Request for Proposals

Digital Learning Content Development for IESC's USAID-Funded YouLead Program

Issue Date:	**December 2, 2020**
Closing Date For Proposals:	**January 5, 2021**
Closing Time:	**5:00 pm Indian Standard Time (IST)**
Project Title:	**Digital Learning Content Development for IESC's USAID-Funded YouLead Program**
Bid Reference Number:	**RFP-DIG-SRI171-DEC2020**

1. Disclaimer

The information contained in this request for proposals (hereinafter referred to as RFP) document is provided to the Offeror(s) by the International Executive Service Corps (IESC) in support of the USAID-funded Youth Employment and Business Start-up (YouLead) program.

IESC desires to receive proposals from companies (Offerors) that, in the aggregate, can help fulfill the organization's digital learning content production needs to include, but not limited to:

- Formal technical courses with up to 200 hours of "instructor" time and 100+ hours of student work;
- Problem-based learning courses (e.g. each unit presents a problem to be solved or a project to be completed before the student can progress);
- Business case studies suite (video, the case, quiz, follow up forum) to supplement entrepreneurship learning;
- Teacher training and pedagogy;
- Digitized content for the work-readiness skills development (e.g. Global Skills/21st century skills); and,
- Short videos to showcase specific occupations or skill descriptors.

Content development approaches that utilize the latest digital education practices such as in the list below are preferred. Offerors are welcome to propose other techniques and approaches not listed.

- Gamification of learning modules

- Interactive learning content
- Project-based and sequenced learning content
- Group and team-based digital activities
- Learner-centered or adaptive learning processors
- Pre- and post-learner assessment features or compatibility of such features in a learning management system environment, etc.

The purpose of this RFP document is to provide Offerors with information to assist them in the preparation of their proposal/s for the services that IESC seeks to source. This RFP document does not claim to contain all the information each Offeror may require. Each Offeror should conduct their own assessment and should check the accuracy, reliability, and completeness of the information in this RFP document, and where necessary obtain independent advice from appropriate sources. IESC will hold a webinar on/around December 10, 2020 to address any questions Offerors may have.

IESC plans to award up to five contracts. Each contract will be for a period of two years and may include one assignment targeted to be completed within the first 2-4 months after execution of the contract. Based on the quality and timeliness of the work, as well as funds availability, additional assignments may be available for those offerors completing their assignments in a high quality, timely manner.

Any contract resulting from this RFP will be a two-year indefinite delivery/indefinite quantity (IDIQ) contract, an umbrella type instrument with pre-negotiated prices. IDIQ mechanisms are typically used as such: should IESC need to fulfill an assignment or task, it will issue an individual task order under that IDIQ for work that is consistent with the overall IDIQ scope of work and as outlined in Part 4.2 of this RFP. Each task order is a stand-alone contract and will contain an order specific scope of work and budget. IDIQ contractors awarded task orders are required to comply with all IDIQ terms and conditions in its task order management.

IESC may cancel this RFP and is under no obligation to make an award as a result of this RFP, although IESC fully anticipates doing so. Activities are anticipated to begin in January 2021.

All contracts are subject to and shall be carried out in accordance with U.S. government regulations promulgated by USAID and any other subsequently published rule or regulation governing the program.

IESC may, at its own discretion, but without being under any obligation to do so, update, amend, or supplement the information in this RFP document.

Interested offerors are responsible for all costs associated with preparation and submission of proposals and will not be reimbursed by IESC.

Background

IESC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to equitable, sustainable economic growth in developing countries. We believe that a robust private sector is the cornerstone of resilient economies and stable countries. For more than 55 years, IESC has focused on market-driven private enterprise development.

YouLead is a USAID-funded, seven-year program implemented by IESC to improve technical and vocational education and training, increase the employability of young people in Sri Lanka, and encourage small and micro business start-ups. YouLead will create a more skilled and flexible workforce by undertaking activities that support and strengthen students, teachers, institutions, and young entrepreneurs.

2. Period of Performance

The anticipated period of performance for contracts awarded under this RFP will be January 2021 until January 2023.

