

To: Offerors

Date: October 7, 2021

From: Procurement and Partnerships Team, INVEST Project; Implemented by DAI Global LLC

Subject: Request for Proposals (RFP) INVEST-098: Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI)
Environment Sub-Index: Research and Analysis of Environmental Policy

Due: 1:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on **November 4, 2021**

Dear Offerors:

Enclosed is a Request for Proposals (RFP) to support the implementation of DAI's INVEST project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). DAI invites firms to submit a proposal to support work under the Vietnam Renewable Energy Transaction Assistance Facility for USAID/Vietnam.

- I. RFP Process and deadlines:** This solicitation will result in the award of a firm fixed price subcontract. We anticipate issuing a single subcontract award expected to be up to US\$150,000 resulting from the implementation of this agreement.
 - a. Submission of Questions – Questions must be submitted no later than **1:00 PM EDT on October 14, 2021** via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com.
 - b. Submission of Proposal – Proposal must be submitted no later than **1:00 PM EDT on November 4, 2021** via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com, copying Laura_Manspeaker@dai.com and Matthew_Mitchell@dai.com. The subject line of the email should be your organization name, followed by “Submission under RFP INVEST-098: Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI) Environment Sub-Index: Research and Analysis of Environmental Policy.” Please certify in your submission email a validity period of 60 days for the price(s) provided and include your organization’s DUNS number. Please limit file submissions to 10 megabytes or less.

- II. Composition of Proposal:** The proposal should comprise the following submission documents. The Technical Proposal and Cost Proposal should be prepared as separate files for independent evaluation, as follows below. Technical proposals should be submitted as a ten (10) slide presentation, using 12-point standard font size. Graphics may be included, so long as text is clearly legible. If text or graphics are of poor resolution, the information provided may be excluded from consideration. Submissions in PowerPoint or PDF are acceptable, although PDF is preferred along with an accompanying PowerPoint document. Please provide a copy of your cost proposal in Excel format; offerors should use the attached cost/budget template.

Part 1 – Technical Proposal

The technical proposal is composed of the following three (3) sections:

1. **Technical Approach** – Offerors will detail their approach to fulfilling the accompanying Statement of Objectives (SOO). The approach will clearly indicate how the proposed activities will result in the successful completion of all deliverables and milestones.

2. **Institutional Capacity** – Offerors should provide details about the experience, expertise, and capacity of their firm (or firms if partners are proposed) to implement the proposed approach and complete the work as described. This should also include past performance information for similar activities.
3. **Management Plan/Staffing Structure** – Offerors should include details of personnel who will be assigned to activities as proposed in the technical approach, as well as a clear management plan in narrative form for the development, review, and submission of all associated deliverables, including a milestone schedule. Offerors are permitted to engage in partnering arrangements if it will aid in providing best value to USAID. If a partnering arrangement is being proposed, please describe the nature of the arrangement, the specific technical value being contributed by each member of the team, and the appropriate management controls to ensure successful delivery.

In addition to the above, please include the following inputs, which will not be counted as part of the 10-slide limit and format may be PDF or Word:

- Two (2) examples of past performance (i.e., case studies) relevant to this activity (limited to two (2) pages per example). Examples should be within the last 5 years.
- CV(s) of any individuals proposed in the staffing plan to conduct this activity (limited to two (2) pages per individual).

A cover page will be considered a non-counting page, should offerors choose to include one. No additional annexes or documentation are requested nor should be submitted.

Part 2 – Cost Proposal

The contract type for the presumptive work will be Fixed Price, awarded as a subcontract by DAI Global, LLC. Please include your total proposed fixed price along with details for specific deliverable pricing. Offerors must also include a cost breakdown of the hourly rates for proposed personnel, any other direct costs, indirect costs, and fees if applicable, with a build-up to their total proposed price or include substantiating price reasonableness documentation/justification. Cost breakdowns included will be utilized to determine price reasonableness. The successful Offeror will need to demonstrate that the proposed rates, fees, etc. are reasonable and will be required to provide documentation during subcontract negotiations to substantiate costs, as needed. Offerors may use the attached cost/budget template, but are not required to as long as the cost criteria is met; please limit file submissions to 10 megabytes or less.

