

To: Offerors

Date: October 14, 2021

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

Subject: Request for Proposals (RFP) INVEST-099: Carbon Labeling Research and Advisory Support

Due: 1:00 PM Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) on November 18, 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 Fund 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 \$150,000 resulting from the implementation of this agreement.
 1. Submission of Questions – Questions must be submitted in English no later than **1:00 PM EDT on October 21, 2021** via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com.
 2. Submission of Proposal – Proposal must be submitted in English no later than **1:00 PM EDT on November 18, 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-099: Carbon Labeling Research and Advisory Support.” 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)
- 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. The cost proposal should not exceed \$150,000.

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 (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. Key parts of the technical approach are: (1) the offeror's approach to collecting and synthesizing data on existing and emerging greenhouse gas supply chain disclosure and certification systems for Vietnamese companies; (2) the offeror's capacity in predicting and assessing the Vietnamese market segments likely to be subject to emerging carbon reporting, international and domestic; (3) the offeror's competency in researching and presenting greenhouse gas labeling using best, international practices; (4) the offeror's competency in preparing and presenting formal recommendations for greenhouse gas supply chain reporting and labeling to Government of Vietnam stakeholders.
 - b. **Institutional Capacity (35 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. Offerors with joint experience in Vietnamese and international carbon labeling best practices and regulations will be preferred; demonstrated capacity to communicate and write in Vietnamese required. 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 (in English and Vietnamese, as needed), 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 Management Plan should clearly outline where staff are located and, if any portion of the team or consortium will be remote, offerors should provide a detailed approach to conducting activities remotely. Offerors must demonstrate through their proposed staff the ability to communicate fluently in English and Vietnamese as well as produce deliverables and other correspondences in English and Vietnamese as required throughout the activity.

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 RFP INVEST-099
USAID INVEST: Mobilizing Private Investment for Development
Carbon Labeling Research and Advisory Support, USAID/Vietnam Buy-In Activity

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

While free trade agreements open many opportunities to member economies, they also present challenges for emerging economies like Vietnam that have carbon-intensive economies. The EU, for example, is considering taxing and/or restricting the import of products that are low quality and have high greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. Such Border Carbon Adjustments (BCAs) would be put in place to avoid carbon leakage when companies transfer production to countries that are less strict. Sectors covered by the proposed EU BCA would likely include steel, iron, cement, fertilizers, aluminum and electricity and could be phased in as soon as 2023. Vietnam could experience significant impacts of such requirements, due to the large role of exports in Vietnam’s economic growth and the high carbon intensity of its industrial consumption (43.5 gCO₂/MJ, almost 20% higher than the EU).¹

In addition to these emerging mandatory requirements, leading international companies are increasingly adopting voluntary GHG reporting standards and setting GHG reduction targets for their supply chain emissions, also known as Scope 3 emissions.² These supply chain disclosure standards cover upstream emissions from material acquisition & pre-processing and downstream emissions from distribution & storage, use, and end-of-life disposal of products. Other emerging standards seek to manage the embodied carbon in built materials³ and the GHG emissions associated with products tied to land use and forestry. Suppliers in Vietnam are increasingly being asked to respond to this mix of mandatory and voluntary disclosure requirements and to improve the GHG emission profile of their products and processes or pay penalties. For example, First Solar, a US-invested producer of PV panels in the South of Vietnam, was imposed a very high carbon tax when entering the European market because it was not able to document the carbon footprint of its production.

Often, companies require suppliers to implement carbon labeling, which provides proof/certificate of carbon footprint calculation for each phase of production, consumption, and disposal. Presently, some firms in the garment and leather shoes manufacturing sectors have implemented their own process for calculating and publicizing their carbon footprint but there is no national legal framework. There are

¹ <https://energytransition.org/2020/07/eu/>

² https://ghgprotocol.org/sites/default/files/standards/Corporate-Value-Chain-Accounting-Reporting-Standard_041613_2.pdf and <https://www.fsb-tcfd.org/publications/#implementation-guidance>

³ Embodied carbon is the total GHG emissions generated to produce a built asset. This includes emissions caused by extraction, manufacture/processing, transportation and assembly of every product and element in the asset that is used in a building.

also no benchmarks or indicators that Vietnamese companies could compare themselves against in order to demonstrate superior performance.

Objectives and Activities

The purpose of this procurement is to identify a firm or consortium of firms to support the Vietnamese government, through USAID INVEST, to assess the reporting and certification needs of individual sectors and evaluate options for developing the institutional set-up, reporting and certification guidance, data systems, and verification bodies that enable companies to respond to emerging GHG reporting and labeling requirements.