3. Scope Statement

YouLead is a USAID-funded, seven-year program, implemented by IESC to improve technical and vocational education and training and increase the employability of young people in Sri Lanka. YouLead will create a more skilled and flexible workforce by undertaking activities that support and strengthen students, teachers, institutions, and entrepreneurs. YouLead improves the quality and availability of career counseling, works closely with key government ministries and private and public training institutes to design and improve educational and vocational training, always with a market-driven approach, and supports entrepreneurship development. Increasing the amount of learning content available digitally is a goal that has increased in importance due to COVID-19 disruptions. YouLead is embarking on an intensive effort to convert, design, or develop large amounts learning content into digital formats to support learning for Sri Lankan youth.

YouLead is in the process of identifying digital course content development needs for its stakeholders. The project anticipates needing to produce 20-30 digital learning materials in a short period of time and intends to award contracts to digital content developers who can best demonstrate an ability to provide high-quality, timely, cost-effective content in Sinhala and Tamil languages.

The subject selection for course contents will be managed by a content requirement identification committee formed by YouLead for each institution. The decision will be made upon evaluating the contribution of multiple key characteristics such as relevance, target audience size, accessibility etc. The proposed contents must be developed in a form of standalone digital learning elements with extended compatibility for SCORM and xAPI (TinCan) compliant learning management systems. The developed contents must be composed with royalty free multimedia elements (text, audio, video, etc.) and must use open source programming for free to use and distribute. The main content may be produced in English, Sinhala, or Tamil, but users interested in accessing the content in the other local languages should be able to access their preferred language as sub/super titles or alternative audio tracks.

All quotations must be valid for ninety (90) days.

4. Statement Of Work

4.1. Schedule of Authorities

The contractor will report to the Project Director or his designee.

4.2. Activities

Each Offeror is expected to propose at least one of the following activities outlined below. Offerors may propose to complete more than one activity as per instructions in section 9:

I.   Traditional courses to be digitized
Provide end to end digital content development for courses identified by YouLead. The activities will include, but not limited to:
   a) Understanding and conceptualizing course level and module level outcomes
   b) Instructional designing of the module-based contents
   c) Develop various learning elements such as text and multimedia titles based on the proposed instructional design (may involve storyboarding/scripting)
   d) Provide standalone and LMS compatible assessment contents compatible with SCROM/xAPI
   e) All contents, elements and technologies used must be compatible with fluid responsiveness to support all mobile devices.
   f) All full courses must be aligned with a thematic approach where users will follow a simple iconic structure throughout the program.
   g) Each course must be accompanied with technical documentation on how to use, update and troubleshoot the contents.

II.   Interactive video case studies

Provide a standalone digital education suite for selected interactive video case studies such as YouLead developed short films and documentaries. (Please visit YouLead Sri Lanka YouTube page for more details). The activities will include, but are not limited to:

   a) Understanding and conceptualizing the case-based learning outcomes
   b) Instructional designing of each learning outcome
   c) Develop various digital learning elements such as text essays, interactivities, and evaluation questions
   d) Provide standalone and LMS compatible assessment contents (such as quizzes), compatible with SCROM/xAPI

III.   Skills Development learning modules

Provide a standalone digital education suite for selected set skills of YouLead's 21 for 21 Skills campaign. (Please visit **www.youlead.lk/skills** for more details) The activities will include, but not limited to:

   a) Understanding and conceptualizing each skill and define measurable learning outcomes
   b) Instructional designing of each skill outcome with a list of proposed digital tools/methods to educate on and assess each skill
   c) Develop various digital learning elements such as multi-media titles, evaluation questions and discussion forums etc.
   d) Provide standalone and LMS compatible assessment contents (Such as quizzes), compatible with SCROM/xAPI or with Standalone grading system.

IV.   Localization of existing courses/modules

Work together with YouLead digital content development team to:
   a) Source digital contents already developed in selected subject areas
   b) Identify and map courses/contents matches with the identified outcomes of YouLead digital content development outcomes
   c) Discuss and negotiate with original service providers for possible localizations
   d) Instructional designing and map out potential contents for localization and identify gaps
   e) Localize the identified courses/contents in LMS compatible form, and develop similar contents to fill the learning gaps identified during the mapping process
   f) Provide standalone and LMS compatible assessment contents (Such as quizzes), compatible with SCROM/xAPI or with Standalone grading system.