- III. **Evaluation of Proposal:** DAI will use best value determination for the award of this Request for Proposals. A best value determination means that, in DAI’s estimation, the selected offer will provide the greatest overall benefit to USAID in response to the requirements stated in this RFP. DAI may also exclude an offer from consideration if it determines that an Offeror is "not

responsible," i.e., that it does not have the management and financial capabilities required to perform the work required. DAI reserves the right to check the past performance, references, and other pertinent offeror information in making award decisions. Proposals will be evaluated against a stated number of factors including: the overall proposed approach, past performance, specific qualifications in the identified approach and sectors, and other evidence substantiating the bidder's ability to deliver, including budget and time frame considerations.

1. **Technical Proposal:** The Technical Proposal will be scored and evaluated separately from the cost proposal. Technical panel reviewers will evaluate offerors on the following factors, consistent with the offerors' technical proposal. The Technical Proposal will be evaluated against the following criteria:
 - a. **Technical Approach (45 Points):** Points for this section will be awarded based on the information presented in the technical approach. The offeror will be scored based on its presentation of a clear approach that reflects the requirements of this specific activity but also incorporates the offeror's competencies. The successful offeror shall demonstrate: (1) how they will research current international standards and accreditations for environmentally responsible businesses and green technologies, as well as research of relevant examples of successful policy to attract green investment; (2) how they will research Vietnam national environmental policy, Vietnam environmental regulation, and Vietnam provincial environmental policy (especially for new and current environmental law), as well as research relevant examples of successful policy to attract green investment; and (3) how they will design a pilot survey and analyze the results, according to the requirements of the PCI.
 - b. **Institutional Capacity (30 Points):** Points for this section will be awarded based on information presented in the corresponding section and any submitted case studies (i.e., examples of past performance). Preference will be given to firms and/or consortia that have past performance in timely and successful delivery of similar services and/or relevant experience in-country as well as experience and local presence in Vietnam. Offerors with joint experience in the International and Vietnamese regulatory environments will be preferred. Offerors should have an established knowledge of Vietnam and International green investment, and offerors should have strong experience in producing surveys and analyzing its results. Offerors should demonstrate any knowledge and technical experience that will support their ability to perform the requirements of the SOO in an efficient and effective manner.
 - c. **Management Plan/Staffing Structure (25 Points):** Points for this section will be awarded based on the qualifications of proposed staff, clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of each proposed staff and each proposed firm (if firms are partnering), and the demonstrated efficacy and clarity of the management plan. Proposals should provide a clear management plan in narrative form for the

development, review, and submission of all associated deliverables, including a proposed milestone schedule in line with the PCI questionnaire and reporting schedule. If the offeror is submitting a proposal with partners, the proposal should describe the nature of the arrangement (i.e. added technical value), the division of labor among the partners, and the appropriate management controls to ensure successful delivery. The offeror should clearly demonstrate that they can work in or travel to Vietnam as needed. The Management Plan should clearly outline where staff are located and, if any portion of the team or consortium will be remote, offerors should demonstrate how they will effectively supplement the work on-the-ground and coordinate with national and international staff. Offerors or at least one partner in their consortium should demonstrate a physical presence in Vietnam, and include proposed staff already located in Vietnam. Additionally, the offeror should provide management plan considerations for Covid-19 contingencies.

2. **Cost Proposal:** Cost and associated cost build-up will be evaluated separately from the technical approach, with due consideration for realism, price reasonableness, and allowability consistent with U.S. government cost principles. Evaluation for this section will be dependent upon all information presented by the Offeror in their deliverable table and supporting cost information, as well as its alignment with the proposed technical approach.
- IV. Offeror's Agreement with Terms and Conditions:** The completion of all RFP requirements in accordance with the instructions in this RFP and submission to DAI of the technical and price proposals will constitute an offer and indicate the Offeror's agreement to the terms and conditions in this RFP and any attachments hereto. DAI is not required to accept and/or evaluate proposals that do not conform to the instructions of the RFP, and additionally, DAI may reject all proposals and not award a subcontract for this RFP. DAI reserves the right to award a subcontract without discussion and/or negotiation; however, DAI also reserves the right to conduct discussions and/or negotiations, which among other things may require an Offeror(s) to revise its proposal (technical and/or price). By submitting an offer, Offerors agree to comply with the general terms and conditions for an award, including [Representations and Certifications](#) compliance. Offerors must provide full, accurate, and complete information in response to this solicitation. By submitting an offer, Offerors certify that they have not/will not attempt to bribe or make any payment to DAI employees in return for preference. Issuance of this RFP in no way obligates DAI to award a subcontract, nor does it commit DAI to pay any costs incurred by the Offeror in preparing and submitting the proposal. DAI reserves the right to award a subcontract to one organization or to issue multiple awards to different organizations based on the results of our evaluation.

