REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
for
eLearning Platform, Instructional Design and Mobile Applications Development

RELEASE DATE: Monday, February 11, 2019
SUBMISSION DEADLINE: 24:00 EAT, Friday, March 1, 2019

A.   BACKGROUND

TechnoServe works with enterprising people in the developing world to build competitive farms, businesses, and industries. We are a non-profit organization that develops business solutions to poverty by linking people to information, capital, and markets. Our work is rooted in the idea that given the opportunity, hardworking men and women in even the poorest places can generate income, jobs, and wealth for their families and communities. With more than five decades of proven results, we believe in the power of private enterprise to transform lives.

TechnoServe is implementing the USAID-funded *Alliance for Inclusive and Nutritious Food Processing* (AINFP) regional program in collaboration with Partners in Food Solutions (PFS). The program leverages the power of the private sector to create better nutritional outcomes for base-of-the-pyramid consumers and more profitable market opportunities for local farmers. This is achieved by supporting local food processing companies in Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia and Ethiopia through remote technical assistance and training from world leading food processing companies under PFS to increase the availability of safe, affordable and nutritious food.

B.   SCOPE

1. Background
Over the past 7 years, TechnoServe, in partnership with PFS, has been responsible for providing technical advisory services to food processors across the African continent through technical experts, business advisors, and highly skilled staff who provide operational assistance, financial advisory, and market linkage services to partner companies. TechnoServe's work has successfully helped food processors increase their consistent /profitable production of high-quality, nutritious foods, ultimately helping improve food security and access to food.

Training remains an important part of the technical assistance provided by TechnoServe. While traditional approaches to training have been successful in helping food processors rapidly improve, a 'boots-on-the-ground' model focused on long training days is not a sustainable or cost-effective model for supporting partner companies long-term. An alternative to this approach is the development of a digital, blended-learning solution that can transfer real-time, in-person training and advice to an application hosting bite-sized learning opportunities which are always readily accessible.

2. Objective

Through this partnership, the AINFP program seeks to deliver Sector Wide Trainings (SWTs) in Ethiopia, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia covering industry best practices targeting systemic constraints and challenges. The Sector Wide Trainings will be offered to food processors and related industry stakeholders, bringing industry actors together and encouraging closer dialogue, knowledge sharing, and awareness across the sector. Our main objective is to bring about industry behaviour change in the most effective and cost efficient way.

3. Audience

Our learners are food processing sector stakeholders across the program countries; Kenya, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Zambia. These include all food processing firms' management and factory staff, regulatory bodies, consultants, distribution agencies and raw material aggregators among others.

4. Courses

Most of our sector wide training to date has been instructor led and we now desire to transition to a blended learning approach to deliver learning outcomes across our various knowledge centres outlined below;

a. Food Safety and Quality Standards
b. Good Manufacturing Practices
c. Access to Finance for Food Processors
d. Nutrition and Fortification
e. Engineering
f. New Product Development
g. Supply Chain Operations
h. Food Manufacturing
i. Marketing and Branding
j. Financial Operations

5. Desired Solution

Based on the above explanation, scope, and background, TechnoServe is soliciting competitive proposals from qualified organizations to develop and implement the AINFP eLearning platform. We are seeking solution architects and developers who are interested in partnering for a long-term commercial venture in food processing training starting out with a non-profit funded pilot phase. The firm should have experience in developing mobile and web applications for various industries and successfully rolling them out in various countries across Africa. Specific roles and responsibilities include but are not limited to: converting training materials into web and mobile content; designing, developing, and implementing web, mobile, and SMS-based applications; end-user training; and ongoing support and maintenance of applications.

Note: The following high-level requirements articulate our vision for the application, but are subject to change throughout the project's anticipated design and pilot phases. Minimum features and functionality are listed to guide the scope of the project, but are not considered all-inclusive.

a. Instructional Design

We have existing technical content and a team of subject matter experts to ensure quality and relevance of the content. The designers will facilitate content scoping and analysis of the target learner profiles to establish a healthy blend of face to face interaction and online training. They will be able to advise on the best presentation of the content in various formats such as animations, videos, infographics and then design story boards, guides, tools, assessments, templates for face to face

presentation, online learner experience and downloadable implementation tools. Working closely with TechnoServe staff and technical experts, this content should be parsed into bite-sized learning modules formatted for consumption on web and mobile applications in an engaging way.

b. Blended Learning Platform Core Features

The eLearning platform should align with the following 4 focus areas:

(i) <u>Self-Paced Learning:</u> We envision a situation where learning is self-paced and the staff do not have to leave the factory floor to acquire learning. The learners would be able to charter their own learning journey once the learning material is available on accessible platforms so that they can interact with it at their convenience and apply it on their day to day job.

