

To: Offerors

Date: February 25, 2021

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

Subject: Request for Proposals (RFP) INVEST-078: Mainstreaming Gender Smart Policies and Practices

Due: 1:00pm Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on **March 25, 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 organizations to submit a proposal for work under USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub.

- I. **RFP Process and deadlines:** This solicitation will result in the award of one or more fixed price subcontract(s). We anticipate issuing one or more subcontract awards resulting from the implementation of this agreement. Each award value is anticipated to be \$250,000.
 - a. **Submission of Questions** – Questions must be submitted no later than **1:00pm EST on March 4, 2021** via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com. DAI will respond to these questions in approximately one to two (1-2) business days.
 - b. **Submission of Proposal** – Proposal must be submitted no later than **1:00pm EDT on March 25, 2021** via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com, copying Katherine.Tilahun@dai.com and Leah.Day@dai.com. The subject line of the email should be your organization name, followed by "Submission under RFP INVEST-078: Mainstreaming Gender Smart Policies and Practices." 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. Proposals must be submitted in English.
- 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 activities in similar contexts. The offeror should also highlight ability to scale changes and influence commercial capital more broadly.
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 organization, 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) case study examples of past performance relevant to this activity (limited to two (2) pages per example).
- CV(s) of any individuals proposed in the staffing structure 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 with the list of all firms participating in the bid. No additional annexes or documentation are requested nor should be submitted.

Part 2 – Price Proposal

The contract type for the presumptive task order 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. Offerors should use the attached cost/budget template; 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 (40 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 which reflects the requirements of this specific activity but also incorporates the offeror's competencies. Points will be given for the following technical areas:
 - i. Investment Thesis: an investment approach that focuses on both development and financial outcomes with existing or proposed data collection to support measurement and reporting towards outcomes.
 - ii. Clear description of how support will be used with specific activities and anticipated results to influence commercial capital.
 - iii. Well-articulated plan to scale gender smart strategies and influence commercial investors. Preference will be given to offerors that identify specific channels of influence or other investors.
 - iv. Demonstrated commitment to incorporating gender smart investing strategies with clear vision for implementation and expected impact
 - v. Feasibility of proposed approach to successfully incorporate gender smart strategies with a realistic timeline
- b. **Institutional Capacity (30 Points):** Points for this section will be based on information presented in the corresponding section. The offeror should demonstrate its:
 - i. Strategic vision for how gender smart strategies will support financial and social returns in emerging markets.
 - ii. Access to and familiarity with strong and relevant networks and connections with both impact and commercial investors to scale and influence commercial capital.

- iii. Demonstrated experience implementing, measuring, and reporting upon investment strategy with impact objectives, including ability to gather and analyze gender disaggregated data.
 - iv. Knowledge and experience scaling strategies, practices, and policies with positive financial and development impact.
- c. **Management Plan / Staffing Structure (30 Points):** Points for this section will be 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. 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 their proposed staff have:
- i. Prior experience adopting/implementing new or revised strategies, policies, and/or practices to improve impact, primarily related to gender equity.
 - ii. Proposed staff should be knowledgeable in investor relations with expertise and networks to support scaling efforts
 - iii. Knowledge of gender smart investing strategies and familiarity with resources, networks, or tools for adopting and implementing gender smart strategies.
 - iv. Ability to gather, analyze, and apply gender disaggregated data to measure and report on impact.

2. **Price Proposal:** Price and associated cost build-up will be evaluated separately from the technical approach, with due consideration for realism, price reasonableness, and allowability consistent with US 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 under RFP INVEST-078:
Mainstreaming Gender Smart Policies and Practices

Introduction

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recognizes that as the world's development challenges become more complex, many can only be solved through market-based solutions. USAID's Private Sector Engagement Hub is working to expand collaboration with private sector and pioneering approaches that catalyze investments into emerging markets. Increasingly, private investors and businesses are looking at emerging markets for new opportunities. However, investing in these markets is complex, and USAID has an important role to play in mobilizing investment into high-impact areas.

