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# Last Mile initiative

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## In Macedonia, Pre-RFP is Key

For Macedonia Connects, early involvement of potential bidders in the Request for Proposal (RFP) process resulted in a better solicitation for their Last Mile Initiative component. Instead of holding a Bidders Conference after announcing a RFP only to clarify information already published, USAID/ Macedonia held a Pre-Bidders Conference.

According to Glenn Strachan, Macedonia Connects Chief of Party, it was a successful approach that allowed potential bidders to provide substantive input into the process. Over 50 individuals participated in the conference held at the Skopje Holiday Inn on December 7th. Strachan fielded the audience's questions—mainly dealing with the uncertain policy environment in which potential bidders are operating and about emerging technologies. "This process allowed us to modify the draft RFP in order to address some of the audience's concerns."



Photo by: John Martone, Macedonia Connects

Potential bidders make their voices heard early in the process.

The RFP is being issued in order to provide broadband services for approximately 430 schools and selected university dormitories within the Republic of Macedonia. Proposals are due in early February. Because this is a local procurement, only registered Macedonian firms can be the prime subcontractor. Any other firms wanting to participate would have to partner with a Macedonian Internet Service Provider (ISP) or communications services provider.

## U.S. IT Firms May Donate Equipment, Expertise

Missions could draw upon support from innovative technology manufacturers in a new public-private partnership now being considered by the Last Mile Team in Washington. Companies would contribute staff time and equipment. USAID would assist with travel grants.



Recent trade show exhibitors include wireless transceiver manufacturers Raylink, WaveIP, Proxim, Orinoco, Ceragon, Motorola, Redline, and RadioLan; antenna manufacturers Huber-Suhner, Pacific Wireless, and RadioWaves; resellers like Connectronics in Cedar Rapids; system integrators like Caynet in Boise; and specialized e-biz solution providers like Shipcom Wireless in Houston.

Industry trade associations would facilitate in identifying the right companies for particular overseas pilots and demonstrations as part of Last Mile programs. The Global Development Alliance Secretariat is assisting with the design of the proposed partnership. The USAID Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization is helping with ideas to assure participation by smaller companies.