(ii) <u>Social Learning and Community:</u> Social learning is a key feature where the reduction of face to face interaction is replaced by dynamic chat platforms which allow learners to share experiences, upload photos and videos of their knowledge application as well as troubleshoot on issues within a community of practice.

(iii) <u>Analytics and Monitoring:</u> The platform should allow for intelligent analytics and customised reporting at the back end as well as the ability to push communication through email, short message service and social media. Administrators and instructors should be able to monitor learner journeys through tools, alerts, and reporting.

(iv) <u>Recruitment, Engagement, and Incentives:</u> Ideally the same platform should enable recruitment of learners through a rigorous selection process to target the right participants and enable payment through credit card or mobile money on the same platform. The platform should be developed in a manner which is engaging for end users and creates incentives for continual learning (intuitive UI/UX, accomplishment levels, gamification, etc.)

C. IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT REQUIRED

We require the firm's technical support from design to full implementation, including in-person instructional design support and ongoing application maintenance.

1. Functional Roles and Responsibilities

The project's scope expands well beyond the development of web and mobile applications and requires a firm capable of designing and mobilizing around a rapid timeframe to carry out a complex project involving business process optimization, user interface and user experience design, software development, user training, research, the development and implementation of a sustainability plan, and the development and production of lessons learned. The selected firm should be able to lead and take ownership of the design, development, implementation, testing, deployment, maintenance, and handoff phases of a technology development project. Key tasks should at a minimum include the following:

a. The development of a detailed work plan clearly showing the information gathering, planning, design, development, testing, delivery, and handoff phases for the application(s).

b. Finalize and document requirements for the app for AINFP based on user testing and design validation. Design validation and design testing must take place within all AINFP countries.

c.	Work with our team of content experts to develop course blueprints / storyboarding and digital content incorporating best aspects of face to face training into an online / digital environment.
d.	Compile and digitize the technical course content into bite-sized chunks accessible in various platforms.
e.	Develop web, mobile, and SMS applications to be used primarily by AINFP companies. Where relevant, apps should work offline and may need to interface with other third party platforms, such as payment and SMS gateways. The platform should be available on both mobile Android smart phones, Android tablets, and an (online) web application, as well as limited content available via SMS.
f.	Develop a cloud hosted database(s) that will be used to collect, store, and report on real time analysis of the data from the platform. Data from the offline components of the platform should sync to the cloud environment seamlessly when connectivity is available.
g.	Pilot testing / debugging to ensure the platform and system meets business and performance requirements specified during the requirements gathering process.
h.	Aid TechnoServe in the process of publicly distributing the apps through relevant apps stores.
i.	Develop a training manual(s) for the platform and provide training on the use of the above systems to relevant TechnoServe staff, AINFP companies, and other key stakeholders.
j.	Ongoing research which results in the development of industry relevant lessons learned for distribution among partners and stakeholders.

Note: The firm is expected to spend time in AINFP countries to work closely with the TechnoServe team and other key stakeholders. It is expected that the technology development portion of this project can be completed remotely once requirements are finalized at each stage of the project.

2. Deliverables

Physical deliverables, beyond the tasks provided above, shall include the following:

a.	Draft and finalized requirements document based on user design validation and testing.
b.	An Android mobile application based on the features and functionality specified as part of the requirements document.
c.	A web application supporting the mobile application, analytics, reporting, training content management, and user management.
d.	An SMS application capable of distributing lightweight training content.
e.	The codebase(s) for the application and any supporting architecture, including access credentials for the database and any relevant API keys.
f.	A training / user manual for the platform.
g.	A lessons learned report.

D.   SELECTION CRITERIA

The AINFP program team will review all submitted proposals to identify the proposal and partner company providing the best value based on the following criteria:

a. Technical and functional capabilities of the design, development, and implementation approach. (34%)
b. Experience with similar projects rolling out technology solutions in East and Southern African countries with low bandwidth challenges as well as presence of technical and instructional support in Kenya for the prototype and pilot project. (33%)
c. Project understanding, responsiveness, and vision for the project. (33%)

