

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Issue Date:	February 22, 2023
Questions Submission Due Date:	March 1, 2023
Proposal Submission Due Date:	11:59 PM, March 10, 2023

**Subject: USAID TAP EG Digital Ecosystem Country Assessment (DECA)
Procurement**

All Prospective Offerors:

International Development Group Advisory Services, LLC (International Development Group LLC or IDG) is soliciting proposals from qualified organizations to provide technical services as described in this solicitation. This procurement will require a formal technical and cost proposal submission as outlined by the Request for Proposal (RFP). This procurement will be conducted through a full and open competition process under which any type of organization is eligible to compete. IDG anticipates awarding a Cost Plus Fixed Fee (CPFF) with a period of performance of 4 years from the date of award as a result of this solicitation. Competition under this procurement will be full and open.

Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted on or before the due date and time listed above to **procurement@internationaldevelopmentgroup.com**. In the subject line reference: Questions – USAID TAP EG DECA Procurement.

All proposals, consisting of the documentation required, must be submitted electronically to **procurement@internationaldevelopmentgroup.com** on or before the due date stipulated above. All submitted documents must conform to the requirements outlined in the solicitation.

Documents received after the deadline will not be considered. This solicitation in no way obligates IDG to award a contract nor commit to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal.

Thank you for your interest in working with IDG.

Sincerely,

IDG Procurement Team

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SECTION A. STATEMENT OF WORK

A.1. BACKGROUND AND OBJECTIVE

IDG intends to engage a subcontractor that can support IDG in conducting Digital Ecosystem Country Assessments (DECA) under the Technical Assistance Project for Economic Growth (TAP EG). TAP EG provides, on a buy-in basis, DDI/EMD and other centers, hubs, offices, and operating units with technical leadership in a range of topics related to economic growth. IDG anticipates that it will receive requests from USAID Missions to lead several DECAs over the course of TAP EG implementation. The scope, timeframe, and budgetary parameters of each DECA implementation will depend on IDG and the USAID Mission reaching an agreement.

The DECA, a flagship initiative of the [USAID Digital Strategy 2020-2024](#), informs the development, design, and implementation of USAID’s strategies, projects, and activities. The DECA aims to inform how USAID Missions can understand, work with, and strengthen the country’s digital ecosystem. The DECA looks at three pillars of a nation’s digital ecosystem: (1) digital infrastructure and adoption; (2) digital society, rights, and governance; and (3) the digital economy.

1. **Digital Infrastructure and Adoption:** Digital infrastructure and adoption refers to the resources that make digital systems possible and how individuals and organizations access and use these resources. Digital infrastructure includes geographic network coverage, network performance, internet bandwidth, and spectrum allocation as well as telecom market dynamics around security, interoperability and competitiveness. This pillar also examines behavioral, social, and physical barriers and opportunities for equitable adoption (digital divides, affordability, and digital literacy)—who uses and does not use digital technologies and why.
2. **Digital Society, Rights, and Governance:** Digital society, rights, and governance focuses on how digital technology intersects with government, civil society, and the media. This pillar is divided into three sub-pillars: Internet Freedom; Civil Society and Media; and Digital Government. Internet Freedom explores factors that enable or constrain the exercise of human rights and fundamental freedoms online. This includes individual rights to freedom of speech, privacy, and free assembly, and the abuse of these rights through digital repression. Civil Society and Media identifies key institutions and how they report on, advocate around, and influence online freedoms. Digital Government looks at the government’s efforts to manage internal information technology (IT) processes and systems, deliver citizen- and business-facing e-services, and engage with the public through digital channels.
3. **Digital Economy:** Digital economy explores the role digital technology plays in increasing economic opportunity and efficiency, trade and competitiveness, and global economic integration. Areas of inquiry include digital financial services (credit or debit cards, payment apps, mobile money, and digital savings and loan products), financial inclusion, regulation of digital finance, digital trade, e-commerce, and the financial technology (FinTech) enabling environment. This pillar also assesses strengths and weaknesses in the local digital talent pool and the tech startup environment; a healthy digital economy requires a supply of ICT skills that matches the demand and an ecosystem that promotes technological innovation.

A.2. GUIDANCE ON METHODOLOGY

For the purposes of this RFP, we ask potential subcontractors to provide information on how they would support IDG to work on an illustrative DECA for Zimbabwe. Each DECA includes three phases: 1) Desk Research and Planning, 2) Interviews, and 3) Analysis and Report Writing.

