

CADMUS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) AMENDMENT #1

Digital Agriculture Ecosystem Assessments

TO: Potential Offerors

FROM: The Cadmus Group
USAID Digital Forward Mechanism

ISSUANCE DATE: June 20, 2024

MODIFICATION #1 DATE: July 8, 2024

SUBMISSION DATE: July 15, 2024, 17:00 EDT

The Cadmus Group hereby issues Amendment #1 to the Digital Agriculture Ecosystem Assessment Request for Proposals. Amendment #1 includes questions submitted by potential bidders and answers to those questions. All other terms and conditions of the RFP remain unchanged.

DocuSigned by:

Taunya Atwood

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Taunya Atwood
Deputy Director, Digital Forward

Questions and Answers on USAID Digital Agriculture Ecosystem Assessment

Request for Proposals

1. Would there be any Primary Investigator / Research Lead from the Digital Forward Team where the applicant organization assists the Primary Investigator with carrying out the tasks? Or, would the applicant organization need to have its own Primary Investigator?
A. The bidder would need to identify their own team, including a team lead.
2. It is mentioned in the RFP that "Offerors are required to include, at a minimum, one local team member for each different Assessment country for which the Offeror is applying, with total local presence consisting of at least 65% of the total proposed level of effort". Regarding this, we are wondering how the Digital Forward Team defines "local presence".
 - o Would the local team member need to be on the ground inside the Assessment country to be considered as "local presence"?
A. Yes, they would need to be located inside of the country of assessment as no international travel will be paid for under this agreement.
 - o Or, the definition of "local presence" is not bound by where the team member is currently based as long as the team member is from that Assessment Country? And that the team member can conduct the assessment virtually?
A. While parts of the assessment can be carried out virtually, the primary data must be collected in-person.
3. We would like to understand how flexible the timeline is - especially for the Burma Scope of Work, since the volatile political situation and unstable internet connectivity could affect the project timeline and implementation? Are there any Burma's specific RfP or limitations?
A. The bidder is welcome to propose a timeline that they feel would be more appropriate. There are no specific limitations for Burma.
4. Relating to this, is it possible to propose a project proposal to carry out the activities virtually - especially in Burma?
A. No, while we envision that some parts of the assessment can be conducted virtually, we expect primary data to be collected in-person in country.
5. Could we co-submit the proposal with others jointly?
A. Yes, however, this must come in as one technical and one cost proposal, with a clear delineation of roles and responsibilities.
6. What are the expectations on the final report? We identified the "USAID Digital Agriculture Ecosystem Assessment - Uganda" where it has 91 pages.
A. Bidders are welcome to propose what they feel is an appropriate length for the relevant assessment. Generally speaking, assessments are in the range of 40-60 pages, excluding annexes. The Uganda report cited in this question is 60 pages excluding annexes.
7. For this RFP, are there any expectations on the number of pages?

