

Request for Proposals

Expansion of the Dominican Single Window for Foreign Trade (VUCE)

Issue Date:	January 24, 2022
Closing Date For Proposals:	February 28, 2022
Closing Time:	11:59 p.m., Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)
Project Title:	Food for Progress Trade Safe (TraSa) Project
Offer Reference Number:	TRASA RFP-001-2022

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 United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)-funded Trade Safe (TraSa) Project (Cooperative Agreement Number: USDA/FCC-517-2020/001-00-B) in the Dominican Republic (DR).

IESC desires to receive proposals from companies (Offerors) to provide IT services and solutions that will expand coverage of the Dominican Single Window for Foreign Trade or *Ventanilla Unica de Comercio Exterior* (VUCE), in Spanish.

IESC plans to award one contract for the services of a Scrum team composed of a Scrum Master, a Product Owner, and at least 3 Full Stack Developer(s) specialized in developing IT solutions (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s) and integration with middleware's).

The purpose of this RFP document is to provide Offeror(s) 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 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 March 2022.

Note that proposal notification, award, and start dates are subject to change at USDA or IESC's discretion. Any activities under a final agreement are subject to and shall be

carried out in accordance with the regulations promulgated by the donor under the Office of Management and Budget guidance at 2 CFR part 200, as supplemented by 2 CFR part 400 and 7 CFR part 1499, other regulations that are generally applicable to grants and cooperative agreements of USDA, including the applicable regulations set forth in 2 CFR chapter I, II, and IV, 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.

The contract issued as a result of this RFP will be a Fixed Price contract.

Background

IESC is a leading U.S. nonprofit organization that fosters private sector development in the economically developing world. Since 1964, we have delivered lasting solutions that have resulted in more than 1.5 million jobs in 137 countries. We partner with businesses, cooperatives, entrepreneurs, jobseekers, and governments to sustainably build capacity, create jobs, and grow enterprises, sharing proven skills and experience that improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities around the world. Our major funders today are the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), among others.

IESC is the prime implementor of the USDA-funded TraSa, which aims to assist Dominican government institutions develop a modernized Sanitary/Phytosanitary (SPS) and food safety related policy and regulatory framework to respond to the needs of the DR's trade agreements and international best practices, as well as Dominican consumers.

In 2017, the General Directorate of Customs (DGA) of the DR developed the Single Window for Foreign Trade. VUCE is a tool for the electronic processing of prior authorizations and permits, such as phytosanitary certificates, which are required by the various government bodies to carry out import and export operations. The VUCE platform simplifies processes of all institutions involved in foreign trade, promotes transparency and security of procedures, and improves the country's overall competitiveness.

Phytosanitary certificates are official documents that confirm that shipments of plants and plant products traded internationally are free of pests and diseases and are therefore safe to trade. These certificates were until recently exchanged in paper form either by mail, courier, or physical means. This system triggered many errors, loss, theft, and

counterfeiting. In that context, the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) developed the ePhyto Solution to bring phytosanitary certification into the digital era.

The ePhyto Solution allows countries to electronically exchange ePhytos with one another through a central Hub. Countries can either produce ePhytos and exchange them with the IPPC ePhyto Hub directly via their own national online platform or use the IPPC's web-based application, the Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS).¹

The ePhyto Solution consists of three main elements:

A central server (Hub): to facilitate the transfer of electronic phytosanitary certificates between NPPOs, either from and to their own national electronic system or by using the generic system described below.

A Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS): a web-based system that can produce and receive ePhytos, to allow countries that do not have a national electronic system to produce, send and receive ePhytos.

Harmonization: the structure and transmission of ePhytos will follow a harmonized format through the use of standardized mapping, codes and lists.²

The Dominican Ministry of Agriculture (MA) recently adopted the Generic ePhyto National System (GeNS), which allows the issuance of electronic phytosanitary certificates and its exchange with the National Plant Protection Agency of the destination country through the IPPC ePhyto Hub. Even so, there is a need to facilitate the management of phytosanitary certificates through the VUCE platform to speed up the process and make it more transparent.

In that context, TraSa seeks a SCRUM team to develop an external solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) to allow the issuance and exchange of ePhytos through the IPPC ePhyto Hub directly via VUCE. The team should take as a reference the single window for foreign trade platform(s) developed by other Latin American countries such as the Single Export Window of Paraguay (VUE) and the Single Window for Mexican Foreign Trade (VUCEM). Paraguay and Mexico are successfully producing ePhyto certificates through their single window platforms and exchanging them through the IPPC ePhyto Hub.