V.   Other

Offerors may propose other types of digital learning content that promote employment or enterprise development for youth or build the capacity of instructors focused on vocational education and entrepreneurship.

General Guidelines (Applicable in all above content development instances)

a) All digital contents, elements and technologies used for development must be compatible with fluid screen responsiveness to support all digital devices.
b) All the content must be aligned with a uniform visual thematic approach, with a simple iconic structure throughout the development (A template will be provided by YouLead)
c) User engagement must be central to all content design and execution.
d) Each course must be accompanied with technical documentation on how to use, update and troubleshoot the contents, including the software used to develop the content, including version and source code.
e) All multi-lingual content must provide language files in sperate XML, language extension files for easy customization or localization for other languages.

5. Contract Type

As stated in Part 1 of this RFP, the anticipated type of contract is an IDIQ with task orders. The type of each task order will be determined by the needs of the assignment, but is anticipated to be fixed price, with deliverable based payments, payable in stages based on the achievement of milestones as per the example Payment Schedule below:

#	Description	Deliverable	Completion Date	Payment
1	Provide course development plan and duration for each module/course provided by YouLead	Completed course development proposed cost as per the attached template	7 Days from the request	40%
2	Provide end to end development of the digital course contents	Fully functional standalone webpage with digital course content Separate set of the same contents for SCROM/xAPI based LMS use	To be specified along with the cost proposal based on the complexity of the development	40%

3	QA, Testing and technical documentation	QA Report, Testing Report and technical documentation	7 Days from the deliverable 2	20%

IESC may also opt to award task orders on a cost reimbursable basis under the IDIQ(s) as well. In the case of cost reimbursement, contractors will be reimbursed after the fact for actual and allowable task order costs. Cost reimbursement task orders typically include line items for labor, other direct costs such as supplies, outsourced services (e.g. editing, animation, web development, artwork), software, equipment rental, interpretation, etc. and any necessary and approved travel expenses. Indirect (overhead) costs may be reimbursed only in the following circumstances: 1) if the contractor has a valid, current U.S. government Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA); or 2) the Contractor opts for a 10% de minimus indirect cost rate (a flat 10% charge on all allowable direct task order costs), per 2 CFR 200.414(f). In the case of the use of a NICRA, IESC will pay indirect (overhead) costs only as per the rates and terms of the contractor's NICRA.

Service Standards & Responsibilities
Full-service production including the following:
- All deliverables must be presented with source-codes with a list of software used to develop and technical documentation
- All deliverables must use Sinhala and Tamil Unicode Fonts (including the technical documentation)
- All contents, web pages and elements must be optimized for web (with minimum quality reduction)
- All elements must be fluid responsive to match with all screen types
- All questions in courses must be presented with answers, shuffled questions, and automated marking with SCROM/xAPI compatibility

6. Instructions to Offerors

6.1. Submission

1) Offers received after the closing date may not be considered.
2) Offers must be in Sri Lankan Rupees (LKR) if the offeror is registered in Sri Lanka. Otherwise, offers must be in US dollars.
3) Technical and cost proposals must be submitted as two separate documents. Cost information must not be included in the technical proposal.

Offerors must submit their proposals by the closing date and time, as listed on page one, to the following:

Tanya Ghaziani
Senior Program Associate
tghaziani@iesc.org

6.2. Clarification and Amendments

Offerors may request clarifications via email to Tanya Ghaziani, Senior Program Associate, **tghaziani@iesc.org** not later than **11:59 p.m., Indian Standard Time (IST) time, on Monday, December 7, 2020**. IESC will hold a webinar on **Thursday, December 10, 2020** to provide an overview of the RFP and responses to the submitted requests for clarification.

All Offerors may then request further clarifications via email to Tanya Ghaziani, Senior Program Associate, **tghaziani@iesc.org** not later than **11:59 p.m., Indian Standard Time (IST) time, on Monday, December 14, 2020. IESC will the post the request for clarifications and answers for all requests** on IESC's website on the **Current Procurements page** on/or before **Wednesday, December 16, 2020**.