- A. Technical proposals are limited to 15 pages, excluding workplan, CVs of proposed personnel, past performance examples and cover letter. Please see page 6 of the RFP. Bidders should include a country-specific plan for each country you are bidding on, with a maximum for the country plans of 2 pages each. There is no page number limit for cost proposals.
8. The language of the report: Would it be only in English or both English and local language?
A. Only English is required, however, bidders are welcome to propose local language translation as part of their proposal.
9. LOE and Price Range: For a single-country assessment, what are the anticipated level of effort (LOE) ranges and corresponding price ranges?
A. A budget range of \$40,000-\$55,000 with a level of effort of 70-115 days is anticipated for each Assessment. Please see page 4 of the RFP.
10. Technical Proposal Length: What is the expected length of the technical proposal for a one-country assessment?
A. Please see answer to question 7 above.
11. Budget/Cost Narrative Length: What is the expected length for the budget/cost narrative?
A. Please see answer to question 7 above.
12. Local Presence Calculation: The RFP requires at least 65% local presence (excluding copy editing and design). Is the denominator for this calculation the total time (days/hours) or the total cost?
A. The denominator is the total number of people on the team. At least 65% of the team, excluding designers and copy editors, should be local. Offerors who are not able to meet this requirement can submit an alternative plan and justification, which will be considered. Preference will be given to Offerors that meet this threshold.
13. Local Presence Definition: Would the presence of a traveling subject matter expert conducting in-country meetings and interviews qualify as local presence?
A. International travel is not permitted under the resulting agreement. Travel within the country is allowable. Local presence is considered a team member that resides in the country of assessment.
14. Gender Expert: Can the gender expert requirement be met by an individual with expertise in both digital technologies and gender analysis?
A. Yes.
15. Travel Costs: Are travel costs an allowable expense within the cost structure?
A. Yes, but only costs within the country of assessment.
16. Document Format: Could you recommend a document format for the proposal, including guidelines for line spacing, font size, and style?
A. Proposals are due in electronic copy only, in MS Word, MS Excel, and/or PDF formats. The specific format for the budget in Excel was attached to the RFP link. Font should be sans serif and a minimum of 11 point.
17. Annexes: Will annexes be considered, including CVs, Gantt Charts, preliminary list of stakeholders, list of previous projects, and firm's capability statement?

- A. Such annexes are allowable as long as the totality does not exceed 3 pages, excluding the separate CV allowances already stated in the RFP.
18. If we bid for more than one country, are the assessments expected to run in parallel or consecutively? Or can the project team decide?
- A. The expectation is that all assessments will take place at roughly the same time. However, bidders are welcome to propose their own timelines.
19. We have seen some past reports that conduct a short version of USAID's Digital Ecosystem Country Assessment first and then a digital agriculture ecosystem assessment. Is that the expectation or can the work focus solely on a deep dive into digital agriculture?
- A. This will solely be a deep dive into the digital agriculture side. There is no expectation that bidders would conduct a full Digital Ecosystem Country Assessment.
20. Since you expect the Offeror to do final copy editing and design, is that budget to be included in the estimated 40-50,000 USD or can that be added on?
- A. This is included in the budget.
21. Is the budget per country? Or can the three countries be pooled as one total budget and allocated as assessed by the project team? For example, can the project team propose to use some of the budget to develop an assessment framework as a basis for all three countries? That is a per country budget.
- A. Bidders who want to bid on more than one assessment are welcome to propose shared costs across countries as long as the total does not exceed the maximum price per assessment. For example, a bidder applying for two assessments should not exceed \$110,000 in total for both assessments.
22. Given the Burma is in civil war, how do you plan to ensure the safety and confidentiality of the work in-country? If that is a risk that the Offeror must take, is there additional budget available?
- A. This is a risk the offeror will be asked to assume.
23. Is travel to the country required for any international consultants?
- A. No international travel will be reimbursed under the award. Any work completed by an international consultant is expected to be completed virtually (or at the cost of the bidder).
24. Can Cadmus provide a copy of the "USAID digital agriculture ecosystem assessment guide" referenced in the RFP?
- A. This guide will be provided to bidders who are selected to conduct the assessments. The guide is not prescriptive.
25. Is there a specific assessment framework identified for use? If not, what are the expectations for developing the assessment framework?
- A. The digital agriculture ecosystem assessment guide provides a general assessment framework. Selected bidders will receive this upon award so that they can finalize their methodology and approach using the guidance.
26. If direct participation is not possible, would USAID consider proposals from joint ventures between a US-based entity and a local company? We are open to partnering with a qualified local firm to leverage our combined expertise and meet the RFP requirements.
- A. Yes, joint ventures are allowed. However, we will only accept one proposal from the local firm.

27. Are US-based firms eligible to apply?

A. Yes.

28. Can you confirm the three countries are Burma, Niger, and Guatemala?

A. Yes, these are the three countries selected for assessments.

[END OF AMENDMENT]