¹ Source: [Global Alliance for Trade Facilitation](#)

² Source: [Overview - International Plant Protection Convention \(ippc.int\)](#)

2. Period of Performance

The anticipated period of performance, should offeror be selected, will be March 2022 until January 2023.

3. Scope Statement

Expand coverage of the Dominican Single Window for Foreign Trade (VUCE, in Spanish) to include exchange of digital phytosanitary certificates for export, re-export and import of agricultural products. Through this new online service available 24 hours a day and seven days a week, Dominican exporters will be able to request and obtain the permits required to export and re-export a specific product, while Dominican importers will be able to receive the phytosanitary permits required to import.

All quotations must be valid for ninety (90) days following the closing date for proposals.

4. Statement Of Work

4.1 Schedule of Authorities

The contractor will report to the Director of Capacity Building and Change Management.

4.2 Activities

The overall activities are as follows:

- Using the Agile software development methodology, design a solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) to produce, check status and issue digital phytosanitary certificates for import, export, and re-export through the VUCE platform, based on the International Standards for Phytosanitary Measures 12 (ISPM 12).
- Develop and implement the aforementioned solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) according to the specific requirements detailed in the section responsibilities of this scope.
 - Connect the designed solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) with the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) ePhyto Hub which is a system to facilitate the exchange of ePhytos between National Plant Protection Organizations (NPPOs).

The contractor is expected to undertake the following tasks:

1. Stage 1: Tasks prior to development

- Read and interpret the International Standard for Phytosanitary Measures (ISPM 12) of the International Food and Agriculture Organizations of the United Nations (FAO) and the IPPC. ISPM 12 describes the principles and guidelines for the preparation and issuance of phytosanitary certificates and phytosanitary certificates for re-export.
- Review and collect technical information (Programming Language of Front End and Back End, Database(s) Engine, Outbound & Inbound Service(s), Web Service(s), API(s), Network Infrastructure Components, etc.) on the current VUCE platform and acquire the necessary knowledge to be able to make the corresponding developments and/or integrations on the front end and back end of said system if necessary. For such purposes, it is necessary for the Product Owner to meet the developers and DGA technology staff and in the same way require the accesses or the base code.
- Review, read, understand all relevant documents concerning IPPC ePhyto Solutions to ensure correct preparation to connect the solution to be developed to the IPPC ePhyto Hub. These documents include the following: API Document, ePhyto Mapping Document, ePhyto Country Response, SPS Acknowledgement Document, Document Type, Schema Field Tag, Document Codes, Modes of Transport Codes, Specific Package Codes, Specific Statements, Status Codes, among others.
- Review all the steps presented in the Guide to Joining the Hub to be used during the development period.
- Review and learn about successful case studies of countries that are producing ePhyto certificates and that are exchanging them with the IPPC ePhyto Hub directly via their own single window online platforms. Case studies should include countries such as Mexico and Paraguay. The SCRUM team should watch video guide(s) that are publicly available in the single window platforms of these countries. If requested, IESC can facilitate contacts with technicians from the Mexico or Paraguay single windows.
- Coordinate meetings with the technicians of DGA and of the Department of Plant Health of the MA and collect all the inputs and relevant data to be used in the creation of a database(s) of phytosanitary certificates. Based on these inputs, build relationship structure diagrams.
- Identify the custom tariff codes corresponding to all agricultural products (chapter 1 to 24 of the harmonized system of the World Customs Organization) jointly with the Directorate General of Customs and the Ministry of Agriculture.

- In coordination with MA and DGA, prepare workflow diagrams and descriptions of workflow for export, re-export and import ePhytos. The workflows should include the following elements (non-exhaustive list): request of certification, information verification/commodity compliance with export requirements, NPPO issuance of certificate, NPPO withdrawal of certificate, NPPO receipt of import certificate.
- In coordination with MA and DGA, prepare a diagram that illustrates the interaction of users and technicians within the web service(s) on the VUCE platform. The diagram should include the following elements (non-exhaustive list): request of certification, information verification/commodity compliance with export requirements, NPPO issuance of certificate, NPPO withdrawal of certificate, NPPO receipt of import certificate.
- In coordination with DGA, prepare the flow diagram at the system level of the elements that interact in the development of the solution (database(s), web service(s), Front End, Back End and Integration to the IPPC ePhyto Hub).

