

Answers to Questions
USAID TAP EG Digital Ecosystem Country Assessment (DECA) Procurement

1. Could you please specify, whether the CVs provided should be of experts chosen for conducting DECA in Zimbabwe specifically, or be a general roster of experts that could be used globally?

Answer: *CVs for personnel specifically for conducting the Zimbabwe DECA are preferable, particularly showcasing local expertise. However, CVs of experts for DECAs globally are also acceptable as long as the offeror can demonstrate that the proposed combination of CVs address the assigned DECA pillars.*

2. Could you also specify whether a roster of experts in a form of a table can be added as an annex in case the CVs should be specifically for conducting DECA in Zimbabwe?

Answer: *A roster of experts in the form of a table may be added but is not required.*

3. Could you please provide an indicative number of DECAs to be conducted? Could you also indicate which countries/regions the DECAs will be conducted in?

Answer: *The regional/country focus and number of the DECAs will be dependent on demand from USAID missions.*

4. Could you please specify, whether in the illustrative example of conducting DECA in Zimbabwe, the subcontractor would have to provide the team leader, a lead for Pillar 2 and a researcher to work under Pillar 3 on e-commerce aspects, while IDG would provide the lead experts for Pillar 1 and 3?

Answer: *The subcontractor is expected to provide a lead for Pillar 2 and a researcher to work under Pillar 3. However, offerors should propose the number of experts they deem necessary to complete the requirements of the SOW. Offerors can decide the level of expertise needed for each proposed personnel. Offerors should use the personnel levels for their budgeting purposes in line with their technical proposal.*

5. Could you please specify whether there is a page limit for the CVs?

Answer: *While there is no page limit for the CVs, the preferred length of the CVs is no longer than 5 pages.*

6. It's unclear whether the interview phase includes on-site or online interviews. Assuming on-site interviews, will there be travel to the regions, and will IDG provide local office facilities and transportation? What assumption should we apply for the description and budget calculation?

Answer: *Please assume a hybrid model, where some interviews will be conducted online, and others in-country. Costs, including local transportation costs, for a 2-week in-country visit*

should be part of the offeror budget calculations. Requirement for local office facilities for the short-term visit is not anticipated.

7. Do the final report's editor, designer, and translation need to be included in the cost proposal?

Answer: *The final report editing, design, and translation costs should not be included in the offeror's cost proposal.*

8. The sections Technical Approach and Cost Proposal state, "The offeror may assume that it will provide support across Pillar 2 for the illustrative DECA for Zimbabwe and provide inputs into the e-commerce aspects of Pillar 3." Should the Offeror include in the proposal only work for Pillar 2 and the e-commerce aspects of Pillar 3 or provide the SOW for all three Pillars?

Answer: *Offerors are welcome to demonstrate their understanding across all three Pillars, while responding specifically to Pillar 2 and e-commerce aspects of Pillar 3.*

9. Are any stakeholder workshops planned that the Offeror should include in the illustrative technical approach and cost proposal?

Answer: *Stakeholder workshops will be part of socializing the DECA and its findings and recommendations within the mission and outside. However, the Offeror does not need to include workshop costs in the cost proposal, with the exception of LOE requirements for its proposed personnel.*

10. Considering that IDG is soliciting subcontractors in this RFP, can offerors provide a submission as a consortium, or is this opportunity extended only to one applicant/company? If the offeror applies as a team (ie two firms with a teaming agreement.) then should both firms fill out annexes A and B, or only the prime firm.

Answer: *This opportunity is extended to one applicant/company only.*

11. The RFP states that the procurement for this opportunity is conducted through a full and open competition process. Does this mean there will be one or multiple awards under this procurement?

Answer: *There will only be one award under this procurement. However, IDG reserves the right to make no awards following this procurement process.*

12. Section D.3.1 also states that offerors must include a title page and a cover letter. However, section D.3.2 states that offerors must structure their proposals to include a cover page. Are the terms title page and cover page used interchangeably, or are they separate elements that the offeror should include?

Answer: *A cover letter is not required. The Request for Proposal has been changed to reflect this.*

13. Similarly, section D.3.1 mentions that the offeror must include a cover letter. However, section D.3.2, which lays out the format of the offeror's technical proposal, does not mention the

inclusion of said cover letter. Therefore, should offerors include a cover letter in their technical proposal? Or is the cover letter in the RFP covered by section D.3.3 (Cover page)?

Answer: *See answer to Question #12.*

14. If the offerors are supposed to include a cover letter in their proposal, what should it cover?

Answer: *See answer to Question #12.*

15. What is the RFP number that is required to be part of the cover page?

Answer: *There is no RFP number. Please include the RFP title instead.*

16. Section D.3.6 Staffing states that the offeror must include bios of potential personnel that might work on the DECA and lists the requirements (levels) for each expert proposed by the offeror. Does this mean the offerors are limited to proposing only three experts, i.e., one senior-level, mid-level, and junior-level expert? Or can the offeror propose more than three experts from different levels?

Answer: *Offerors should propose the number of experts they deem necessary to complete the requirements of the SOW. Offerors can decide the level of expertise needed for each proposed personnel. Offerors should use the personnel levels for their budgeting purposes in line with their technical proposal.*

17. Will IDG share the CVs provided in the offeror's technical proposal with USAID?

Answer: *IDG will not share any CVs presented in the technical proposal with USAID without the offeror's prior permission.*

18. The section on past performance (D.3.7) states that offerors should provide information on up to three projects. Does this mean offerors should only provide information for three or at least three projects?

Answer: *Offerors should provide information for up to three projects.*

19. The RFP states that the proposal submission due date is March 8, 2023. However, it does not specify the exact time for submissions and the time zone for the proposal submission due date. Does this mean that offerors can assume that proposals can be submitted by 11:59 PM (EST) on March 8, 2023?

