To: Offerors

Date: March 9, 2021

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

Subject: Request for Proposals (RFP) INVEST-080: USAID's Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub – Connecting Community Anchor Institutions to the Internet in Kenya

Due: **1:00PM EDT on April 2, 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 for work as part of the USAID Bureau for Development, Democracy, and Innovation's Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub buy-in.

I. **RFP Process and deadlines:** This solicitation will result in the award of one Firm Fixed Price subcontract. We anticipate issuing a single subcontract with an award value no greater than USD $300,000 resulting from the implementation of this agreement.

a. Submission of Questions – Questions must be submitted no later than **1:00 pm EDT on March 16, 2021** via email to **INVEST_Procurement@dai.com**.

b. Submission of Proposals – Proposals must be submitted no later than **1:00 pm EDT on April 2, 2021** via email to **INVEST_Procurement@dai.com,** copying Matthew_Mitchell@dai.com and Leah_Day@dai.com. The subject line of the email should be your organization name, followed by "Submission under RFP INVEST-080: ITR Community Connectivity in Kenya" 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:** Your organization's 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 slide deck presentation of no more than ten (10) slides with a minimum font size of 12, and graphics with a minimum font size of 10. Submissions in PowerPoint or in PDF are acceptable, although PDF is preferred along with an accompanying PowerPoint document. Please provide a copy of your cost proposal in Excel format.

Part 1 – Technical Proposal

Please limit your technical proposal to no more than ten (10) slides. The technical proposal is composed of the following three (3) sections:

1. **Technical Approach –** Offerors will detail their approach to fulfill 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 within the stated timeframe. Offerors should demonstrate clearly how they will perform the work to achieve the stated objectives. Offerors should specifically include the process by which they will collect data and information to help perform financial and policy modeling of proposals to connect community anchor institutions to open, interoperable, and reliable, and secure internet services. Given that the COVID-19 pandemic will require remote work, offerors should note any mitigation strategies.

2. **Institutional Capacity** - Offerors should provide details about the experience, networks, expertise, and/or capacity of their firm (or firms if a partnering arrangement is proposed) to recommend the proposed approach and complete the work as described. This should also include past performance information for similar activities as those requested under this solicitation. Offerors should demonstrate their experience working in the digital ecosystem in Kenya, as well as within the telecommunications and internet connectivity sectors. Offerors should also demonstrate their knowledge of and familiarity with USAID's Private Sector Engagement Policy and the newly released Digital Strategy and how it relates to this solicitation.

3. **Management Plan/Staffing Structure –** Offerors should include details of personnel who would be assigned to the activities described in the technical approaches, 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. Firms may consider partnering with other firms that bring in complementary skill sets and experience.

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

- One (1) to two (2) examples of past performance relevant to this activity (limited to two (2) pages per example)**.** Examples should be within the past five (5) years.
- CV(s) of any individuals proposed in the staffing plan to conduct this activity (limited to two (2) pages per individual)

NOTE: These inputs (past performance examples and CVs) will not be counted as part of the 10-slide limit and the format may be PDF or Word. A cover page will be considered a non-counting page, and offerors should include one and list on it the names of all firms/individuals participating in the bid. No additional annexes or documentation are requested at this time.

Part 2 – Price Proposal

The contract type for the presumptive contract will be Fixed Price, awarded by DAI Global, LLC. Please include your total proposed fixed price along with details for specific deliverable pricing. Offerors should also include a cost breakdown of the hourly rates for proposed personnel, 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 can use the attached cost/budget template for guidance, but are not required to use it, as long as the cost proposal captures the necessary elements (i.e. deliverables table with breakdown of how the deliverable totals were calculated). 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(s) 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. Proposals will be evaluated against a stated number of factors, including the overall proposed approach, past performance, specific qualifications in the identified sectors and other evidence substantiating the bidder's ability to deliver, including budget and timeframe considerations.