2. Stage 2: Tasks during development

- Develop the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s)) so that it responds to the following requirements:
 - (A) The programming language is “.net”.
 - (B) The interaction with third parties should be through configurable API services via SOAP or REST (as recommended by [Guide to Joining the Hub](#)).
 - (C) The management of WDSL Certificates and should include the creation or request of the certificates. Both paths have the Hub, self-signed or requested and finally, mutual TLS handling.
 - (D) All interfaces, views of the front end where users interact, must be adaptive, compatible with all possible resolutions of the most used technological devices and must match the CSS used in the VUCE platform if the stakeholders decide so.
 - (E) The relational database(s) to be created must be built respecting the standardized normalization rules and must be indexed.
 - (F) Include E-R database schema: the creation of approval tables, the creation of internal case tracking tables (data persistence), VUCE data dictionary survey and the creation of a service or cron job for queued cases.
- The development IDE(s), webservice(s) and logs must be documented. The IDE(s) must be licensed (include licenses) for example: Visual Studio. In case of using GIT (for version control) and DevOps, license(s) and / or

- subscription(s) must be acquired during the development stages. Subscriptions must be acquired for one year minimum.
- In order to be able to connect to IPPC ePhyto Hub, develop the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) to be used by the Single Window platform so that it responds to the following pre-requisites:
 - (A) Enter phytosanitary certificate data electronically.
 - (B) Produce phytosanitary certificates (ePhytos and/or paper).
 - (C) Send ePhytos.
 - (D) Store of electronic phytosanitary certificate data.
 - (E) Receive ePhytos.
 - (F) Decrypt ePhytos.
 - (G) Validate the structure of the ePhyto message.
 - (H) Read/view/print/produce pdf of ePhytos.
 - (I) (Source: [Pre-Requisites to connect to ePhyto Hub](#))
 - Coordinate meetings with DGA and the Ministry of Agriculture to define the requirements and validate the following immediate requirements and their corresponding development components so that they meet the pre-requisites mentioned before:
 - (A) Consultation of the permits using the tariff code.
 - (B) Request the phytosanitary certificate through the VUCE platform under interaction between users with their defined roles, associating information through a local database (data storage) for such purposes and being able to associate the payment by means of invoices so that can start the process of producing the certificate.
 - (C) Produce the phytosanitary certificate (adapting it to the ISPM 12 Format) through the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) to be integrated with VUCE platform associating information through a local database (store data) for such purposes, step by step where an XML file can be built using the structure mapping used in the IPPC documentation ePhyto Hub and that a downloadable pdf can be generated. The integration must include in the front end of the VUCE platform the option for the user to consult the permits using the tariff code, to request and to produce the phytosanitary certificate and any other actions as requested by the beneficiaries.
 - (D) Integrate the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) to VUCE platform and connect it to ePhyto Hub through APIS by (SOAP) over HTTPS following the official guide on how to connect to it (as recommended by Guide to Joining the Hub).

- (E) Transfer and receive ePhytos produced in XML format through the IPPC ePhyto Hub to be exchanged by the destination NPPO system or any ePhyto GeNS and digested by the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)).
- (F) Check and notify the status of the ePhyto certificates for export, import and re-export exchanged through the ePhyto Hub. Verify and notify about the validation process of the ePhyto certificates (from origin to the destination NPPO and vice versa).

All these immediate requirements with their corresponding components are summarized in the following table:

Task ID	Immediate Requirements	Components
B.4.1	Permissions Query: By code	Query.
B.4.2	Request of Phytosanitary Certificate and Online Payment Integration – VUCE Platform	Development, Integration and Local DB.
B.4.3	Generation of Phytosanitary Certificate Online	Development and Local DB.
B.4.4	Integration Web Service(s) with VUCE Platform and connection with IPPC ePhyto Hub (Inbound & Outbound Services)	Integration / Web Service(s) / APII SOAP.
B.4.5	Transfer and receive Phytosanitary Certificate in XML format through ePhyto Hub	Integration / API SOAP / WDSL.
B.4.6	Online Phytosanitary Certificate Validation (Consult Status and Print Certificate)	Integration / API SOAP / WDSL.

- Develop the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) so that it responds to the following infrastructure requirements:
 - (A) The solution could be deployed within virtual environments VMWare, Hyper-V or as a virtual appliance on DGA premise within their infrastructure.
 - (B) Develop the solution in an environment with High Availability (include tool, software, or licenses if necessary) on DGA premise within their infrastructure.
 - (C) Consistent and predictable performance, with follow-up response times for all form inquiries and data transfers.
 - (D) The solution preferably must be deployed on the Windows Server 2016 STD (or a latest version) Operating System or various (clustering) (depending on the scope of development) (include perpetual license).

