

**Request for Quotations (RFQ) No: RFQ-2021-062**

<b>Issue Date:</b>	<b>17 August 2021</b>
<b>Deadline for Written Questions:</b>	<b>19 August 2021, 5 PM Hanoi time</b>
<b>Clarifications based on Written Questions:</b>	<b>23 August 2021</b>
<b>Closing Date:</b>	<b>26 August 2021</b>
<b>Closing Time:</b>	<b>5:30 PM, Hanoi time</b>
<b>Project Title:</b>	<b>USAID LinkSME Project</b>

**Purpose:**

The International Executive Service Corps (IESC) seeks a Vietnamese firm and/or other non-governmental organization that can support quantitative research efforts pertaining to the business enabling environment and small and medium enterprises. Such support would facilitate efforts of the **USAID Linkages for Small and Medium Enterprises Project** (sometimes referred to as "**USAID LinkSME**" or the "Project") in Vietnam, to assist the development of policy and administrative reforms or help SMEs identify new markets. The quotations must comply with the requirements in this RFQ and the detailed specifications and technical requirements in Annex 1, attached.

**Instructions to Offerors:**

**A. Submission of Questions and Offers**

Submit any questions to [procurement@linksme.org](mailto:procurement@linksme.org) before the deadline specified in this solicitation. Submit offers to [procurement@linksme.org](mailto:procurement@linksme.org) before the deadline specified in this solicitation.

Please reference the RFQ number in any response to this RFQ. Questions received after the deadline may not be answered. Offers received after the specified time and date will be considered late and will be considered only at the discretion of IESC.

Best offer proposals are requested. It is anticipated that a contract will be awarded solely on the basis of the original offers received. However,

IESC/USAID LinkSME reserves the right to conduct discussions, negotiations, and/or request clarifications prior to awarding a contract.

**B. Evaluation and Award:**

The award will be made to a responsive Offeror that follows the RFQ instructions, meets the eligibility requirements, meets or exceeds the minimum required technical specifications, and is judged to be the best value.

Please note that if there are significant deficiencies regarding responsiveness to the requirements of this RFQ, an offer may be deemed “non-responsive” and thereby disqualified from consideration. IESC/USAID LinkSME reserves the right to waive immaterial deficiencies at its discretion.

Please note that the anticipated contract type is a Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA). Prices will be those proposed by the prevailing Offeror in this RFQ and agreed to by USAID LinkSME. From time to time, USAID LinkSME will issue firm, fixed price release orders under the contemplated BPA, by which it will procure services described in the BPA at the corresponding prices.

**C. Source/Nationality:** All goods and services offered in response to this RFQ or supplied under any resulting award must meet USAID Geographic Code 937 in accordance with the United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), 22 CFR §228. The cooperating country for this RFQ is Vietnam. Other countries meeting this code requirement include, among others, the United States, India, Indonesia, and the Philippines.

**D. Prohibited Countries and Sectors:** The Project does not engage with lead firms or Offerors involved in activities in Cuba, Iran, Lebanon, Libya, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Syria or involved in producing arms, tobacco, or alcohol.

**E. Eligibility:**

By submitting an offer in response to this RFQ, the Offeror certifies that he/she is not debarred, suspended, or otherwise considered ineligible for an award by the U.S. Government. IESC will not award a contract to any individual that is debarred, suspended, or considered to be ineligible by the U.S. Government.

As a matter of policy and efficiency IESC will not consider bids from commercial companies or other organizations or enterprises (including nonprofit organizations) in which foreign governments or their agents or agencies have a controlling interest.

**F. Quotations:** Quotations in response to this RFQ must be priced on an all-inclusive basis considering the aspects specified under clause 6.2 ('Cost Arrangement') in Annex 1. Offerors are required to provide quotations in a PDF file with the following details:

1. The types of research support services that the Offeror proposes to provide (see Section 6.1 of Annex 1).
2. A firm, fixed price cost for each service proposed - see section 7 of Annex 1 for the required format.
3. Validity period for quotation (minimum 30 days).
4. A maximum 10-page attachment with any relevant information/approach to the Offeror's capacity for providing the services specified in Annex 1.