Thank you,
DAI INVEST Procurement and Partnerships Team
INVEST_Procurement@dai.com

Statement of Objectives (SOO) under RFP INVEST-098

USAID/Vietnam

Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI) Environment Sub-Index: Research and Analysis of Environmental Policy

Introduction

USAID seeks to unlock the potential of private capital to drive inclusive growth. Increasingly, private investors and businesses are looking to emerging markets for better returns and new market opportunities. Specifically, USAID can leverage its resources – grants, technical assistance, guarantees, and convening power – to help raise awareness of investment opportunities, lower transaction costs, and mitigate the risk of investments that generate positive social, economic, and environmental impact.

Through INVEST's flexible buy-in mechanism, USAID Missions and Operating Units can access an unprecedented network of firms and individuals that have the range of technical expertise needed to identify opportunities and effectively mobilize private capital toward development priorities. Using a lean approach tailored to high potential opportunities, relevant parts of the network will come together to research, develop, and build specific solutions that align private capital with development needs.

Background

Provincial administrations play an important role in addressing national priorities like infrastructure development, foreign direct investment selection, public procurement, and environmental sustainability. In an effort to support the private sector and create a favorable business environment in Vietnam, the Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI)¹, managed by the Vietnam Chamber of Commerce and Industry (VCCI)², measures economic governance and promotes local socio-economic development in each of the country's 63 provinces.

Through an annual business questionnaire, PCI assesses and ranks the ease of doing business in each province for the private sector through ten sub-indices: entry cost for new firms, land access, transparency, time costs of regulatory compliance, informal charges, policy bias, proactivity of provincial leadership, business support services, labor policy, and legal institutions.

The influence of PCI in promoting the transition away from state-owned enterprise (SOE) dominance toward a more competitive landscape for the private sector has been considerable. There is room to leverage this legacy in promoting policies that attract sustainable investments in energy production and green industries. It is positioned to measure key development areas such as economic growth and job creation, drive key reforms at the provincial level, provide effective assessments of central policies, and to facilitate greater public-private dialogue.

The activities in the scope of work are intended to support VCCI in the development of a Green index that would measure the performance of provincial governments in environmental governance, with an aim to promote best practices among provincial governments that foster an enabling investment environment for quality, green investment, and sustainable business practices by existing and potential investors in Vietnam. The outputs from this work will be incorporated by authors separate from this SOO into the 2022 PCI report, which will be released in March-April 2023.

¹ <https://pcivietnam.vn/en>

² <https://vcci.com.vn/>

Objectives and Activities

Under this scope of work, the offeror will work closely with the VCCI/PCI program team and the USAID INVEST program. The offeror will carry out research and assessments in order to inform the PCI Program on environmental regulations and policies, including international best practices for attracting green investment in energy production and other sectors, as well as develop and test an environmental survey as a Green module for incorporation into the broader Provincial Competitiveness Index.

The offeror is anticipated to complete the tasks listed below, although offerors should respond with a technical approach that they believe best fulfills the objectives and key priorities:

International Research and Analysis

- Conduct a literature review of international academic and policy research studies in order to:
 - understand how regulation relates to and/or moderates firms' decision to become environmentally responsive and/or invest in green technologies and practices; and
 - identify the underlying motivations for firms to become environmentally responsive.
- Research internationally recognized environmental standards and accreditations, and produce illustrative case studies showcasing best practices for regulatory compliance and enforcement, particularly at the subnational level.
- Research how subnational administrations around the world attract investment in clean energy and green technologies with environmental policies, regulations, procurement practices, and monitoring, reporting and verification (MRV), and produce illustrative case studies showcasing highlighted examples.