Answer: *Yes. Offerors have until 11:59 PM EST to submit their proposals.*

20. The RFP states the award will be a Cost-Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF). However, can offerors opt for a Time and Material award for this project?

Answer: *No. This will be CPFF award.*

21. Is there a budget ceiling for the entire blanket purchase agreement?

Answer: *The overarching budget ceiling for the subcontract will be responsive to demand received from USAID mission.*

22. The budget template provided has a column titled Description. Does that mean the offeror should provide the LCAT, or does it mean the offeror needs to provide the activities the expert will perform?

Answer: *For Labor, the offeror should include the names of personnel under the “Description” column. For ODCs, please include the description of the included items.*

23. As the RFP explains, “IDG anticipates that it will receive requests from USAID Missions to lead several DECAs over the course of TAP EG implementation.”. On the other hand, the DECA Toolkit recommends various options to USAID Missions as they prepare for hiring an external DECA Research Team. Will IDG or subcontractor be allowed to outreach/contact USAID Missions to promote/inform about its DECA services, or will the process be demand-driven only?

Answer: *Mission outreach discussions will take place with the successful offeror.*

24. DECA Toolkit offers detailed definitions and guidelines for team organization, estimated timelines, research methodologies, etc. As we prepare our response to this RFP, since there is no reference in the RFP to the DECA Toolkit, are we restricted to aligning with all DECA Toolkit guidelines, terminology, etc.?

Answer: *Offerors should use the DECA Toolkit as a guide for their technical proposal. However, offerors are also encouraged to provide other approaches that they deem important in response to the SOW requirements.*

25. As an international consulting group, we have an extended pool of international experts available for participation in different projects. As the RFP explains: “The offeror must include the bio blurbs of potential personnel that might work on the DECAs” it is unclear if IDG is interested in a pack of potential personnel or the specific personnel we will consider for the specific example of Zimbabwe?

Answer: *Offerors should demonstrate their ability to quickly respond to specific needs by providing personnel specific for a Zimbabwe DECA. Please also see the answer to Question #1.*

26. Are there any preferences on location of staff? Are local staff considered a better option than expats or TCNs?

Answer: *There is a strong preference for at least one or more local experts. However, offerors may propose a mix of personnel that align with their technical approach.*

27. Outside of the 3 pillars can we propose specific cross cutting areas that would be relevant for Zimbabwe or should we focus exclusively on the core pillars?

Answer: *Offerors should propose complimentary cross cutting areas that are relevant to the Zimbabwe DECA.*

28. Is this RFP eligible to all firms or restricted to just few pre-selected organizations?

Answer: *This procurement is a full and open competition process. All firms are welcome to submit a proposal.*

29. The Digital Ecosystem Framework has four cross-cutting pillars: Digital Inclusion (inc the Gender Digital Divide), Cybersecurity (which often falls under Pillar 2), Emerging Technology (esp important with recent AI news), and Geo-political positioning (this is critical for infrastructure and section 889). However, none of these pillars are mentioned in the RFP - how does IDG plan to address these as part of the DECA?

Answer: *IDG is aware of the USAID Digital Ecosystem Framework and will indeed incorporate these into all DECAs, as appropriate.*

30. Should any of these elements be considered part of the subcontractor's scope for the purposes of the illustrative technical approach (e.g., for the Zimbabwe DECA)?

Answer: *Yes.*

31. Could you kindly clarify whether the proposal is due by a specific time on March 8 (e.g., 11:59 PM ET)? (The RFP says "must be submitted on or before the due date and time listed above" but there's no time listed.)

Answer: *Please see answer to Question # 19.*

32. Is there an illustrative number of participants/set of stakeholders that should be considered in the budget for the "post-interview synthesis sessions"? Is there an expected (or minimum) number of such sessions for which all bidders should account?

Answer: *Offerors may assume that there will be at least 2-3 post-interview synthesis sessions—internally within the research team, but also primarily with mission staff but may include external stakeholders. Offerors should only budget for LOE days anticipated for proposed personnel for such sessions, not the logistical arrangements. Please see answer to Question # 9.*

33. Are such sessions expected to involve a) only IDG and the subcontractor b) IDG, the subcontractor and the USAID Mission or c) additional external stakeholders?

Answer: *Please see answer to Question # 32.*

34. Is there a page limit on annexes (e.g., CVs)?

Answer: *There is no limit on the annexes. While there is no page limit for the CVs, the preferred length of the CVs is no longer than 5 pages.*

35. Is there a limit on the number of CVs that can be submitted?

Answer: *The number of CVs should align with the offeror's technical approach for the illustrative DECA.*

36. Is it permissible to submit CVs for staff additional to those named in the Staffing Section of the proposal?

Answer: *Yes but this is not required. But please see answers to Questions #1 and #2.*

37. For budgeting/scoping our approach, should we assume that consultations are conducted in-person (with prospective international travel), in-person by a subcontractor engaged in-country consultant, in-person by an IDG managed in-country consultant, or virtually?

Answer: *Please see answer to Question #6. Please assume that all key team members responsible for drafting particular DECA pillar sections or a significant sub-section of a pillar are anticipated to participate in the virtual and in-country visits.*

38. For budgeting, should we assume that IDG will be engaging an in-country research consultant that will support research efforts across pillars? Or should any envisioned engagement with in-country experts be considered – and budgeted for – within the proposed approach (at least as pertains to Pillar 2 and the relevant element of Pillar 3)?

Answer: *Offerors should propose and budget for any local personnel needed for the assigned pillars/sub-pillars of the illustrative DECA.*