### Annex 1: Background and Specifications

#### 1. Background

The USAID LinkSME project (sometimes referred to as “the Project”), funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), supports the Government of Vietnam (GVN) in its efforts to develop, adopt, and implement policy and regulatory reforms to provide a more favorable environment for small and medium enterprises (SMEs) particularly through its Business Enabling Environment (BEE) Component. It also works with business support organizations (BSOs) and the GVN to improve the performance of SMEs and integrate them into lead firm supply chains, particularly through the Market Linkages Component of the Project. The project is implemented by IESC ([www.iesc.org](http://www.iesc.org)), under a contract with USAID and an operating license issued by the People’s Aid Coordinating Committee. Click [here](#) for more information in English and [here](#) in Vietnamese.

Since its inception, the Project has been engaging consultants to undertake research assignment called for in its work plans. In most cases the selected consultants have been responsible for collecting data from individuals, enterprises, or other organizations sufficient for them to reach reasonable conclusions on the research questions assigned.

Over time, though, the project has observed that consultants engaged to analyze data, draw conclusions, and develop policy proposals are not necessarily adept at collecting the underlying data in the first place. Further it is possible that different research projects supported by USAID LinkSME may require inquiries with the same target audience. This creates possibilities for combining data collection efforts to support more than one research effort.

Finally, the COVID-19 pandemic has made data collection even more challenging. Under these conditions, a firm or other non-governmental organization well experienced in data collection under difficult conditions could very well outperform consultants with even advanced research skills.

#### 2. Scope Statement

IESC is seeking a firm to support the collection of data necessary to undertake at least some of the research and analysis called for under its work plan. **See Annex 2 for a list of some of the project’s**

**contemplated research activities**, parts of which the project and its consultants might require assistance.

Rather than procuring such services on a case-by-case basis, IESC is seeking to enter into a blanket purchase agreement that would define both services and corresponding prices for a variety of discrete activities associated with data collection. Individual examples of discrete activities can be found under Section 6.1.

The contemplated arrangement would allow the Project to procure such support through release orders it issues from time at prices established by the BPA.

### **3. Subcontract Objectives**

The overall objectives of this subcontract are:

- To facilitate data collection by consultants the project has engaged.
- To compile data collected into a format that consultants may thereafter analyze.

### **4. Limitations and Conditions**

Decisions on which Offerors to engage shall be subject to any conflict of interest or ethical requirements applicable to IESC or USAID LinkSME.

### **5. Period in which this Agreement is in Effect and the Period for which Performance is Required**

The agreement will be in effect from the date of signature until August 31, 2022 with the possibility of renewal for an additional year.

### **6. Statement of Work**

#### **6.1 Illustrative Activities**

The following is an illustrative list of tasks the Offeror might be asked to undertake:

<b>No.</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Deliverables</b>
1	Design questionnaires in close coordination with engaged consultants	A draft questionnaire reflecting such consultations
2	Identify target audiences and relevant verified contact details	A list of contacts
3	Review and pilot the survey questionnaires	Amendments and supplements to presented questions after piloting
4	Develop data entry programs	Data entry program
5	Conduct surveys	Survey results in raw form
6	Implement data cleaning and coding	Collected data cleaned and coded
7	Compile and present survey results	Compiled data in user-friendly format

LinkSME welcomes proposals from Offerors of **additional discrete activities and corresponding prices** that would support research efforts.

### **6.2 Cost Arrangement**

The cost arrangement, to be described in the contemplated BPA, shall be based on fixed prices for the above services at a per-unit basis.

