

Government launches open tender for Site 3 of New Central Harbourfront under two-envelope approach

The Government announced today (December 18) the launch of the open tender for disposal of Site 3 of the New Central Harbourfront (i.e. Inland Lot No. 9088) under the two-envelope approach. The tender invitation will close on June 18, 2021.

Site 3 has a site area of about 47,967 square metres and is designated for non-industrial (excluding residential, godown and petrol filling station) purposes. The maximum gross floor area that may be attained is 150,000 sq m (excluding public facilities and the Government Accommodation to be constructed or reprovisioned by the purchaser as stipulated under the Conditions of Sale). The purchaser will be required to provide within the lot public open space of not less than 25,000 sq m in total (of which not less than 12,000 sq m shall be provided at grade), a continuous landscaped deck spanning above Lung Wo Road and Yiu Sing Street, and a multi-level pedestrian connection linking up the hinterland of the core business district (CBD) in Central with the harbourfront. These public open space and pedestrian connection facilities will be open to the public round the clock and free of charge. Under the approved Central District (Extension) Outline Zoning Plan, Site 3 is also subject to stringent building height restrictions. The maximum building height for the western portion is 50 metres above the Hong Kong Principal Datum (mPD), while that for the eastern portion is 16 mPD.

A spokesperson for the Development Bureau said, "Site 3 is a sizeable premier commercial site in the CBD in Central. Coupled with its prime harbourfront location, the integrated development will benefit Hong Kong both economically and socially. The Government hopes that this project can optimise development space by providing the maximum possible commercial floor space to address the city's strong demand for prime Grade A offices, while creating a world-class harbourfront with quality public open space and pedestrian-oriented connectivity."

The spokesperson added, "Our vision is for Site 3 to become a new landmark for Hong Kong, setting a benchmark for people-centric design with emphases on sustainable and urban design considerations as well as integration with the surroundings. In this connection, the Government has decided to adopt a two-envelope tender process whereby tenderers' proposals will be evaluated on the bases of design merits and premium offers separately, and the proposal achieving the best combination of both will win."

The tendering arrangements have been drawn up with due regard to the Stores and Procurement Regulations (SPR). Tenderers are required to submit their premium proposals and non-premium proposals concurrently but in two

separate envelopes. Key features of the tender assessment criteria include:

- An equal weighting of 50 per cent each will be given to the assessment of the premium and non-premium aspects;
- A non-premium proposal must reach a passing mark to ensure that the design adopted has attained the required quality. Similarly, only a premium proposal that is not lower than the reserve price predetermined by the Government (on the tender closing date in accordance with the established practice) will be accepted, so as to ensure reasonable returns for this commercial site in the interests of public revenue. A premium proposal lower than the reserve price will be regarded as non-conforming. In other words, a tender will only be regarded as conforming after passing both the premium and non-premium assessments; and
- A non-premium proposal has to comply with the Planning Brief (PB) endorsed by the Town Planning Board (TPB) for Site 3 in 2016. In other words, a tenderer should prepare a design proposal based on the PB. The assessment criteria have been grouped into six categories, namely overall design and development concept; setting a new benchmark for people-centric and sustainable design; quality of architectural and urban design; quality of landscaping and attractiveness of public open space (including the landscaped deck); connectivity and walkability within and outside the site; and composition of commercial uses and placement of Government, Institution and Community (G/IC) uses. Detailed assessment criteria and relevant considerations have been set out in the tender document.

"The major requirements in the PB form the backbone of the assessment criteria. On top of that, the assessment criteria also reward proposals that can realise the vision set out above and attach particular importance to aspects with strong public interest including the quality of architectural and urban design, the public open space, connectivity and walkability, greening and landscaping, and G/IC facilities," the spokesperson added.

Since the announcement of disposal of Site 3 under the two-envelope approach in February this year, the Government has briefed the Harbourfront Commission, the Land and Development Advisory Committee, the TPB and representatives of five development-related professional organisations, and listened to their views. Members of the above committees and organisations come from different sectors including professional institutes, civic and environmental groups and businesses. They all welcomed the Government's decision to sell Site 3 under the two-envelope approach, and looked forward to the early development of the site. The Government has fully taken into account their views when finalising the assessment criteria.

In light of the complexity of Site 3 and having regard to the views of the relevant sectors, the tender period will last for six months, thereby allowing sufficient time for tenderers and their teams to prepare design proposals. The tender periods of previous land sales under the two-envelope approach were also longer than those for conventional cash tenders.

In accordance with the SPR requirements, assessment will be carried out by a Tender Assessment Panel (TAP) comprising government officials, so as to safeguard the integrity of the procurement exercise. The TAP will be chaired by the Permanent Secretary for Development (Planning and Lands), with senior directorate officers from different professions serving as members.

In addition, the Government has appointed eight experts from the fields of architecture, landscape architecture, planning, building surveying, urban design, place making, creation of public realms, social development and more as independent Technical Advisors (TAs). The TAs have earlier provided views on the assessment criteria, and will offer professional advice to the TAP on the non-premium proposals received. All TAs appointed are required to refrain from taking part in the preparation of individual bids for Site 3 or providing advice to potential tenderers on the site.

The list of TAs is as follows:

Professor Leslie Chen Hung-chi
Mr Cheung Hau-wai
Mr Ivan Ho Man-yiu
Professor Ling Kar-kan
Mr Francis Ngai Wah-sing
Professor Tang Bo-sin
Professor Wang Weijen
Professor Eric Yim Chi-ming

Land sale documents for Site 3 including the Explanatory Statement, the Information Statement, the Form of Tender, the Tender Notice, the Conditions of Sale and the sale plans are available for downloading from the Lands Department website (www.landso.gov.hk). The sale plans are also available for distribution and inspection by the public from today.

To enhance transparency and with reference to the existing land sale arrangements, apart from announcing the successful tenderer and its combined score, premium offer and details of the design proposal after completion of the tendering process, the Government will also disclose, at an appropriate time after completion of the transaction procedures and on a non-attributable basis, the combined scores, premium offers and the gist of design proposals of all unsuccessful conforming tenderers (i.e. unsuccessful tenderers passing both premium and non-premium assessments).

Before commencement of the development, the purchaser of Site 3 is required to prepare a master layout plan in accordance with its non-premium proposal for approval by the TPB. Members of the public may offer comments according to the existing framework of the Town Planning Ordinance (Cap.

131).

The development of Site 3 has gone through years of thorough public discussion. The Urban Design Study for the New Central Harbourfront completed in 2011 after two stages of extensive public engagement has provided a robust basis for the development of Site 3. The relevant development parameters and design guidelines have also been incorporated into the PB for Site 3. The PB was endorsed by the TPB in 2016 after discussion and refinement, and has become important guidelines for the Site 3 development.