1. **Technical Proposal:** The Technical Proposal will be scored and evaluated separately from the price 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. Points will be awarded to firms describing their thoughtful approach to addressing the Statement of Objectives (SOO). The offeror will be scored based on its presentation of a clear approach that reflects the requirements of this specific activity and incorporates the offeror's competencies. The technical approach should clearly demonstrate the offeror's specific approach(es) to supporting USAID/ITR, USAID/Kenya, and the Government of Kenya perform financial and policy modeling of proposals to connect community anchor institutions, such as schools, health centers, government offices, and other locations, to open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet services. The technical approach should outline how information and data will be gathered from various sources, thoroughly analyzed/evaluated, and clearly and comprehensively presented to the key stakeholders.

    b. **Institutional Capacity (30 points)** – Points for this section will be based on information presented in the corresponding section and any submitted past performance examples. Points will be awarded to firms who demonstrate:
        i. Deep knowledge of and experience working in the digital ecosystem in Kenya (if the offeror has experience in the region as well, it can also be included but is not required);
        ii. Experience working with investors, technology providers, and regulators on telecommunications and ICT, particularly in the internet connectivity sector;

iii. Demonstrated experience developing comprehensive and digestible landscape analyses/reports by collecting information/data through various sources, such as personal interviews; and
iv. Ability to be flexible and responsive to changing needs, especially in light of COVID-19 concerns. This includes the Offeror's ability to validate findings and conduct meetings virtually or in person, as required.

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 (including LOE estimates per proposed staff member) and each proposed firm (if firms are partnering), and the demonstrated efficacy and clarity of the management and staffing plan to ensure quality deliverables on time and effective coordination and communication with INVEST and USAID. 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, which outlines a basic framework of expected deliverables and a timeline for submission of each, including time for regular meetings, review and feedback on drafts as appropriate should be included. If the offeror is submitting a proposal along 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 demonstrate their proposed staff's:
   i. Knowledge and experience working in the digital ecosystem in Kenya (if the offeror has experience in the region as well, it can also be included but is not required);
   ii. Experience working with investors, technology providers, and/or regulators on telecommunications and ICT, particularly in the internet connectivity sector; and
   iii. Excellent written and verbal communications skills, including producing reports as digestible and clear products.

   Lastly, the activity lead for the proposed team should demonstrate 10+ years of experience in the telecommunications industry.

2. **Price Proposal:** Price 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, budget with cost breakdowns, and any relevant supporting cost information, as well as its alignment with the proposed technical approach. Budgets will be analyzed for cost reasonableness of the deliverable prices as well as the cost build-up.

IV. Offeror's Agreement with Terms and Conditions: Please visit the INVEST Procurement Forecast website for RFP 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 for RFP INVEST-080
USAID's Innovation, Technology, and Research Hub –
Connecting Community Anchor Institutions to the Internet in Kenya

INTRODUCTION

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recognizes that market-based solutions are a key component in solving the world's development challenges. USAID's Private Sector Engagement team is working to expand collaboration with the 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.

New forms of collaboration are required to facilitate these investments. 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.

INVEST pairs innovative technical approaches with streamlined and user-friendly procurement and subcontracting processes. These simplified processes level the playing field, ensuring that USAID can work with the best firm for the job, regardless of that firm's size, locality, or previous experience with government contracting.

BACKGROUND

The Innovation, Technology, and Research (ITR) Hub at USAID works to address gaps in digital access, affordability, advance the effective and responsible use of technology, and advanced data analysis in developing countries. By supporting these countries as they build their commitments and capacity to fully harness the power of digital technology, ITR helps improve the lives of millions of poor and vulnerable people throughout the world and promotes a path to self-reliance for countries by supporting the development of secure, inclusive, and resilient digital ecosystems and the adoption of digital tools and data-driven approaches to improve development outcomes.

In order to identify solutions that address the gaps in digital ecosystems, ITR will work with INVEST to provide technical assistance to countries requiring support. Priority areas will include: developing financial and policy models that create secure, open, reliable, and inclusive connectivity for communities; exploring strategies for effectively mobilizing private capital in

rapidly evolving digital markets in ways that foster recognition of and protection for personal rights; and identifying what makes a productive and inclusive relationship between traditional development actors and technology companies in the digital space.

CHALLENGE

The US National Security and National Cyber Strategies both make the advancement of an open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet a cornerstone of the U.S. government's interests in cyberspace. The State-USAID Joint Strategic Plan commits USAID "to support critical institutional capacity building and reform efforts" of developing countries in order "to secure an open, interoperable, reliable, and stable cyberspace." This model is under threat by state actors that seek to promote a closed, "sovereign internet" that would limit options for private sector competition, displace multi-stakeholder models of internet governance, and intersperse state-backed network firms throughout the global internet, undermining its security and reliability.