Vietnam Research and Analysis

- Conduct desk research of current Vietnamese environmental laws, policies, and data reporting systems in order to:
 - assess the national environmental policy and its impact at the provincial level, including relevant environment data and indicators tracked by the General Statistics Office (GSO);
 - identify the roles and responsibilities of provincial governments in environmental regulation, procurement, compliance and enforcement, and environmental data reporting;
 - understand provincial administrations' priorities for environmental policies and how provinces are prioritizing green technologies and practices for enterprises and investors; and
 - assess businesses' compliance obligations, with a focus on the obligations prescribed in the 2020 Law on Environmental Protection.
- Analyze data collected by the 2019 and 2020 PCI questionnaires (and 2021 if available, all data to be provided by VCCI post-award) of environment-related survey questions to assess firms' and local governments' perceptions of environmental regulations and their enforcement in order to:
 - understand what firms consider important when judging the attractiveness of green investment in a province and the incentives or support of the provincial administration; and
 - assess firms' behavior on environmental responsibilities, their current level of green practices, and plans to invest in green technologies and operations.

Pilot Survey and Recommendations

- Research environmental indices and environmental competitiveness surveys to determine best practices and propose environmental questions for a green module under the current PCI survey.
- Develop a methodology/set of recommendations the PCI team might consider in order to measure the perception of environmental sustainability of provincial policies and regulations and their effectiveness in promoting (or deterring) investment in green energy. Possible environmental aspects to consider for the survey include water and natural resources protection, greenhouse gas emissions, intensity of electricity, manufacturing, and transport, renewable energy targets, air pollution, waste management, energy efficiency standards, and/or green procurement guidelines.
- Create an evaluation strategy to test the impact of the index on real environmental improvements, including but not limited to the aspects mentioned above.
- Draft a pilot survey for the PCI team to test on 200-300 firms to collect data to test out the feasibility and practicality of the recommended methodology. To the extent possible and available, incorporate feedback from provincial government stakeholders on the survey.
- Analyze the survey findings in coordination with the PCI team and produce summary to be incorporated into final reporting.

Separate from the support provided by the offeror, the PCI team will conduct an independent appraisal of the work delivered under this scope of work, with consultations to be held with Vietnamese experts in the field. Comments from the experts involved in the appraisal should be responded to/incorporated by the offeror.

Proposed Deliverables

The offeror will submit draft deliverables in English and final versions of deliverables in both English and Vietnamese.

The deliverables in line with the proposed objectives above are anticipated to include:

- ***Desk Research Report*** – A report that summarizes the literature review of firms’ underlying motivations to become environmentally responsive, and significant Vietnamese national and subnational environmental protection laws, provincial policies for environmental protection and regulation enforcement, and policies for encouraging investment in green industry. The report will also outline the roles and responsibilities of Vietnamese national and subnational governments for environmental compliance and enforcement.
- ***Environmental Regulations Perceptions Assessment*** – An assessment of PCI’s 2019 and 2020 questionnaire data (and 2021 if available) that summarizes the perception of Vietnamese provincial governments and enterprises on environmental regulation and compliance. This will include what enterprises consider important when judging the attractiveness of green investment in a province and the incentives or support of the provincial administration as well as enterprises’ behavior on environmental responsibilities, their current level of green/sustainable business practices, and plans to invest in green technologies and operations.
- ***Pilot Survey*** – Draft a pilot survey for PCI to administer in order to test out the feasibility and practicality of the recommended environmental indexing methodology. The draft survey will include the methodology, the index construction and weighting, a set of working indicators, and a set of suggested questions.
- ***Pilot Survey Findings Analysis*** – Complete analysis of the data, after it is collected and cleaned by PCI, from the pilot survey responses. This written analysis will include an executive summary of the consultancy and its findings along with final recommendations, which will be included in the 2022 PCI report to be released in 2023.