A.3. TASKS

The selected firm/subcontractor will:

- Provide overall management of one or more pillars of the DECA, including technical research, report writing, logistics, and field interviews.
- Provide Expat, TCN, or host-country staff to ensure accurate coverage of one or more of the DECA pillars.

During the three DECA phases, the subcontractor will:

I. Desk Research and Planning Phase:

- Work with the IDG team to conduct or guide desk research, desk research, lead identification of key themes and knowledge gaps under one or more DECA pillar or sub-sections within a specific pillar;
- Serve as lead author for one or more desk research briefs;
- Provide technical review and final sign-off of desk research briefs.

II. Interview Phase:

- Develop and review content of the DECA presentations, particularly for the pillar assigned to the subcontractor team
- Lead DECA presentations for one or more pillars
- Provide guidance and input on interview guides for one or more pillars
- Lead interviews for one or more pillars, or for sub-sections within a specific pillar.

III. Analysis and Report Writing Phase:

- Lead post-interview synthesis session to identify trends for a particular pillar;
- Lead or delegate amongst subcontractor team members report-writing responsibilities for one or more pillars;
- Serve as lead author for at least one DECA Pillar findings and recommendations section;
- Provide final technical review and sign-off of the overall DECA report.

A.4 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A.4.1 USAID: USAID will provide the following support to IDG and the selected subcontractor firm:

- Provide oversight of IDG's contract;
- Review and provide consent to subcontract for IDG; and
- Provide technical review of key deliverables.

A.4.2 IDG: IDG will provide the following support to the selected subcontractor:

- Provide technical guidance and implementation support;
- Provide necessary support and guidance to the subcontractor on subcontract-related issues;
- Lead one or more pillars of the DECA.

A.4.3. Subcontractor: The subcontractor will be responsible for the following:

- Provide implementation support to the DECA overall, but particularly to the assigned DECA pillar;
- Lead one or more of the DECA pillars and provide relevant staff for those pillars;
- Ensure quality control of shared deliverables.

A.5 DELIVERABLES

List of Deliverables

Output for each DECA
Deliverable 1: At least one Desk Research Brief for the assigned pillar (one Desk Research Brief per Pillar led)
Deliverable 2: Lead Presentation to USAID on assigned pillar prior to data collection
Deliverable 3: Provide guidance and input on interview guides related to assigned pillar, and overall across all pillars
Deliverable 4: Summary report of data collection
Deliverable 5: Post-interview synthesis session to identify trends, particularly on assigned pillars
Deliverable 6: Report on assigned pillar findings and recommendations section

Unless specifically instructed otherwise, all reports shall be submitted electronically in MS Office Word or Excel and PDF. All deliverables are to be submitted in English. Final due dates for all deliverables will be discussed with IDG and then included in the subcontract work order.

SECTION B. DELIVERIES AND PERFORMANCE

B1. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

The period of performance is estimated to begin on the **date of award** and **July 29, 2027**.

B2. LIST OF DELIVERABLES

The prospective subcontractor is responsible for the following outputs and deliverables:

Deliverable	Estimated Due/Completion Date*
Deliverable 1: At least one Desk Research Brief for the assigned pillars	TBD
Deliverable 2: Lead Presentation to USAID on assigned pillar prior to data collection	TBD
Deliverable 3: Provide guidance and input on interview guides related to assigned pillar, and overall across all pillars	TBD
Deliverable 4: Summary report of data collection	TBD
Deliverable 5: Post-interview synthesis session to identify trends, particularly on assigned pillars	TBD
Deliverable 6: Report on assigned pillar findings and recommendations section	TBD

*The dates will be finalized during contract negotiations.

Unless specifically instructed otherwise, all reports shall be submitted electronically in MS Office Word, Excel, or PDF. All deliverables are to be submitted in English. Final due dates for all deliverables will be discussed with IDG and then included in the contract.

SECTION C. PAYMENT

C.1. PAYMENT SCHEDULE

The payment schedule will be determined during negotiations.

SECTION D. PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

The technical proposal must be entirely separate from the cost proposal, and it must not include cost information in the content of the technical proposal. The technical proposal must be organized by the technical evaluation criteria listed in Section E and must discuss and address the performance of services described in Section A.

D.1 QUESTIONS CONCERNING THE RFP

Questions regarding this opportunity must be submitted by the date and time in the cover page to **procurement@internationaldevelopmentgroup.com**. In the subject line reference: Questions – USAID TAP EG DECA Procurement.