Developing countries cannot be self-reliant without a reliable, secure, and affordable digital infrastructure. Unfortunately, in too many countries, digital infrastructure to support anchor institutions like schools, universities, health facilities, and commercial use is often absent, and the infrastructure that may be present is often insecure, unreliable, or expensive. This condition has made developing countries susceptible to proposals and offers by countries seeking to promote their vision of a sovereign internet with state-centric, insecure, and risky digital infrastructure projects. These offers of assistance at first seem innocuous, aimed at connecting anchor institutions at seemingly attractive prices, but frequently do so by fundamentally undercutting private sector opportunities, limiting competition, and ultimately threatening the long-term self-reliance of these countries' digital ecosystems.

Developing country governments often need assistance comparing and analyzing the cost and benefits of different financial and business models that are presented to them. Many countries have universal service funds that are designed to assist in connecting un- or underserved areas – but countries do not necessarily have the capacity to effectively evaluate proposals to use those funds. As countries seek to connect community anchor institutions like schools and universities to high-speed internet, it is important that those countries consider security, reliability, and other costs in those investments. In addition, governments control other policy levers, such as vertical infrastructure sharing, spectrum policy, open access, and rights-of-way policies, that can significantly increase the cost of network construction.

In collaboration with the Government of Kenya, USAID/Kenya has expressed a commitment to analyzing scalable solutions that provides secure, reliable, and inexpensive internet access to un-connected and under-connected communities to drive both economic and educational outcomes. Through INVEST, USAID/ITR – in collaboration with USAID/Kenya – will engage with a firm to evaluate the challenges and opportunities that can drive investment in solutions that connect poor and underserved communities in Kenya to the internet.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

This activity will provide technical assistance to the Government of Kenya, USAID/ITR and USAID/Kenya to help perform financial and policy modeling of proposals to connect community

anchor institutions, such as schools, health centers, government offices, and other locations, to open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet services. This assistance would include:

- Evaluating the financial viability of last-mile connectivity business models and, if necessary, the policy adjustments and/or financial support necessary to attract investment(s) to scale the solutions;
- Identifying and outlining policy-levers that the Government of Kenya might be able to control (e.g., cost of leasing space on government buildings for tower siting, preferential fees for rights-of-way use, pro-competitive interconnection and fiber open access policies, spectrum flexibility, expansion of allowance for community networks and start-up providers, etc.) that could lower the costs of connecting community anchor institutions to the internet;
- Analyzing the accuracy and identifying gaps in standard cost and financial models, including those provided by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU-D), to assess the subsidy needed (if any) for connecting those locations to the desired level of reliable and secure internet connectivity;
- Analyzing security and privacy risks of certain technologies that might be proposed to expand community connectivity for the examined business models or a particular project;
- Gathering information from available resources, ITU-D's, and local service providers regarding the characteristics of potential community anchor institutions in priority regions identified by the Government of Kenya and/or USAID/Kenya; and
- Where appropriate, conducting a financial and cost analysis of replacing insecure and unreliable equipment with secure and reliable options.

ITR and USAID/Kenya will collaborate to ensure the work aligns with the ongoing collaboration with the Government of Kenya.

The objectives of this engagement include:

1. Analysis of cost and financial models of last-mile connectivity business models that evaluate the level of subsidy necessary to connect community anchor institutions in priority region(s) identified by the government and USAID/Kenya to the desired level of reliable and secure internet connectivity;
2. Issue recommendations to the Government of Kenya on policy levers that would reduce the costs of internet connectivity in the priority region(s) and advance the expansion and investment in open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet access in the country as a whole;
3. Complete a financial and cost analysis of replacing insecure and unreliable equipment with secure and reliable options, where appropriate;
4. Analyze security and privacy risks of certain technologies that might be used to expand community connectivity for the examined business models;
5. Gather information on the barriers of connecting community anchor institutions in priority regions(s) to reliable and secure internet; and
6. Identify the differentiated technology and initial as well as recurrent cost requirements of supporting asynchronous and synchronous information sharing, such as to deliver instruction, training, or communication between individuals and groups (e.g., students in a class or teachers in a training cohort).

