DAI

Digital Frontiers

Modification 01

to

Request for Proposals (RFP)

No. 2022-08

Digital Agri Hub – State of the Sector

Issue Date: June 9, 2022

RFP No.	2022-08
RFP Issue Date	May 19, 2022
Modification 01 Issue Date	June 9, 2022
Title	Digital Agri Hub – State of the Sector
Issuing Office & Email	Digital Frontiers c/o DAI DigitalFrontiers@dai.com
Revised Deadline for Receipt of Proposals	June 30, 2022, 5 pm EST time to DigitalFrontiers@dai.com
Point of Contact	DigitalFrontiers@dai.com
Anticipated Award Type	Time and Materials or Cost Reimbursable Contract
Basis of Award	An award will be made on the Trade off Method. The award will be issued to the responsible and reasonable offeror who provides the best value to DAI and its client using a combination of technical and cost/price factors.

1. **Purpose**

Modification 01 adds Attachment I to this RFP, consisting of responses to questions and requests for clarifications received by June 1, 2022.

Modification 01 also extends the deadline for proposals to June 30, 2022.

2. **Attachment I: Responses to Questions and Requests for Clarification**

1. To what extent does Digital Frontiers expect methods used in the 2018 Digitalization of African Agriculture Report to be replicated? If this is an expectation, can Digital Frontiers provide copies of the interview guides used for the research? This will ensure bidders are able to better estimate the length and subject matter expertise of the interviews that will be conducted (to ensure incumbent bidders are not advantaged in the procurement process).

   Unfortunately, we are not able to provide access to the interview guides used for the 2018 Digitalization of African Agriculture Report.

2. To what extent will the research draw on investment and research into digital investments made by the donors collaborating on the production of this report, e.g. FCDO's Deep Dive on Digital Innovation within DFID's Agriculture Portfolio?

   FCDO's Deep Dive research would be useful for the purposes of the State of the Sector report. The partners will inquire about the possibility of sharing these deliverables with the selected contractor. Offerors are also encouraged to propose other relevant research funded by other donors that would be valuable to this assignment.

3. Can Digital Frontiers provide a budget range for this award? Alternatively, can USAID provide information on the existing contract size for the 2018 Digitalization of African Agriculture Report?

   Digital Frontiers is not providing a budget range for this RfP nor can we provide any information on the size of the contract of the 2018 Digitalization of African Agriculture Report as the Digital Agri Hub partners were not involved in that report.

4. Please can you share, or give an indication of, the budget ceiling for this opportunity?

   Digital Frontiers is not providing a budget range for this RfP nor is cost included in the evaluation criteria. As described in section 5.1 of the RFP, cost proposals will be reviewed for realism and reasonableness and can be negotiated upon award.

5. Is there a specified team size, specific roles or a delivery model required?

Offerors should propose a team size and roles necessary to implement their proposed technical approach.

6. Can Digital Frontiers please provide guidance on the preferred team size for this award? Alternatively, may offerors consider the team composition from the 2018 Digitalization of African Agriculture Report to be appropriate for this award as well?

There is no preferred team size for the award. The Digital Agri Hub partners were not involved in the 2018 Digitalization of African Agriculture Report and are unaware of that team's composition.

7. The guidelines specify a 10 month timeframe. Are there any external milestones or events that we should be aware of, and is there a penalty for proposing to submit in a shorter/longer timeframe?

Offerors are welcome to propose alternative timelines for consideration as part of their proposal.

8. The timeframe is 10-month long and includes multiple steps that, at times, involve multiple stakeholders. As the timeframe is rather tight, what is the opportunity to extend this project beyond the 10-month period?

Offerors are welcome to propose alternative timelines for consideration as part of their proposal.

9. Will you be looking to include in the report:
   o Country deep dives (similar to the CTA report), as opposed to regional?
   o Case studies on specific players?

Illustrative cases of countries and specific players are expected to be included, largely drawing on existing reference materials. The development of new deep dives based on original research is not required, although relevant existing ones from other sources should be cited and summarized in the report.

10. In including the climate landscape in the report, are there actors/types of initiatives that the DAH initially would like to prioritise profiling (noting that the offeror can reflect further on this question)? E.g. service providers, multi-stakeholder initiatives, digital climate finance mechanisms

We request that the offerors propose actors/initiatives to prioritize based on their expertise and experience.

11. Can you please clarify who the intended target audience is for this report? The RFP references (on p9) USAID's Technology Division in the Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub (ITR/T) at the Development, Democracy, and Innovation (DDI) Bureau, USAID Missions, the private sector, and international and local development organizations – and also states (on p10) that the "primary output of this work will be an externally facing report".

The primary audience are external (i.e. outside of USAID) stakeholders with an interest in the digital agriculture ecosystem. This includes donors, NGOs, impact investors, development financial institutions, governments, digital practitioners, service providers, SMEs, and ag-tech and fin-tech companies.