- (E) In case of use any Linux Distro (depending on the scope of development), include the ISO image, the installation, document the benefits of using it versus the preferably one and the know-how of the implementation.
 - (F) The database engine for the Local DB(s) must use preferably the Microsoft SQL Server 2016 (or a latest version) Standard or Enterprise (depending on the scope of development). The perpetual license should be included.
 - (G) In case of using MySQL, PostgreSQL or other database engines (depending on the scope of development), include the implementation on a Virtual Machine (VM), document the benefits of using it versus the preferably one and the know-how of the implementation through deliverables.
 - (H) Sandbox or test environment(s) must be included and tested on premises, advising and / or requiring the technical team of the DGA a virtual machine or include one in the cloud with shared access to the stakeholders.
 - (I) Each value increment within the development compilation must be properly debugged and corrected programming errors in time. Each test must be documented and shown to the stakeholders. In addition to sharing the development logs and version control of each compilation within the development stages of each component or code to be developed.
 - (J) Security covering aspects of a) Role-based security. b) Comprehensive audit trail that can be integrated into a syslog. c) Windows Authentication (LDAP) integrated into Active Directory (AD) (if necessary). d) Secure data transfer, via encryption protocols (TLS, FTPS).
 - (K) Backup & Replication System (license must be included if required) to generate and archive the necessary backups and snapshots to have a disaster recovery plan.
- Include a module or section for reporting and statistics organized into categories (products, custom tariff code, export and import destination, exporter, and importer, etc., weight per unit, etc.) to be defined by the stakeholders. The reports and statistics should allow the business owner to generate information about the phytosanitary certificates produced, received, and issued.
 - Connect the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) to IPPC hub. To do so, follow the 3 steps described in the [Guide to Joining](#)

the IPPC ePhyto Hub, that is to say step one: get prepared, step two: registration, step three: onboarding.

- Integrate the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) with VUCE Platform through API (s) or any development component.

3. Stage 3: Tasks after development

- Prepare one technical guide and one user operational manual of the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) in order to facilitate corrections, maintenance and extensions of the functions.
- Prepare the implementation of a training program for the management, use and operation of the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) that will be integrated to the VUCE platform. Two types of training should be given:
 - (A) One about the ePhyto certificates process. These trainings should be given to at least 10 key stakeholders from DGA, the Plant Health Department of the Ministry of Agriculture and IESC.
 - (B) One about the technical aspects of the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)). These trainings should be given to at least 10 key stakeholders from DGA and IESC.
- Perform all the necessary tests to verify that the developed solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) correctly performs the tasks, data processing and information output indicated in the determined technical requirements.
- Ensure the proper functioning of the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) implemented, making the necessary adjustments and corrections if required.
- Gather in a shared repository in the cloud all the documentation, development requirements, input, data, programming components, database(s) (with own license), builds, open-source code and any other pertinent information that has been used prior and during the development and all the pertinent information that will be needed by the beneficiaries to operate and make any adjustments to the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)).
- Provide a minimum of 1 year warranty, starting from the date of the delivery of the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) developed and properly functioning. This warranty must contemplate any modification to the code, parameters that give any error or do not work as expected, and any consultancy and it must provide technical support to technical users in the operation, management and use of the developed solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)).

4. Tasks across all three phases, prior, during, and after development

- Use the Agile software development methodology (preferably SCRUM type). Document and type the topics within the backlog through the stories, define the epics of the scopes that meet the development objectives and define the issues that will be worked on in each Sprints within the development stages. Define participants in Sprint events (Sprint Planning and Sprint Retrospective). Grant access of the Agile software to IESC and DGA. Document each progress of the issues and upload or link the deliverables.
- Hold meetings with DGA, MA, and IESC in support of the activities of the development project so that any doubts or requests pertinent to the scope of the development is satisfied. Keep detailed minutes for all meetings held with stakeholders and share with IESC within one (1) business day.

The contractor is expected to produce the following deliverables. They must be in Spanish. Written deliverables must be provided in an editable format. Delivery dates are estimated.

Stage 1: Prior to development

- **Deliverable 1.** Due 4 weeks after award of contract.
One work plan in Work Breakdown Structure (WBS) template provided by the project. The workplan should contemplate an 11-month development period. The work plan timeline needs to keep the Agile software development methodology and process in mind.
- **Deliverable 2.** Due 8 weeks after award of contract.
Relationship database structure diagrams designed in coordination with the technicians of DGA and of the Department of Plant Health of MA.
- **Deliverable 3.** Due 8 weeks after award of contract.
Workflow diagrams and descriptions of workflow for export, re-export, and import ePhytos designed in collaboration with DGA and MA. The workflows should include the following elements (non-exhaustive list): request of certification, information verification/commodity compliance with export requirements, NPPO issuance of certificate, NPPO withdrawal of certificate, NPPO receipt of import certificate, etc.
- **Deliverable 4.** Due 8 weeks after award of contract.
Diagram that illustrates the interaction of users and technicians within the web service(s) on the VUCE platform. The diagram should include the following elements (non-exhaustive list): request of certification, information verification/commodity compliance with export requirements, NPPO issuance of certificate, NPPO withdrawal of certificate, NPPO receipt of import certificate, etc.
- **Deliverable 5.** Due 16 weeks after award of contract.