- ***Environmental Impact Evaluation Strategy*** – A set of recommendations tailored to the proposed survey to evaluate the impact of the index on real environmental improvements.
- ***Case Studies of International Industry Standards*** – A collection of illustrative case studies (minimum of two case studies estimated at 2 pages each) showcasing internationally-recognized environmental standards and accreditations and best practices for regulatory compliance and enforcement, especially at a subnational level.
- ***Case Studies of Subnational Policy for Green Investment*** – A collection of illustrative case studies (minimum of three case studies estimated at 2 pages each) showcasing how subnational governments around the world attract investment in clean energy and green technologies with environmental policies and regulations.
- ***Presentation*** – A presentation, including slide deck, of the activity’s findings and recommendations for VCCI/PCI Program team, USAID, and INVEST.

Period and Place of Performance

This activity is expected to commence in November or December 2021 and be completed by May 2022.

Work for this activity is expected to take place primarily in Vietnam with remote work supplementing on-the-ground implementation, if necessary. The activity components that are not the responsibility of the successful offeror (referred to below as INVEST subcontractor) are italicized below. Those that are anticipated to be the responsibility of the successful offeror are numbered.

Tentative Timeline

	Activity	Start date	End date	Implemented by
1	Environmental Regulations Perceptions Assessment	Upon contract execution	January 2022	INVEST subcontractor in close consultation with PCI
2	Draft Pilot Survey (to incorporate environmental indices/surveys’ best practices as described above)	January 2022	February 2022	INVEST subcontractor
	<i>Administer Pilot Survey</i>	<i>March 2022</i>	<i>March 2022</i>	<i>PCI team. The data will be given to INVEST subcontractor</i>
3	Desk Research Report (to include both International and Vietnam research and best practices as described above)	February 2022	April 2022	INVEST subcontractor
4	Case Studies of International Industry Standards	February 2022	April 2022	INVEST subcontractor
5	Case Studies of Subnational Policy for Green Investment	February 2022	April 2022	INVEST subcontractor
6	Pilot Survey Findings Analysis	April 2022	April 2022	INVEST subcontractor will have one month to analyze and construct the index. Some of the findings may be

				reported in the PCI 2021 report to be released around Mar-Apr 2022.
7	Environmental Impact Evaluation Strategy	March 2022	April 2022	INVEST subcontractor
	<i>Independent Appraisal of Environmental Impact Evaluation Strategy</i>	<i>April 2022</i>	<i>April 2022</i>	<i>Vietnamese experts, to be coordinated by PCI team</i>
8	Finalized Environmental Impact Evaluation Strategy	May 2022	May 2022	INVEST subcontractor
9	Final Presentation		May 2022	INVEST subcontractor

RFP INVEST-098: Provincial Competitiveness Index (PCI) Environment Sub-Index: Research and Analysis of Environmental Policy

Q&A

Technical Questions

- 1. This is a methodological question: In the SOO it says: "Develop a methodology/set of recommendations the PCI team might consider in order to measure the perception of environmental sustainability of provincial policies and regulations and their effectiveness." We are admirers of the PCI, and one of its strengths is collecting precise measures of actual performance - not "perceptions" (like Corruption Perceptions Index). Would the environment module be about summing concrete measures into a "PEPI" (Provincial Environment Protection Index) - or include vague "perceptions" as indicators?**

Answer: The 'perceptions' mentioned refer to local firms' perceptions of and behavior regarding environmental regulations, governance, and responsibilities. Under the Vietnam Research and Analysis phase, offerors will assess (1) whether firms consider the local environment as supportive and attractive for green investments, and (2) firms' current level of green practices and plans to invest in green technologies and operations. The methodology will include a set of questions that measure firms' perceptions to produce the findings of the Green Index. These findings will not be used as indicators in the Green index but instead will provide valuable context for municipal and national governments interested in attracting private sector participation and investment to the green industry.

Recommendations to evaluate the impact of the index on actual environmental improvements will be included as part of the Environmental Impact Evaluation Strategy deliverable (or similar deliverable as proposed by the successful offeror).

- 2. Our understanding is that a new environment module would eventually be added to the present PCI survey instrument, which enterprises fill out. This means more work and time for enterprise managers, so is there a "ballpark" understanding about how long this extra module would be (maybe in interview minutes)? Is it a problem if the model adds another 30+ minutes to the existing survey?**

Answer: Yes, as the Green index will be seen as a subindex/module of the PCI survey, there will be a higher implementation burden on the part of enterprise managers. INVEST and VCCI estimate that a module with optimal benefits would be around 1-1.5 pages (A4) in length in the questionnaire. However, offerors are encouraged to propose an environment module that minimizes the increased implementation burden while maximizing survey quality to offer the best value to VCCI.