12. Are there specific ToRs or minimum levels of experience and qualifications for individual roles in the team? Or can these be shaped by suppliers?

There are no ToRs or minimum levels of experience/qualifications for team roles. The offerors should propose the team members who they feel are most qualified to implement the proposed approach.

13. Based upon the earlier 2019 CTA Digitalization of African Agriculture Report, is a stakeholder mapping/analysis exercise necessary to make specific recommendations to donors and investors in each region, and across regions? How much should this component be emphasized in this current project, and in the technical proposal?

Offerors should propose whatever approach they think makes the most sense to achieve the deliverables.

14. The work-plan talks about 150+ phone interviews, Is it possible to physically travel to both Africa and Latin America, do in-person interviews and analysis, and include a travel / accommodation / per diem budget to support these fact-finding missions, or will all interviews need to be conducted remotely? now that borders are re-opening, it is now more possible to travel into some areas with either minimal or zero quarantine needed, based on this, if travel is allowed, what does DAI advise in terms of missions in-country and to what areas? i.e. one week in brazil, one week in Nairobi, one week in Hyderabad / bangalore, in order to cover the main Digital Agriculture technology centres of intense activity ?

Travel is allowable.

15. Can you re-clarify on the needed Sample size of interviews: Is the number of interviews 150 total (i.e. 50 per region) as stated in the workplan, or 900 total, (i.e. 300 per region)? 300 interviews is what was done in the previous CTA Digitilization African Report, so if we go by that logic, 300 more needed for Asia and 300 needed to LATAM, is that correct?

The expectation is approximately 50 interviews per region.

16. Please confirm whether there is any flexibility on the # of interviews as per pg. 2 of 21, section 3 under "Proposed Tasks & Deliverables" - e.g. 150 spread across regions + 10-15 for global donors. Specifically, if we can reasonably obtain the necessary insights from 5 interviews from global donors vs 10-15 stipulated in the RFP, would it be acceptable?

Yes, it could be reasonable to have fewer interviews if offerors can make the case that a lower number of interviews will be sufficient and representative.

17. In order to carefully select interviewees, across donors / agritech / INGO / farmer-association and other stakeholders, will DAI introduce the selected contractor to individual stakeholders that should be included for the Africa / LATAM / Asia sections, or will all interviewees be identified and selected by the contractor only?

The Digital Agri Hub partners can provide some potential informants, but the contractor will be primarily responsible for identifying and selecting interviewees.

18. Analytical framework: To address all components of D4Ag innovations and digital agri-tech solutions, what methods of analysis are required? Is it suitable to use a mixed-method approach?

- Specifically, which of the following analytical methods is required: a) value chain analysis (including input, producer, consumer, and distribution hubs); b) eco-system landscape analysis (i.e. spider analysis: a series of questions to verify how stakeholders view their country's digital agri-tech developments across six areas: infrastructure services, human capital and culture, density, investment financing, regulatory environment, and readiness indices); c) SWOT analysis?

No specific methods of analysis are required. Offerors may propose whatever approach and methods they feel is most appropriate in order to achieve the objectives of the scope of work.

19. Regarding point '3. Research and Interviews' of the 'PROPOSED TASKS AND DELIVERABLES' section:

o Could you please specify whether the interviews are expected to be with Agtech organizations from the [DAH database](#) or sourced externally?

Interviews may be sourced from the DAH database, but that should not be the only source used to identify interviewees. As specified in the RFP, the selected contractor would be expected to expand the range of entries in the database through their interviews and research, so relying entirely on current entries would be insufficient.

20. Regarding point '1. Kick off and Workplan' of the 'PROPOSED TASKS AND DELIVERABLES' section:
o What is expected of the offeror regarding this [DAH database](#)? As a result of the investigation, is this an input to be improved or is it expected to generate a certain number of new registrations?

Data from any digital agriculture firm should be presented in a format consistent with the DAH database. The precise format will be shared with the selected contractor.

21. Will the offering vendor have access to some of the interviewees/contacts of the previous CTA Report or does DAH want to have a brand new sample of interviewees? Are there certain target interviewees that will be arranged by the DAH team or will the offering vendor be responsible for all recruiting?

DAH can provide some potential interviewees, although it may not be those from CTA. Ultimately, the contractor is primarily responsible for identifying and selecting interviewees.

22. Will the offering vendor have access to the survey instrument used for the CTA report?

At this time, we are unsure if the CTA survey instrument will be made available to the selected contractor. DAH will be able to provide organization attributes that we want collected.

23. Will the offering vendor be responsible for the design and formatting/layout branding, etc. of the Final Report and associated material (including communication material) or will be using DAH-specific branding/templates, etc.?