1. Firm Qualifications

A qualified firm must have:

a. A minimum of 3 years of experience in Android and web application development experience, including expert knowledge of and experience in managing the full lifecycle of technology development projects.
b. An ability to design the structure of databases and platforms which are secure and scalable.
c. Experience working with local and international organizations and clients of a similar discipline to TechnoServe, with an emphasis on organizations focused on agricultural value chains and food processing. Experience working with both public and private sector partners is strongly preferred.
d. Proven experience successfully executing similar assignments in East and Southern Africa.
e. Expertise and experience in technology design and technology assessments for web and mobile applications deployed within agricultural value chains in East and Southern Africa, including the development of requirements for custom applications.
f. Experience working with agricultural focused businesses to determine sustainable business models and best practices.
g. Expertise and experience in User Interface / User Experience (UI/UX) design for smallholder farmers and companies in East and Southern Africa.
h. Experience in training project personnel, stakeholders, and end users in the use of applications and database management, including a deep expertise in designing trainings tailored for local communities in East and Southern Africa.
i. Professional ability to handle sensitive information related to organizations and individuals, including a demonstrated ability to respect the confidentiality of such information while working with TechnoServe.
j. Proven ability to ensure robust Information security procedures and principles pertaining to relevant data protection and confidentiality aspects (including appropriate data backups), in accordance with TechnoServe IT standards and procedures, as well as local laws in the country of the application's operations.
k. Proven ability to mobilize teams which work effectively with others, including multicultural teams with varying levels of technical competency and understanding.
l. Ability to work under pressure and commit to deadlines along expedited project schedules with rapidly evolving timelines, where tasks must be carefully coordinated in parallel.
m. Verbal and written fluency in English.
n. Expertise in technology research and the ability to develop industry relevant lessons learned and lessons learned reports for distribution among partners and key stakeholders. Ability to write industry facing reports and conference papers for the distribution of lessons learned.

2. Proposal Contents

Proposals must contain the following:

   a. **Cover Letter:** Include contact information (phone and email address), for the team's designated contact person who can receive and distribute RFP information on behalf of the team.

   b. **Firm Qualifications & Experience:** Provide firm description and qualifications to address the scope of this assignment, including client references for past projects.

   c. **Project Understanding and Approach:** Provide a brief description of your understanding and approach to the project.

   d. **Technical Approach and Support Overview:** Describe vendor support during and after implementation, including a detailed plan for sustainability and support provided long-term.

   e. **Cost Proposal:** Provide a breakdown of cost per deliverable as indicated on 3.2 above. The cost proposal must include all design, production, testing and software necessary for the development and long-term support for the application(s). For each deliverable, costs should be broken out indicating one-time set up costs, implementation costs, travel, seat licenses and other fees, and integration costs. ***Note:*** *a. The cost to be quoted for should be inclusive of all applicable taxes; b. ongoing fees that could be incurred as a result of the deliverables should be listed separately with an estimate (based on current market prices) of cost per year.*

E.   TIMELINE AND SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

1   Questions regarding this RFP may be addressed to AINFP-DigitalRFP@tns.org. All questions must be received no later than **24:00 EAT, Thursday, February 21, 2019**. Responses to all questions received will be distributed to all interested parties no later than 24:00 EAT, Monday 25, 2019.

2.   Completed responses to the RFP with title clearly marked as **"PROVISION OF CONSULTANCY FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AINFP PROGRAM DIGITAL APPLICATIONS"** and should be addressed to the email address below:

   AINFP-DigitalRFP@tns.org

   Should be received by **24:00 EAT, Friday March 1, 2019**.

   Please note that late submissions will not be considered at all and any form of Canvasing is prohibited and could lead to automatic disqualification

3.   The contract will be awarded to the selected provider and the provider will be contacted in writing by Monday, March 18, 2019.

4.   The assignment will begin on Monday, March 18, 2019 and last until Friday, March 20, 2020. The first version of the application must be completed in time for pilot testing with a live app by Monday, May 20, 2019.

F. TERMS AND CONDITIONS

a. The Request for Proposal is not and shall not be considered an offer by TechnoServe.
b. All responses must be received on or before the date and time indicated above. All late responses will be rejected.
c. All unresponsive responses will be rejected.
d. All proposals will be considered binding offers. Prices proposed must be valid for entire period provided by respondent or required by RFP.
e. All awards will be subject to TechnoServe contractual terms and conditions and contingent on the availability of donor funding.
f. TechnoServe reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal or cancel the solicitation process at any time, and shall have no liability to the proposing organizations submitting proposals for such rejection or cancellation of the request for proposals.
g. TechnoServe reserves the right to accept all or part of the proposal when award is provided.
h. All information provided by TechnoServe in this RFP is offered in good faith. Individual items are subject to change at any time, and all bidders will be provided with notification of any changes. TechnoServe is not responsible or liable for any use of the information submitted by bidders or for any claims asserted therefrom.
i. TechnoServe reserves the right to require any bidder to enter into a non-disclosure agreement.
j. The bidders are solely obligated to pay for any costs, of any kind whatsoever, which may be incurred by bidder or any third parties, in connection with the Response. All responses and supporting documentation shall become the property of TechnoServe, subject to claims of confidentiality in respect of the response and supporting documentation, which have been clearly marked confidential by the bidder.
k. Bidders are required to identify and disclose any actual or potential Conflict of Interest.

THE END