IESC may opt to not answer questions before the proposal submission deadline outside of the allotted response period for clarifications. No questions will be answered over the phone or in person.

Offerors are cautioned that, notwithstanding any remarks or clarifications, given during the webinar, all terms and conditions of the RFP remain unchanged unless they are changed by amendment to the RFP. If the answers to webinar or other questions, or any RFP amendment create ambiguities, it is the responsibility of the Offeror to seek clarifications prior to submitting an offer.

6.3. Cover Page and Markings

In addition to the required proposal documents listed in sections 10 and 11 below, please include a cover page with your submission for the technical and the cost proposals (separate cover pages). The cover page should be on company letterhead and should contain the following information:

1) Project or Title (from the front page of this RFP document)
2) Company Name
3) Company Address
4) Name of Company's authorized representative
5) Contact person if different that Company's representative
6) Telephone #, Cellular/Mobile Phone #, Email address

7)   Duration of Validity of proposal
8)   Payment terms
9)   Company DUNS # if applicable
10) Signature, date, and time

7. Eligibility Requirements

Offeror may be required to present a business license and must have experience in:
- Digital course content development
- Past experience in designing and developing eLearning related contents
- Proven international best practices in use with digital content development
- Affiliations with other institutions/course providers for accreditation/certification for programs is an added advantage.
- An understanding of the trending demands for online learning content among youth both locally and internationally

Offerors may need to obtain a DUNS number and an eligibility notice prior to receiving any award. Should an offeror need assistance in obtaining a DUNS number, IESC will provide instructions and will also make those instructions publicly available. A DUNS number is not required to submit a proposal.

8. Basis for Award

IESC anticipates that award will be based on best value principles. Accordingly, award will be made to the technically acceptable Offerors whose proposals provide the greatest overall value to IESC and the USAID/YouLead program, price, and other factors considered. The winning proposal must conform to all solicitation requirements.

To determine best value, proposals will be evaluated on the criteria below. The number of points assigned, totaling 100 points, indicates the relative importance of each individual criterion. Offerors should note that these criteria serve to: (a) identify the significant factors that Offerors should address in their proposals; and, (b) set the standard against which all proposals will be evaluated.

9.   Technical Proposal Evaluation

Please read carefully, the following are instructions for preparing proposals. Proposals must be organized into sections corresponding to the sections presented in **9.1 Technical Evaluation Criteria** and numbered accordingly. Please stay in the page limits given below. Only include the requested information and avoid submitting extra content. Any pages exceeding the page limitation for each section of the proposal may not be evaluated.

Proposals shall be written in English with each page numbered consecutively. Cover pages, dividers, and tables of contents are not subject to the page limit.

9.1.   Technical Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated according to the following criteria. Points will also reflect the overall presentation of the proposal, which should be clear, complete, well organized, and well written. Most importantly, proposals should address all the requirements listed in this RFP. Proposals will be scored on:

[1] Content development approach: 3-page limit *for each type of activity as outlined in section 4.2 that the Offeror is proposing to complete*. If the offeror is, for instance, proposing that they can do two or more of the types of activity outlined in section 4.2, a content development approach will be required for each one and each will be assessed separately. IESC reserves the right to determine if all of the activity types proposed will be included in a possible contract or only some depending on the evaluation of the proposals. Total Possible Points: 40

- Demonstrating a robust approach to youth engagement and providing an effective, youth-oriented user experience that will engage the user up front and maintain that engagement throughout. If the approach taken may have different impacts for male and female learners, Offeror should explain how it will address the disparity;
- Creativity of approach, including the use of appropriate technologies;
- Learning outcomes. Will the proposed approach achieve the desired outcome—e.g. for course development, is the student likely to achieve the required competencies and therefore increase their probability of getting employed?

[2] Offeror's past performance and references: 3-page limit (no limit for the provision of video or other content from the Offeror's portfolio). Possible points 40.