The selected contractor will be responsible for a high-level of copyediting and design/format for all deliverables. All design will have to comply with DAH branding guidelines.

24. Is there anything from the previous CTA report that the DAH feels is light in content? Anything missing that donors and other stakeholders have communicated explicitly to the DAH team? Any areas where improvements are desired in the new report?

DAH welcomes offerors' opinions on this topic. Please share what you think the previous CTA report was missing, including emerging areas that may not have been relevant at the time of that report, and how your approach would improve those shortcomings in this report.

25. In Section 3 (Page 3) Digital Frontiers notes that "Personnel must meet minimum specifications included in this RFA, and preference will be given to candidates that meet preferred specifications." That said, in Section 1.4 only technical criteria for offerors are mentioned. Can Digital Frontiers please clarify if this was intentional or if other personnel-based requirements also exist.

All references to personnel requirements, minimum or preferred, is inaccurate per the published version of this RFP and therefore should be disregarded by offerors. Offerors are required to demonstrate that their organization meets the technical qualifications listed in Section 1.4 to be considered under this RFP.

26. If applying as a consortium, may offerors include Past Performance Reference from subcontractors in the Past Performance Matrix?

Yes, so long as the implementer of past projects is clearly described.

27. Given the public holidays here in the UK tomorrow and Friday (2ⁿᵈ & 3ʳᵈ June), and the very limited time between publication of this RFP and the submission deadline – can we please request a 1-week extension (until Thursday 23ʳᵈ June)?

The deadline has been revised to June 30, 2022, 5 pm EST

28. Can you please confirm whether the description of staff roles and responsibilities should be included within the 10 page limit? Or can this be included as a separate annex (along with our staff bios/2-page CVs, past performance matrix, and cover letter)?

Staff roles and responsibilities would be included in the 10-page limit whereas staff bios/CVs can be included as a separate annex.

29. Is an indirect cost rate allowed to be charged under this project and if so, do we need to have a NICRA approved by the government to do so?

Yes, indirect rates can be charged, if an organization does not have a NICRA, Digital Frontiers will request audited financials upon award. DAI will verify proposed indirect costs to ensure that no profit is included; this contract will be issued as a subaward under a USAID Cooperative Agreement.

30. The RFP mentions that "DAI anticipates awarding a Time and Materials or Cost Reimbursable contract. This contract type is subject to change during negotiations." Could you clarify whether a milestones-based rather than cost reimbursable contract is possible and under what terms? Could you offer more information on the proposed contract type?

Digital Frontiers plans to issue Time and Materials or Cost Reimbursable contract to account for USAID's iterative approach in reviewing reports. As mentioned in the RFP, Fixed Price contract that is milestone based can be considered upon award negotiations. Any offeror proposing exclusively fixed mechanisms should demonstrate how agile responsiveness to rolling USAID feedback could be achieved without inflating milestone amounts or requiring post award modifications.

31. The RFP requires for offerors to be registered with SAM. Can you clarify at what time in the process the entity needs to be active in SAM?

Digital Frontiers will not issue this contract to an entity that is not registered on SAM.gov, and the registration process can and has delayed contract issuance. So while SAM registration is not required for proposal submission, but DAI strongly recommends that offerors begin that process now. More information can be found here: https://sam.gov/content/entity-registration.

32. *Under FAR 16.601(d), a Time-and-Materials type contract should only be used if no other contract type is suitable. This procurement appears to be suitable as a commercial item Firm Fixed Price contract because the types of services sought by this acquisition are regularly provided to both commercial companies and Executive agencies as commercial items and on a fixed-price basis. Based on the Statement of Work, there does not appear to be a significant difference between the types of consulting services being acquired under the DAI procurement and the types consulting services provided to commercial entities and other government customers. In this regard, over 367 contractors already provide business transformation services to the government on a commercial fixed-price basis via the GSA Schedules. See, e.g., GSA Multiple Award Schedule*

– Professional Services, Schedule 541611. Moreover, we believe it is possible to accurately estimate the extent and duration of the work and to anticipate costs with a reasonable degree of confidence. Accordingly, this procurement should be a FAR Part 12 Commercial Item Firm Fixed Price procurement. Can DAI amend the RFP accordingly? If not, can DAI clarify why this is not a FAR Part 12 Firm Fixed Price contract?

USAID takes an iterative approach to reviewing and revising deliverables, and so we do not believe there is a feasible way to determine the length of the revision process with a reasonable degree of confidence. DAI furthermore views this Scope of Work as tailored to specific needs of this particular activity only and should not be viewed as commercial consulting services. Therefore, for the issuance of this subaward under the Digital Frontiers Cooperative Agreement, we have highlighted Time and Materials or Cost Reimbursable contract types as preferred mechanisms. This is open to negotiation upon award. A reminder that as this RFP will result in a subaward issuance under an assistance cooperative agreement, and per 2 CFR 700.13, offerors must exclude profit from cost proposals.