D.2 PROPOSAL DUE DATE

Proposals must be submitted electronically to *procurement@internationaldevelopmentgroup.com* by the date and time in the cover page. All submitted documents must conform to the requirements outlined in the solicitation.

Documents received after the deadline will not be considered. This solicitation in no way obligates IDG to award a contract nor does it commit TAP EG, or by association IDG, to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal.

D.3 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Offers submitted in response to this solicitation shall be in the English language. Offers received in other than English shall be rejected. Documents prepared in response to this RFP must be submitted in accordance with the instructions described below. It is up to the discretion of IDG whether late submissions will be considered. Typically, these will not be considered.

Details on the proposal instructions are as follows:

D.3.1 Page Limitation

Offerors must limit Technical Proposals to **6 pages** excluding those documents listed under the “**Note:**” below. IDG will not read or evaluate any of the pages after Page 6. The technical proposal must be written in English using Times New Roman font point size 12 with one-inch margins all around, typed on standard 8.5” x 11” (210 mm by 297 mm) paper, single spaced with each page numbered consecutively. Proposals must be legible and require **NO** magnification. The Offeror may use a smaller Times New Roman font only for tables, charts, and graphs; but, the font must remain clearly legible and not be smaller than 9 point. The technical proposal must be submitted in Adobe Acrobat (PDF) or Word format. **Failure to comply with these instructions may be grounds for exclusion from further consideration.**

Note: The page limit does not include the following:

1. Cover page (not to exceed one page)
2. Table of contents (if applicable)

3. Executive Summary (one page).
4. Annexes

Information from annexes should be summarized in the narrative of the Technical Proposal, as appropriate with references to the respective annexes. A page in the technical proposal that contains a table, chart, graph, etc., not otherwise excluded is subject to the page limitation. Text in graphs and charts must not have a font size smaller than 9-point.

D.3.2 ORGANIZATION

The technical proposal must be organized according to the evaluation factors in Section E and must address all evaluation factors. Specifically, its organization must be in the following format:

1. Cover Page
2. Executive Summary
3. Technical Approach
4. Staffing
5. Past Performance
6. Annex (CVs)

The following describes the prescription for the respective sections of Technical Proposal:

D.3.3 COVER PAGE

The Cover Page must not exceed one page. It must include the following.

- **RFP title**
- Name of organization submitting proposal
- UEI number
- Name and title of contact person with the organization
- Name and title of person with authority to negotiate
- E-mail address; telephone numbers; postal and physical addresses

D.3.4 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Executive Summary must summarize the implementation approach and describe how the Offeror proposes to meet the contract's objectives, planned methodologies that will allow it to implement its Scope of Work, and achieve the anticipated results. The Executive Summary must not exceed 1 page.

D.3.5 TECHNICAL APPROACH (3 pages)

The Offeror must include in their technical approach the following:

- Explanation to address how the Offeror intends to carry out the SOW objectives and specific tasks for the illustrative DECA for Zimbabwe. It must demonstrate a clear technical understanding of the work to be performed and the approach and methodology the Offeror proposes to implement to achieve the results.
- The Offeror must demonstrate how it proposes to coordinate their efforts with IDG to work together as a team to deliver the DECA reports.

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.

D.3.6 STAFFING (1 page)

The offeror must include the bio blurbs of potential personnel that might work on the DECAs. As an annex to the technical proposal, the offeror must include the CVs of all named personnel and must indicate which category and level each personnel will be proposed as. Please find requirements below:

- To be considered at the senior level, the candidate must have 10 years of work experience and a BA or MA
- To be considered at the mid-level, the candidate must have 7 years of work experience and a BA or MA
- To be considered at the junior level, the candidate must have up to 3 years of work experience and a BA or MA

D.3.7 PAST PERFORMANCE (2 pages)

Past Performance: The Offeror must provide performance information for itself, and the contractor teaming arrangements, if any. Please provide information on up to three projects.

D.3.8 Cost Proposal

Offerors must use the cost template (see Annex C) to submit a complete cost proposal for the illustrative DECA for Zimbabwe. The budget should be completed based on the technical approach and staffing proposed by the company for Zimbabwe. The budget can include illustrative experts and can assume that the subcontractor will be responsible for Pillar 2 with inputs across all of the other DECA pillars, and particularly on the e-commerce aspects of Pillar 3.

Offerors must include indirect rates in accordance with their NICRA and audited financials.