DELIVERABLES & IMPLEMENTATION TIMEFRAME

Resulting deliverables will likely be:

- Report on the financial viability of identified last-mile connectivity business models and partners (including local vs. international as well as public vs. private partners) and the policy adjustments and/or financial support necessary to attract investment to scale the solutions;
- Identify and report on the existing technology and connectivity resources as well as gaps within sub-sectors of the Ministry of Education, such as primary education, secondary education, technical and vocational training, and university education;
- Recommendations to USAID/Kenya and ITR on different technology or innovations appropriate to different geographic locations and contexts in the Kenyan telecommunications space that is secure, interoperable, reliable, open, affordable, and sustainable to meet USAID Journey to Self-Reliance goals;
- Recommendations to Government of Kenya on an optimal path and policy-levers to undertake that would advance investment and the expansion of open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet access in under-connected communities (both urban and rural);
- Report on the mapping, security and privacy risks of certain technologies that might be utilized to expand community connectivity and provide solution options to secure personally identifiable information data or ensure the online safety of users such as children and youth;
- Summary of the characteristics of potential community anchor institutions in priority regions, and a map of internet providers operating in Kenya and all local and international stakeholders (public and private);
- Financial and cost analysis and recommendations report of replacing insecure and unreliable equipment with secure and reliable options;
- Report(s) that outlines (a) the barriers of connecting community anchor institutions in priority region(s) to reliable and secure internet, (b) government policies that would reduce the costs of internet connectivity in the country, (c) if appropriate, the effects of replacing insecure and unreliable equipment with secure and regional options in the country, and (d) recommendations of any additional support necessary to enhance the digital infrastructure in the country;
- Presentation(s) of findings to Government of Kenya and USAID stakeholders on findings and recommendations; and
- Final summary PowerPoint presentation on findings and recommendations.

General Implementation Structure

Onboarding and Work-Planning

- The Subcontractor, USAID ITR, and DAI INVEST teams will meet for an implementation kickoff meeting. The purpose and goal of this meeting is to align expectations and contexts and plan for the activities listed below.
- Partner Onboarding: DAI will work closely with USAID ITR to provide the selected partner(s) with all necessary context, as well as to develop the work plan(s) for the determined countries.

Implementation

- Project Implementation: The selected partner(s) will implement the work as prescribed by the work plan. DAI INVEST will provide management support and technical oversight throughout all activities and anticipates working closely with the subcontractor(s) and maintaining ongoing communications through periodic (e.g. weekly and monthly) check-ins/reporting as well as possible onsite meetings. USAID staff will be engaged throughout implementation, supporting the initial identification of challenges and root causes, and providing guidance and feedback as appropriate throughout the activity.

The activities outlined above are estimated to take place over a roughly 7-11 month period starting around May/June 2021. A deliverables table with an illustrative timeline is offered below; however, offerors may propose alternate timelines, workplan and level of effort associated with the various components of the activity.

Description	**Illustrative Timeframe**
Onboarding & work planning with the Mission as well as engagement with partners identified by USAID such as key government line ministries	1 Week
Introduction and finalization of workplan with key ministries to ensure coordination, partnership and greater GoK ownership	2 Weeks
Collect information and data from ITU-D, additional background desk research & key informant interviews	4-6 Weeks
USAID Review and Feedback	1 Week
Analyze the accuracy and identifying gaps in standard cost and financial models of last-mile connectivity providers	4-6 Weeks
USAID Review and Feedback	1 Week
Analyze the accuracy and identifying gaps in standard cost and financial models	4-6 Weeks
USAID Review and Feedback	1 Week
Identify and outline policy-levers that could lower the costs of connecting community anchor institutions to the internet	4-6 Weeks
Analyze security and privacy risks of certain technologies and gather information on the characteristics of potential community anchor institutions	2-4 Weeks
USAID Review and Feedback	1 Week
Conduct a financial and cost analysis of replacing insecure and unreliable equipment with secure and reliable options	2 Weeks
Development of Findings & Recommendations	2-4 Weeks
Presentation of findings to USAID and other stakeholders	1-2 Weeks