Encouraging these investments requires new forms of collaboration. In September of 2017 through a contract awarded to DAI, USAID set up the INVEST mechanism to build and engage a network of partner organizations with valuable investment and finance expertise, including those that have not worked extensively with USAID in the past. INVEST enables USAID Missions, Bureaus, and Independent Offices to quickly access niche expertise from this diverse network of partner organizations. These partners work alongside USAID to deliver customized financing solutions that address investment constraints, mobilize additional private capital, and produce development results for a variety of sectors and geographies.

USAID's Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment Hub (GenDev) has engaged INVEST to increase women's entrepreneurship and economic empowerment (WEEE) through a range of activities including the ongoing expansion of financial services through technological innovation, increased access to commercial capital, and support to scale gender smart investing.

USAID seeks to broaden the use of gender smart investing strategies among both institutional and commercial investors to increase capital at scale and improve financial and social outcomes for all, and to do so by supporting investors to incorporate and adapt gender smart strategies.

Development Hypothesis

USAID believes that catalyzing investment for gender balance and equity will increase both returns on investment as well as development outcomes, such as: advancing women in leadership, increasing women's access to capital, improving gender equity in the workplace, supporting the development of products and services that are beneficial to women and girls, addressing gender-based violence and harassment in the workplace, improving women's health, and expanding the knowledge and reach of women investors.

As economies recover from Covid-19, there is increased opportunity to apply gender smart investing strategies to support a resilient recovery given women's roles in essential goods and services as both producers and consumers, the high rate of women leaving the workforce during the pandemic, and higher rates of return on investments in gender-diverse and equitable companies.

Purpose & Background

The purpose of this activity is to increase the adoption of gender smart investing strategies among institutional and commercial investors to shift towards mainstream use of gender smart investing strategies. Gender smart investing – also known as gender lens investing – has grown in popularity and practice in the past ten years in both public and private capital markets. Gender smart investing is broadly defined as incorporating “gender factors into investment analysis and decisions to improve social and business outcomes,” and gender smart strategies can include using capital to support:

- Women as investors: institutional or private, deploying their own capital or on behalf of others. This includes roles as fund managers, on investment committees, in senior roles in asset management.

- Women’s access to capital. This includes providing debt or equity for women-owned or founded businesses (micro, small, medium or large), providing capital for women fund managers, and access to finance directly and indirectly through financial institutions and fintech.
- Women in leadership: on the board, in the C-suite and senior management. This can include companies owned by men, but with strong track records of women in leadership.
- Workplace equity: policies and practices supportive of women. This can include pay equity, access to health insurance, safe work spaces without sexual harassment, diversity and inclusion.

Despite its growth, gender smart investing continues to represent only a small portion of the \$74 trillion in global assets under management. While impact investors are increasingly adopting gender smart strategies, including among their portfolio companies, the opportunity for growth among other investors – especially commercial investors – remains. Given the variety of gender smart investing strategies, there are several entry points for established investors and vehicles to adopt and implement these strategies and unlock capital at scale.

USAID is currently working with leaders in gender smart investing to catalyze the field and build the evidence base that gender smart investing is good investing through both catalytic capital and technical assistance. In doing so, USAID is providing direct support to gender smart investors to mobilize private capital and support portfolio companies to employ gender-smart practices in their business operations and strategies. This activity will build upon the ongoing work to broaden the use of gender smart investing strategies and encourage adoption among commercial investors as gender smart investing begins to be considered just good investing.

Objectives and Activities

For this activity, USAID seeks investors, fund managers, or other financial providers and firms who need assistance applying and adapting gender smart investment strategies to existing operations, products, or vehicles in USAID presence countries. To unlock capital at scale, offerors should be committed to gender smart investing and their activities should scale gender smart investment strategies among commercial capital.

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Operational support to partner with gender experts, gender-smart fund managers, and others to better understand and apply gender-smart strategies to policies, processes, and operations
- Technical assistance to refine tools, policies, and processes to incorporate gender considerations
- Assessment of unconscious biases in investment decision making and allocation of capital and implementation of changes to address these biases
- Improving gender-disaggregated data collection, analysis, and reporting
- Support to scale existing gender smart investing strategies across vehicles, products, or funds

All proposed approaches should capture and analyze data to demonstrate the impact of incorporating gender smart strategies and better understand the positive effect on commercial metrics (e.g. return on investment, fundraising, etc.) and development outcomes.