The proposal must provide an account of the Offeror's record in implementing similar activities to those outlined in the tasks and activities. Offerors should provide a narrative of its experience in general, and specifically include examples from its portfolio of work that demonstrate the quality and style of its learning content development experience. The Offer must confirm that it was the lead developer of each piece of content (or of the specific module or technology that is being demonstrated). These examples may be provided via a link to one online site where the curated content is hosted or a downloadable file sharing service. Administrator/instructor access should be granted for any content that is restricted or fee based. IESC will consider all content provided proprietary and strictly confidential.

This section should include sufficient information to demonstrate the Offeror's ability to complete the proposed activities in an effective and on-time manner.

Offerors should provide a minimum of three (3) references for past and present clients familiar with each type of activity proposed. References must include contact information which may be included as an attachment.

The Offeror may submit this section only once if proposing to complete more than one type of activity—if so, please indicate which references (at least three) and which portfolio samples best represent the Offeror's capabilities by activity type. The Offeror may submit a separate past performance section for each activity if they prefer.

[3] Offeror's Personnel Experience and Capacities: 4-page limit (not including resumes or CVs, which are attachments). Total Possible Points: 20

The technical proposal must include a description (biographical sketch acceptable) of the individual or team of individuals who would directly work on the activities in the contract. Resumes or CVs must be submitted as attachments for individuals submitted in this section and do not count within the page limitations of this section.

This section will be marked on the extent to which the Offeror's or its personnel have experience in developing the kind of content proposed.

The Offeror may submit this section only once if proposing to complete more than one type of activity and the team proposed is the same. If so, please indicate which activity types each proposed personnel will work on and their role on that activity. The Offeror may submit a separate personnel experience section for each activity if they prefer.

10.   Cost Proposal Evaluation

The Offeror shall submit a separate cost proposal per activity proposed in accordance with the budget template at Attachment A of this RFP, which can be found via a separate link on IESC's website on the **Current Procurements page**. Offerors must include a detailed justification for each cost in order for IESC to determine cost reasonableness. Should an offeror propose any subcontractors to perform any portion of the work, such total subcontract costs must be clearly denoted on a separate budget line in the Offeror's budget. Offerors must also include a separate budget worksheet for any proposed subcontractor(s). Subcontractor budget and narratives must adhere to the same budgeting format requirements (per Annex A Budget Template) herein for prime offerors, including cost narratives and indirect (overhead) cost restrictions.

All proposed costs must be in accordance with the **U.S. Government Cost Principles under 2 CFR 200**.

Sri Lankan VAT Invoice giving VAT/NBT break-down should be issued to IESC along with the Offeror's VAT Registration number **IF** you are registered for VAT and the amount invoiced includes same. Your prior confirmation on this is required.

YouLead
304, 1/1, Union Place,
Colombo – 02,
Sri Lanka.
27 May 2020

11.   Deviations

IESC reserves the right to waive any deviations by offerors from the requirements of this solicitation that in IESC's opinion are considered not to be material defects requiring rejection or disqualification; or where such a waiver will promote increased competition.

12.   Discrepancies

Please read the instructions carefully before submitting your proposal. Any discrepancy in following the instructions or contract provisions may disqualify your proposal without recourse or an appeal for reconsideration at any stage.

13.   Conflict of Interest Declaration

The following steps outline IESC's contract selection process and should be understood by all Offerors to ensure the transparency of awards and avoid conflict of interest.

1) Request for Proposals (RFPs) are posted on IESC's website on the **Current Procurements page**. The offer is open to all qualified offerors;
2) Clarifications will be emailed to all offerors submitting questions, as well as posted on IESC's website on the **Current Procurements page**, simultaneously;
3) Once the proposals are received, an evaluation committee scores them;
4) Cost proposals are evaluated for reasonableness, accuracy, and completeness;
5) The best value proposal is selected based on a combination of the technical score and the cost;
6) No activity can be started until both IESC and the awardee have signed a formal contract; and,

7) IESC policy against fraud and code of business ethics exists throughout the life of the subcontract and beyond. Even if the contract is closed, if any party is found guilty of fraud, IESC will make a full report to the USAID Office of Inspector General, which may choose to investigate and prosecute guilty parties to the fullest extent of the law.

Any contracts awarded will be required to comply with all administrative standards and provisions required by USAID.

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