- 3. We feel that developing a PEPI should include variables beyond just what can be collected from a survey of enterprises. Would you be open to discuss that (and the inputs required) during the contracting stage (or should we include it as an "optional extra" annex to this proposal)? For example, the measurement of the provinces performance concerning environmental protection issues might usefully include:**

- **Number of reported industrial pollution complaints over one year**
- **Percentage increase/decrease in province forest cover**
- **Degree to which a specific set of required province-level implementing regulations have been drafted and approved**
- **Air quality measures, including from main industry zones**
- **Water quality test results from major rivers**
- **And maybe 1-2 measures specific (but important) to only some-but-not-all provinces: mangrove coverage; natural forest coverage; biodiversity protection measure; coastal fishing sustainability measure; saline intrusion; etc.**

The above would be blended (weighted) with firm-level measures for a more meaningful PEPI. Although maybe the activity proposed is focused just on the responsibilities of firms and their direct impact on the environment and compliance with relevant regulations?

Answer: VCCI combines indicators and variables from the business survey and other resources, such as hard data accessible from official published sources, to minimize perception survey limitations and biases. However, since the use of hard data is subject to availability, accessibility, continuity, and relevance (i.e., whether the data is available for all the 63 provinces/cities in Vietnam, published annually, or sensitive to national security and defense), offerors are highly encouraged to make their own assessments and provide recommendations on the use of hard data to the PCI team.

Offerors should include any additional details and considerations as part of their technical approach that are needed to complete the activities, tasks, and objectives in the SOO. Technical proposals should include all aspects of the offeror's proposed approach and not exceed the ten (10) slide limit.

4. The Statement of Objectives refers to "Research internationally recognized environmental standards and accreditations". Please confirm if those standards are about something like ISO's environment standards and international industry standards.

Answer: Offerors should provide recommendations on specific standards that firms will be required to consider and abide by, including environmental and industry standards. The offeror's research should also include the identification of any standards to which Vietnam has committed in international treaties or agreements that firms are required to meet.

5. The description of Proposed Deliverables "Desk Research Report" on Page 3 of the SOO seems to only cover Vietnam's regulations and practices while "Desk Research Report" in the table of "Tentative timeline" on Page 4 includes both international and Vietnam research and practices. Please confirm if the above difference is existed.

Answer: The Desk Research Report should focus primarily on the domestic regulatory environment, though offerors are encouraged to include international research as necessary to contextualize their findings. The complete international research and analysis is expected to be captured under the Case Studies of International Industry Standards deliverable.

6. Can you please advise if the international case studies should ideally come from developed countries or comparable countries to Vietnam or a mix of countries?

Answer: The case studies should have similarities with the Vietnam context in terms of international commitments (commitments to SDGs and FTAs, such as CPTPP, EVFTA, and other related agreements). Case studies from middle-income and high-income countries would also be helpful, as Vietnam has set the goal of becoming a high-income country by 2045.

Procurement Questions

7. I wonder if this slide presentation is a form of a summary of the full narrative proposal? Or all we should submit is just the slides themselves.

Answer: The complete technical proposal should be submitted as a 10-slide deck presentation (plus optional cover page for 11 slides total). There is no additional narrative proposal. Any documents submitted beyond the 10-slide limit and case studies requested in the RFP will not be reviewed by the evaluation committee. The 10-slide deck should present the complete technical proposal including the technical approach, institutional capacity and management and staffing structure in a clear and concise manner.

8. We also wonder that any guidance (or an example) on the level of details for the slides to be presented or just a few bullet points to present the key issues (as the slides should be).

Answer: INVEST does not have an example we are able to provide. However, the slides should be thorough, robust, and engaging to convey complete information of the proposal in 10 slides. While there is no one format, proposals often include some narrative in addition to charts, tables, or graphics to often convey things like partner arrangements, project timeline, organization chart/staffing structure, past performance, etc. We leave it up to the offeror to present their proposal in a format that best conveys the information. There is no required format beyond the 10-slide length limitation.