D.4 ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS

1. Representations and Certifications: A completed copy of the representations and certifications must be submitted with the proposal. A copy of Section 889 Certification (Annex A) filled out by the organization must be submitted with the proposal.

2. Evidence of Responsibility: the offeror will make an affirmative determination of responsibility and must address each element of responsibility in the template provided (Annex B).

The proposal must be emailed to procurement@internationaldevelopmentgroup.com no later than the time and date shown on the cover page.

Note: Please make sure to type the email addresses as per instructions. It is the offeror's responsibility to verify receipt of their quote by IDG.

SECTION E. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR AWARD

E.5 QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE OF THE FIRM

The selected consulting firm shall possess the following qualifications:

- Demonstrated experience in conducting assessments of a scale and complexity similar to those envisaged by the SOW for the past five years;
- Strong capacity and experience in planning and organizing logistics;
- Strong capacity in qualitative research; and
- Demonstrated experience of key personnel

E.5.1 EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be equally evaluated according to the following criteria:

- Demonstrated understanding of the requirements set forth in the RFP;
- Relevance and quality of proposed qualitative research and analysis;
- Qualifications and experience of key personnel responsible for managing the subcontract and administering STTA experts and consultants; and
- Reasonableness of the proposed costs.

E.5.2. COST EVALUATION

Evaluation points will not be awarded for cost. Cost will be evaluated using price analysis and cost realism analysis and will be done in accordance with FAR 15.404-1.

ANNEX A: SECTION 889 CERTIFICATION

Section 889 Certification

DATE:

FROM:

TO: International Development Group Advisory Services, LLC

SUBJECT: Prohibition on Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment (Section 889)

FIRM NAME certifies that it is in compliance with the below Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR).

52.204-24 Representation Regarding Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment (Dec 2019)

The Offeror shall not complete the representation in this provision if the Offeror has represented that it “does not provide covered telecommunications equipment or services as a part of its offered products or services to the Government in the performance of any contract, subcontract, or other contractual instrument” in the provision at [52.204-26](#), Covered Telecommunications Equipment or Services- Representation, or in paragraph (v) of the provision at [52.212-3](#), Offeror Representations and Certifications- Commercial Items.

(a) *Definitions.* As used in this provision—

“Covered telecommunications equipment or services”, “critical technology”, and “substantial or essential component” have the meanings provided in clause 52.204-25, Prohibition on Contracting for Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment.

(b) *Prohibition.* Section 889(a)(1)(A) of the John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2019 (Pub. L. 115-232) prohibits the head of an executive agency on or after August 13, 2019, from procuring or obtaining, or extending or renewing a contract to procure or obtain, any equipment, system, or service that uses covered telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system. Contractors are not prohibited from providing—

(1) A service that connects to the facilities of a third-party, such as backhaul, roaming, or interconnection arrangements; or

(2) Telecommunications equipment that cannot route or redirect user data traffic or permit visibility into any user data or packets that such equipment transmits or otherwise handles.

(c) *Procedures.* The Offeror shall review the list of excluded parties in the System for Award Management (SAM) (<https://www.sam.gov>) for entities excluded from receiving federal awards for “covered telecommunications equipment or services”.

(d) *Representation.* The Offeror represents that it. _____ will, ____ will not provide covered.

telecommunications equipment or services to the Government in the performance of any contract, subcontract or other contractual instrument resulting from this solicitation.

(e) *Disclosures.* If the Offeror has represented in paragraph (d) of this provision that it “will” provide covered telecommunications equipment or services”, the Offeror shall provide the following information as part of the offer—

(1) A description of all covered telecommunications equipment and services offered (include brand; model number, such as original equipment manufacturer (OEM) number, manufacturer part number, or wholesaler number; and item description, as applicable).

(2) Explanation of the proposed use of covered telecommunications equipment and services and any factors relevant to determining if such use would be permissible under the prohibition in paragraph (b) of this provision.

(3) For services, the entity providing the covered telecommunications services (include entity name, unique entity identifier, and Commercial and Government Entity (CAGE) code, if known); and

(4) For equipment, the entity that produced the covered telecommunications equipment (include entity name, unique entity identifier, CAGE code, and whether the entity was the OEM or a distributor, if known).

The Offeror is required to inform the prime contractor within one (1) business day of identifying any covered equipment/services as required by FAR 52.204-25.

52.204-26 Covered Telecommunications Equipment or Services-Representation (Dec 2019)

(a) *Definitions.* As used in this provision, “covered telecommunications equipment or services” has the meaning provided in the clause 52.204-25, Prohibition on Contracting for Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment.