We seek partners with a track record and proven ability to effectively raise and deploy capital for impact with a commitment to gender smart investing. Our objective is that the activity will influence and encourage other investors, particularly commercial investors, to incorporate gender smart strategies, moving gender smart investing from a niche strategy with mainly impact investors to broad use in the investment community. With this focus, partners should demonstrate how the proposed activity will influence other commercial investors.

Offerors should provide a detailed proposal that outlines their investment thesis and strategy; clearly articulates demonstrated commitment to gender smart strategies and a plan for scaling commercial capital;

details their current capacity, experience and/or strategy for gender-smart investment, including specific products, vehicles, or support services; how the activity will contribute to the objectives of increased gender smart investment; and describe how its approach will help encourage other investors and firms to incorporate gender smart investing strategies.

Selected offerors must be willing to share their experience and make data and other information available to INVEST and USAID for purposes of learning through the activity. This may include developing a case study, resource guides, or other materials that may help other investors incorporate gender smart strategies.

Offerors should include in their proposal the data they capture as part of their standard data reporting to investors and due diligence procedures that will be with INVEST as a part of this activity.

Technical Approach

In line with the requirements listed in the RFP, it is anticipated that offerors will address the following information:

- Investment thesis that demonstrates alignment with the stated objectives of this activity, including anticipated impact and results.
- Description of how operational support or technical assistance will be utilized, including specific activities to be undertaken, and how it would result in behavior change among commercial investors and/or achieve scale.
- Information on the timeline and strategy for implementation the activities proposed in support of changes in strategy, policies, practices, or operations.
- Demonstration of how the proposed activities (technical assistance or operational support) will contribute to the development impacts sought by USAID as outlined in the SOO Development Hypothesis, indicating the specific development impacts the approach aims to support.
- Information on planned data collection as part of standard reporting to investors.
- A proposed approach to data collection and learning specific to the goals of the INVEST and USAID team.

Proposals should also reflect the background and relevant experience of the offeror, including:

- Experience in investing in emerging markets
- Demonstrated commitment to incorporating gender smart investing strategies, highlighting prior experience (including personnel's professional experience and institutional experience)
- Experience covering geographies, sectors, asset classes, etc.
- Previous experience with proposed partners (if any)
- Portfolio structures/type(s) of investments
- Ticket size
- Investment stage(s).

Anticipated Deliverables

Offerors should propose deliverables in line with the proposed technical approach and timeline. Offerors should include the below deliverables among the proposed deliverables.

- *Inception Report* to validate the proposed approach, activities, timeline, milestones, and proposed indicators.
- *Scaling Plan* to outline how and to which entities gender smart investing strategies will be scaled with a proposed plan for disseminating activities and practices with commercial investors.
- *Final Report* to detail activities, report on selected indicators, and highlight impact (outcomes and outputs), as well as proposed actionable tools and resources that other commercially oriented investors can put into action so that scale will continue well beyond this specific activity.

Implementation Timeframe

The activities outlined above are anticipated to take place over a period of approximately 12 months. All activities must be completed by May 2022. Offerors should propose a timeline commensurate with their technical approach. Additionally to encourage and influence other investors, USAID would look to offerors to identify information that can be shared beyond the life of this activity, such as standard reporting, analysis, and any high-level findings relevant to the hypothesis outlined above. In response to this solicitation, offerors may propose their own alternate timelines, work plans, and level of effort associated with the various components of the activity in line with their proposed approach with all activities being completed by May 2022.

General Implementation Structure

Upon selection and award, INVEST will work closely with the awardee to determine the contract structure including final timelines and deliverables. INVEST and USAID will also work closely with the awardee on the monitoring, evaluation, and learning plan, including the selection of performance indicators, cadence for reporting, communications, and other general ongoing project management activities, as well as be a resource to help the awardee achieve overall objectives.