Specifically, the successful offeror will carry out the following activities:

1. Provide an overview of existing and emerging GHG supply chain disclosure and certification systems that are relevant to Vietnamese companies, including both mandatory and voluntary initiatives. This review will indicate which sectors and types of companies that are likely to be affected, and how.
2. Conduct a rapid assessment of the domestic market in Vietnam that may be subject to emerging GHG disclosure and supply chain requirements, including the type of products, disclosure requirements, and market size of exports that are likely to require carbon reporting and labelling in response to emerging export demands.
3. Undertake research on international best practices in GHG labeling. This review will include legal frameworks, reporting protocols and other tools/methods for carbon accounting and carbon footprint calculation, types of assistance provided to businesses for implementation, guidance and processes for third party verification, data sources and/or benchmarks that can facilitate reporting, and management agencies for supervising and certifying GHG reports and carbon labels.
4. Based on the above research and assessments (and conversations with MPI, MOIT, MONRE, VCCI, and other relevant stakeholders), recommend institutional arrangements and regulatory initiatives that the Vietnamese government might consider to support supply chain reporting and labeling.

Illustrative Deliverables and Implementation Timeframe

Illustrative deliverables are listed below, however, offerors should propose deliverables in line with their approach while meeting the objectives outlined in this SOO.

All deliverables will be submitted for review and approval in English, but all final versions must be submitted in both English and Vietnamese. Translation of the final deliverables into Vietnamese is the responsibility of the offeror and all costs associated with translation should be included in the proposed pricing for this activity.

Activities	Timeline	Deliverables
Kick-off meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Questionnaire - Interview list - Survey plan 	~2 months (December 2021 – January 2022)	Virtual kick-off call, workplan
Research on Carbon Labeling Practices <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Survey with the questionnaire - Draft research report summarizing findings of the assessments and research described in the Activities section 	~5 months (January – May 2022)	Research report that captures findings from surveys and needs assessment, outlines international carbon labeling practices, and provides recommendations specific to Vietnam <i>(In EN and VN)</i>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultations with MPI, MOIT, MONRE, VCCI, and relevant ministries/stakeholders to discuss initial findings of the draft report - Final research report and recommendations 		
<p>Proposed plan for developing a Carbon Labeling System for Vietnam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Draft recommendations report on options for GVN to consider in support of carbon labeling - Consultations with MPI, MOIT, MONRE, VCCI, and relevant stakeholders to present draft recommendations and explore possible options for institutional arrangements and regulatory initiatives the government can implement. This discussion will include next steps and funding needs as well as identify capacity building needs of government stakeholders, verification bodies, and companies seeking to obtain carbon labeling - Final report detailing recommendations and considerations for GVN. 	~6 months (January – June 2022)	Research report and proposed plan to develop a Carbon Labeling System for Vietnam <i>(In EN and VN)</i>
<p>Workshop and presentation on research, activity outcomes, and recommendations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Present report on international Carbon Labeling Practices and recommendations for Vietnam - Present findings from surveys and needs assessment of carbon labeling of Vietnamese enterprises - Present report on Plan to develop A Carbon Labeling System for Vietnam. 	June 2022	In-person or virtual workshop with INVEST, USAID, VCCI, and other stakeholders to present activity findings and recommendations

Period and Place of Performance

The activity is anticipated to commence in December 2021 and take place over a period of 6-9 months. However, offerors should propose a timeline that is representative of their proposed technical approach and management plan that delivers the scope of work as described.

Work for this activity is expected to take place primarily in Vietnam with remote work supplementing the on-the-ground implementation, if necessary. If the offeror will not have in-country presence, they must provide a detailed approach to achieving the activity objectives remotely.

Role of INVEST

INVEST will work closely with the selected offeror(s) during all stages of this work. DAI will subcontract the selected offeror directly and provide review and oversight throughout the life of the activity. The INVEST team will administer regular check-ins, reporting, deliverable review prior to client presentation and approval, and manage an ongoing monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) framework.

- *Subcontractor Onboarding:* INVEST will provide the successful offeror(s) with all necessary context, and work with the successful offeror(s) to develop the work plan.
- *Project Implementation:* The successful offeror(s) will implement the work as prescribed by the work plan(s). INVEST will provide management support and ensure regular check ins/reporting.
- *Ongoing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning:* INVEST will define indicators during the subcontracting process, collect and review M&E data from subcontractors for requisite reporting to USAID and will conduct data quality assessments as necessary.