Request for Clarifications and Answers

Tropical Avocado Promotion

**RFP Issue Date:** January 29, 2021  
**Closing Date for Proposals:** February 24, 2021  
**Closing Time for Proposals:** 5:00 PM, EST  
**Project Title:** Exporting Quality Program  
**Offer Reference Number:** RFP-DREQ-003-2020  
**Clarifications Issue date:** February 17, 2021

**Question 1:** Who are the decision-makers that will be reviewing and approving the promotion agency’s and influencers’ work?

**Answer 1:** Exporting Quality program marketing technical staff will review work presented by the contractor on behalf of itself and subcontractors (if any). As necessary, program staff will validate work with its network of Dominican exporters and U.S.-based importers and distributors. The Program Director has final approval authority (Section 5.1 Schedule of Authorities).

**Question 2:** Have the growers/exporters in the Dominican Republic and the importers/distributors in the USA been involved in the development of this RFP and have they expressed support for the activities and deliverables contained therein? How do you envision them being part of overseeing or collaborating on the work the promotion agency does?

**Answer 2:** Dominican growers/exporters were consulted in the development of this RFP and expressed support for the activities and deliverables contained therein. IESC communicates with key importers and distributors of Tropical (green-skin) Avocados in the U.S. and considered their inputs prior to designing the activities in section 5.2. U.S. importers and distributors were not directly involved in the development of this RFP.

IESC notes support from Dominican exporters and U.S. importers and distributors.

It is important to IESC to seek sector feedback as planned activities progress. Throughout the period of performance, IESC will validate key components of the contractor’s work with its network of U.S.- and Dominican-based importers and exporters.
**Question 3:** Without a website or dedicated social media profiles for Tropical Avocados, how do you anticipate the recipes will be distributed and made available to the target audience?

**Answer 3:** IESC will coordinate efforts between the contractor (winner of this RFP) and the Dominican promotion agency in charge of the Tropical Avocados from Dominican Republic website and social media channels to ensure work is complementary, not duplicative. This response is not intended to limit distribution of recipes through different channels the Offeror may identify in their proposal, i.e. distribution or placement of recipes through influencers.

**Question 4:** Are you happy with the prior agency you worked with who developed the branding and marketing plan and would you work with them again? If so, what has worked best? What would you have liked to accomplish but didn’t?

**Answer 4:** IESC competitively sources all contracts according to 2 CFR 200.319. IESC considers the activities under section 5.2 Activities to be related to, but distinct from previous work performed under contract. Please see section 11.2 Offeror’s Past Performance for more information on how past performance is evaluated during the technical proposal evaluation.

**Question 5:** Of the $15,000 allocated to Influencer Marketing, what is the anticipated amount that can be used by the promotion agency for coordination, management and messaging development in conjunction with the influencers?

**Answer 5:** All costs must be in accordance with the U.S. Government Cost Principles under 2 CFR subpart E (nonprofit organizations) or the Federal Acquisition Regulations (FAR) Part 31 (for commercial organizations). IESC expects applicants to provide a well-reasoned technical approach based on Offeror’s experience. This must be accompanied in the cost proposal by an explanatory cost narrative, demonstrating reasonable and appropriate costs, as an attachment for evaluation (Section 12. Cost Proposal Evaluation). The $15,000 figure is approximate (Section 2. Background).

**Question 6:** On deliverable “Materials produced in the context of the collaboration with influencers”, are you looking for materials produced in the normal course of business by the influencers, or are you looking for additional materials to be developed by the promotion agency to extend the messaging reach of the influencers? If you are looking to extend the messaging, what is the anticipated budget that can be used for such purposes, and is that budget expected to be part of the $15,000 influencer marketing budget?

**Answer 6:** If the contractor includes the design of additional materials, they could be included in the estimated $15,000 influencer marketing budget. IESC welcomes Offerors’
creative proposals to accomplish effective messaging such that the Offeror believes would have the best result per section 4. Scope Statement and given the estimated value of the anticipated contract in section 2. Background.

**Question 7:** Is advance payment allowed for any portion of this project, including but not limited to deposit requirements of influencers?

**Answer 7:** The executive summary of the cost proposal must include Offeror payment terms and conditions, including if any working capital advances will be necessary and the amount of such, if applicable (Sections 7.4 Table of Contents and 12. Cost Proposal Evaluation). IESC will evaluate any and all costs and payment terms and conditions for reasonableness.

**Question 8:** What are your payment terms after a deliverable has been submitted as complete?

**Answer 8:** Any contract resulting from this RFP will be a fixed price deliverables-based contract (Sections 1. Disclaimer and 6. Contract Type). The Program Director is the ultimate responsible for approving deliverables once submitted by the contractor (Section 5.1 Schedule of Authorities). After Program Director approval IESC will process payment within a period not to exceed 30 days, or as negotiated and accepted by IESC.