UPU national or regional events. Points assigned based on proposal quality, coverage, and experience.

77. Types of packaging waste considered: The tender is unclear on what types of packaging is to be considered under this tender and thus the scope of the study. Considering the specifics of the environment of postal organizations, a variety of packaging could be inside / outside of the scope of this study. For example

- Packaging specifically related to postal processes (e.g. Parcel Packaging including filler and strapping bands)
- Packaging not specifically related to postal processes (e.g. Food and other Product Packaging).

Can you elaborate if any previous work has been done to select a focus? Or if some packaging is a priori not included in the study?

Scope is intentionally broad; prioritization is part of study.

78. The document notes that the duration is “expected to be 4 months” while also asking bidders to state the anticipated duration. We kindly request the UPU to confirm whether the contract period is fixed at four months or if a slightly longer period (e.g. 5–6 months) can be proposed if justified by the methodology.

Yes, duration can be longer – bidder to provide information on expected delivery duration.

79. It is understood from our previous experience that the budget ceiling for projects of similar nature is low. For smooth execution of the project, it is requested to raise the ceiling to 70,000 CHF.

No comments, ceiling is in the RFP.

80. It is requested to clarify the study area for the project, including the countries to be focused on for the analytical and technical assessment.

Countries will be discussed with the successful bidder; feel free to provide your options.

81. We kindly request clarification on whether these three consultations should be distributed across selected countries and global level (e.g. 1–2 national, 1 global), and whether there is any preference for virtual vs. in-person to optimize costs within the fixed budget.

Consultations may be national and/or global; virtual preferred.

82. We kindly request the UPU to clarify whether the Vendor is expected to actively lead outreach with potential partners, or primarily to provide technical input and documentation, with formal engagement led by the UPU.

Vendor supports technically; UPU leads formal partner engagement.

83. We kindly request the UPU to indicate whether there are any minimum requirements for the team leader and other consultants (e.g. minimum years of experience, academic qualifications, language skills), beyond the qualitative criteria mentioned.

Please provide CVs of the proposed team and Team Lead.

84. We kindly request clarification on the expected level of physical presence in Berne: whether at least one in-person mission is anticipated, or whether the assignment could be delivered remotely if justified. If in-person work is expected, we request indicative number/duration of missions.

To be discussed based on the methodology proposed.

85. We kindly request clarification on whether there is any page limit or recommended maximum length for the overall technical proposal, and whether annexes such as CVs, detailed work plans, and reference letters are counted within any such limit.

Up to the bidder, but please be reasonable.