(b) *Procedures.* The Offeror shall review the list of excluded parties in the System for Award Management (SAM) (<https://www.sam.gov>) for entities excluded from receiving federal awards for “covered telecommunications equipment or services”.

(c) *Representation.* The Offeror represents that it. _____ does, ____ does not provide covered.

telecommunications equipment or services as a part of its offered products or services to the Government in the performance of any contract, subcontract, or other contractual instrument.

The Offeror is required to inform the prime contractor within one (1) business day of identifying any covered equipment/services as required by FAR 52.204-25.

Name and Title: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

ANNEX B: EVIDENCE OF RESPONSIBILITY

1. Authorized Negotiators

[Names of authorized negotiators]

2. Adequate Financial Resources

[Company Name] has adequate financial resources to perform the contract, or the ability to obtain them. [expand your certification with brief supporting information, as necessary]

- a. [Please briefly describe your relationship with your bank, your line of credit, etc. this should be one sentence. Where does your working capital come from?]

3. Ability to Comply.

[Company Name] is able to comply with the required or proposed delivery or performance schedule, taking into consideration all existing commercial and governmental business commitments. [expand your certification with brief supporting information, as necessary]

- a. Briefly describe the systems your company has in place for project management, administration, financing, monitoring, and reporting. These should be a couple of sentences. Briefly describe the systems your company uses to identify and mitigate risk throughout the life of a project. Confirm that your company complies with reporting requirements.
- b. Briefly identify the number of projects completed, the amount, and whether or not there were any cost overruns, and whether task orders were completed on time.

Include a statement that the company is able to comply with the proposed delivery of performance schedule, having taken into consideration all existing business commitments, commercial as well as governmental.

4. Record of Performance, Integrity, and Business Ethics

[Company Name] has a satisfactory performance record in accordance [expand your certification with brief supporting information, as necessary]

- a. Confirm that your company has complied with contract requirements in the past adhered to contract schedules, including the administrative aspects of performance.
- b. Confirm your company's record of forecasting and controlling costs.
- c. Confirm that your principals have never been debarred or suspended.
- d. Explain how the company will work with the client to ensure work quality.

[Company Name] has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics. [expand your certification with brief supporting information, as necessary]

- a. Confirm that your company has never been accused of unethical business practices.
- b. Reference your completion of the Representations and Certifications document.
- c. Identify your company's code of conduct or code of ethics, and briefly describe its contents.

5. Organization, Experience, Accounting and Operational Controls, and Technical Skills

[Company Name] has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills, or the ability to obtain them (including, as appropriate, such elements as production control procedures, property control systems, quality assurance measures, and safety programs applicable to materials to be produced or services to be performed by the prospective contractor and subcontractors). [expand your certification with brief supporting information, as necessary]

- a. Identify the number of projects your company has completed as evidence of its experience.
- b. Reference your company's past performance record. Demonstrate that your company has the capacity in accounting and financial capacity to complete the project.
- c. Identify the type of accounting software your company uses and justify the selection of this software. Is it secure and equipped to handle government contracts?

6. Equipment and Facilities

[Company Name] has the necessary production, construction, and technical equipment and facilities, or the ability to obtain them. [expand your certification with brief supporting information, as necessary]

- a. Briefly describe your company's building and facility.
- b. Briefly describe your company's Information Technology systems including hardware, software, and internet connectivity.

7. Eligibility to Receive Award

[Company Name] is otherwise qualified and eligible to receive an award under applicable laws and regulations. [expand your certification with brief supporting information, as necessary]

- a. Recertify that neither your company nor any of your principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared ineligible for the award of contract by any Federal agency.
- b. Certify that neither your company nor any of its principals have been convicted of or had a civil judgment rendered against them for commission of fraud, or a criminal offense in connection with obtaining, attempting to obtain, or performing a public (federal, state, or local) contractor subcontract.
- c. Confirm that neither your company nor any of its principals has been convicted of committing embezzlement, theft, forgery, bribery, falsification or destruction of records, making false statements, tax evasion, or receiving stolen property, and are not presently indicted for, or otherwise criminally or civilly charged by a governmental entity with commission of any of the offenses enumerated above.

8. Cognizant Auditor

9. Organization of Firm

With the signature below, [Company Name] certifies that the above statements are accurate, complete, and current.

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

ANNEX C: BUDGET TEMPLATE

See Excel file provided.