**7. Requested Quotation**

For each discrete service the Offeror proposes to provide, quote a corresponding cost:

<b>Item</b>	<b>Net</b>	<b>VAT</b>	<b>GROSS</b>
Proposed service 1	To be filled in by Offeror	To be filled in by Offeror	To be filled in by Offeror
Proposed service 2, etc.	To be filled in by Offeror	To be filled in by Offeror	To be filled in by Offeror

**Annex 2: Illustrative List of Activities where Research Support Might be Needed**

No.	Name of activity/ research	Anticipated type of SME/ Business	Expected sample size	Geographical scope	Brief on issues/ content to be asked or types of data to be collected
1	Building capacity for SMEs and support SMEs in achieving sustainable development when they join supply chains/ Research on sustainable standards in agro-processing and wood product industries	Manufacturing SMEs	50 -100	North, Central and South of Vietnam	2 separate surveys to collect qualitative data for the two sector: agro-processing and wood products. Questionnaires to be provided by research consultants.
2	Support assessment on the regulations related to business activities in the MPI state management sector under Resolution 68/NQ-CP	All	50 - 100	North, Central and South of Vietnam	Feedbacks on business barriers in the MPI's management sector.
3	Study and propose supplementation and amendments of regulations and policies to support SMEs.	All	50 - 100	North, Central and South of Vietnam	Feedbacks and recommendations for SMEs support mechanism, focusing on (i) Technological supports for SMEs; (ii) Information supports for SMEs; (iii) Advisory services for SMEs; (iv) Human resources development for SMEs; (v) Support for start-up and innovation; (vi) Support SME linkages.
4	Study, evaluate the implementation and propose solutions to improve the implementation of the Decree 34/2018/NĐ-CP on the establishment, organization and operation of Credit Guarantee Fund for SMEs	SMEs and commercial banks	50 - 100	North, Central and South of Vietnam	Feedbacks on the barriers in accessing credit guarantee and recommendations for improvement



## USAID LinkSME Project

No.	Name of activity/ research	Anticipated type of SME/ Business	Expected sample size	Geographical scope	Brief on issues/ content to be asked or types of data to be collected
5	Assess the implementation progress of Resolution No. 02/NQ-CP of the Government on continued implementation of key duties and solutions to improve the business environment, enhance the national competitiveness, and come up with directions and proposals for the following year.	All	50	North, Central and South of Vietnam	Feedbacks on property registration system and recommendations for improvement
6	Research, evaluate, analyze, and propose support to expand the potential export markets for Vietnamese SMEs.	Manufacturing SMEs	200	North, Central and South of Vietnam	4 separate surveys to collect qualitative data for the four sectors. Questionnaires to be provided by research consultants
7	Conduct regulatory review for reforming business regulations	Sectoral enterprises, sectors to be determined	30 for each sector	All if possible, North otherwise	semi-structured questionnaire with face-to-face or online interview, or roundtable
8	Conduct regulatory review for reforming business regulations	Sectoral enterprises, sectors to be determined	30 for each sector	All if possible, North otherwise	semi-structured questionnaire with face-to-face or online interview, or roundtable
9	Review regulations in Land, Environment and Construction	Both SME and large enterprises	50	All if possible, North otherwise	semi-structured questionnaire with face-to-face or online interview, or roundtable
10	Review regulations in Road and Maritime Transport	Mainly SMEs	50	All if possible, North otherwise	semi-structured questionnaire with face-to-face or online interview, or roundtable
11	Review regulations in food and beverage industry	Mainly SMEs	50	All if possible, North otherwise	semi-structured questionnaire with face-to-face or online interview, or roundtable

## USAID LinkSME Project

<b>No.</b>	<b>Name of activity/ research</b>	<b>Anticipated type of SME/ Business</b>	<b>Expected sample size</b>	<b>Geographical scope</b>	<b>Brief on issues/ content to be asked or types of data to be collected</b>
12	Review business reporting requirements	Both SME and large enterprises	50-100	All if possible, North otherwise	semi-structured questionnaire with face-to-face or online interview, or roundtable