33. The RFP appears to be out of 21 pages. On the version we have received we can only see up to page 13. Please can you share the remainder of the document.

There are only 13 pages in this RFP, apologies for the confusion.

34. Will organizations be awarded more points for demonstrating more than 3 references, or will only the top 3 references be assessed?

All relevant references will be evaluated; however evaluation scoring will not be affected by supplying more than 3 references.

35. Is there a CV & profile template that DAI have that we should use?

No, offerors are welcome to use their templates, however CVs/Bios should not exceed 2 pages each.

36. Regarding the item 3 on the "Attachment F: Representations and Certifications of Compliance", we would like to better understand what exactly you mean by "**Executive Compensation Certification**"? It means you want us to provide only a list of our 5 most highly compensated contractors or is it something else?

The certifications listed in Attachment F will be included into the contract and signed upon award. However, by submitting a proposal you are agreeing to be in full compliance with the terms and conditions and all applicable US federal government clauses However, no additional documentation is needed at this point.

37. We would like to know if we need to provide the Defense Base Act (BSA). Considering that we are a non-profit organization, our staff have the legal status of contractors rather than employees, all of them being non u.s citizens. Under these circumstances, do we still need to submit it?

DBA must be included in the budget for all employees regardless of nationality.

38.   If our organization is based in one of the continents for the Study (i.e. Asia), is it possible to subcontract local consultants in Latin America and Africa to assist with stakeholder interviews? If yes, would DAI assist to help identify suitable local consultants in those continents that could be contracted to do this work? Do we budget for these, or are these covered separately by DAI and then we coordinate the overall global team?

Yes, this is possible. If local consultants are needed to conduct interviews in other study locations, the offeror should describe their role, recruitment and management plan, and need for DAI assistance (if any) in their technical proposal and include the consultant line item in their cost proposal.

39. Are you open to considering "menu" of prices on the pricing proposal, or should it be a fixed amount as per scope/proposed work to be delivered by the offeror vendor? For example, "communications material" format/content and thus associated prices could vary.

Offerors should provide one cost proposal with one set of prices that reflect the actual cost of the activity without profit. If selected for award, those prices can be further refined in negotiation.

40. Will there be an opportunity for bidders to make oral presentations of the technical proposal prior to the DAI evaluation committee making final adjudication?

No,   there   is   no   plan   for   oral   presentations

Answer for all of the below questions (41-47): The correct link has been shared with offerors and updated in the online postings of the RfP: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PWjPfMMuAs-xGrOh5FppAj9TvIAZjiWdKQ_FivEwz5Y/edit

41. On Page 2 under 'Proposed Tasks and Deliverables' a document is referenced to read for more information. The link is not included. Please can you share the relevant link.

42. On page 2 of 21, Row 9 of the RFP under Proposed Tasks and Deliverables, there is a statement asking offering vendors to "Please read this document for more information on what the research will entail." The word "document" is colored blue and underlined like a hyperlink. Is the link is broken or does this statement refer to the RFP as the 'document'?

43. Could you please provide a working hyperlink to the mentioned document with more information on what the research will entail? The hyperlink is not working (p.10).

44. In the RPF is mention **this document** (see below) in the TORs on page 10, and it looks as if it were a hyperlink (but it is not)

*Kick off and Workplan – the recipient will meet the Digital Frontiers, USAID, BMGF and FCDO teams and ensure there is alignment between the recipient and the teams. Please read **this document** for more information on what the research will entail. During the kickoff, the offeror will also agree with the DAH database partner on how and when to share any innovator data collected over the course of the research.*

We would like to know if the mention "**this document**" refers to the ToRs / RFP, or is it a different separate document? If it is, would you kindly send it to us?

45. The RFP references the following text, which implies that offerors are to read an existing document. That said, the hyperlink is not included in the PDF. Can Digital Frontiers please provide a copy of this document (RFP text, with bold for emphasis: Please read this document for more information on what the research will entail.

46. Please can you share a link to the document on what the research will entail referenced on p.10 of the RFP? This isn't showing as a hyperlink for our team currently

47. Page 10 of the RFP (under Proposed Tasks and Deliverables section in Attachment A) appears to contain a link to a document containing more information about what this research would entail but unfortunately the link does not seem to work (see screenshot pasted below). Can you please share this information asap?

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PWjPfMMuAs-xGrOh5FppAj9TvIAZjiWdKQ_FivEwz5Y/edit

48. To review the above documents, and ensure adequate time to prepare proposals linked with the above missing files, requests a two-week extension to the RFP submission deadline.

The deadline for proposal submission has been extended to June 30, 2022, 5pm EST