Flow diagram at the system level of the elements that belong to the development (database(s), web service(s), Front End (UI -user interface y UX -user experience), Back End) and to the connection to the IPPC ePhyto Hub.

Stage 2: During development

- **Deliverable 6.** Due 16 weeks after award of contract.
Report including all the infrastructure specifications used to build the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)).
- **Deliverable 7.** Due 40 weeks after award of contract.
The solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) to produce, check status and issue digital phytosanitary certificates for import, export and re-export through the VUCE platform, according to all the requirements aforementioned and according to all the requirements to be identified with the stakeholders throughout the development (as specified in the responsibilities). The solution should be developed, tested and integrated with VUCE platform and connected to the IPPC ePhyto Hub.
- **Deliverable 8.** Due 40 weeks after award of contract.
Documentation related to the development IDE(s), webservice(s), logs, GIT and DevOps (in case it is being used), and licenses or subscription(s) (1 year minimum). Documentation should include the name of the software used and its version, API(s) used, sample of 100 logs generated, the name of the GIT and DevOps used, the access of GIT, the builds of the web service(s), API(s), or system(s), the operative system, the licenses used and the duration of the subscription.

Stage 3: After developments

- **Deliverable 9.** Due 40 weeks after award of contract.
Source code (licensed to be manipulated without limits by beneficiaries) which must be the property of the DGA. DGA must make unrestricted use of it.
- **Deliverable 10.** Due 41 weeks after award of contract.
All images of the operating system (ISO), snapshot(s) and backups of the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)).
- **Deliverable 11.** Due 41 weeks after award of contract.
Provide access to a cloud-based shared repository where all the documentation has been uploaded. Documentation should include the following elements: meeting minutes, development requirements, input, data, programming components, database(s) (with own license), builds, open-source code and any other pertinent information that has been used prior and during the development and all the

pertinent information that will be needed by the beneficiaries to operate and make any adjustments to the system(s), web service(s) and/or API(s).

- **Deliverable 12.** Due 44 weeks after award of contract.
Report of the tests carried out to verify that the developed system(s), web service(s) and/or API(s) correctly performs the tasks, data processing and information output indicated in the determined technical requirements. Reports should include the following elements: the name of the responsible, the dates in which were carried out the tests, types and details of the tests, quantity of tests, results.
- **Deliverable 13.** Due 45 weeks after award of contract
One final report of implementation of the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) for evaluation, approval or rejection by the stakeholders (DGA and MA).
- **Deliverable 14.** Due 41 weeks after award of contract.
One technical guide and one user operational manual of the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)).
- **Deliverable 15.** Due 48 weeks after award of contract.
Reports of the implemented training program for the management, use and operation of the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) that will be integrated to the VUCE platform. Two types of training should be given. Trainings should be carried out on the ePhyto certificate process, and on the technical aspects of the solution. Reports should include the following elements: list of participants, dates, content of the training, material used.
- **Deliverable 16.** Due 48 weeks after award of contract.
Provide a minimum of 1 year warranty document duly signed by the company and DGA. It should be a minimum of 1 year warranty, starting from the date of the delivery of the solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) developed and properly functioning. This warranty must contemplate any modification to the code, parameters that give any error or do not work as expected, and any consultancy and it must provide technical support to technical users in the operation, management and use of the developed solution (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)).

5. Contract Type

The contract is anticipated to be a Fixed Price contract, to be paid in stages based on completed and accepted deliverables.

Note: IESC expects to award a contract for an estimated amount of \$50,000 to \$300,000.

6. Instructions to Offerors

6.1 Submission

- 1) Offers received after the closing date may not be considered.
- 2) Offers must be in U.S. 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: globalawards@iesc.org.

6.2 Clarification and Amendments

Offerors may request clarifications via email to globalawards@iesc.org not later than **11:59 p.m., Washington DC Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) time, on Sunday, February 13, 2022**. IESC will provide answers to these questions and requests for clarification asked by all Offerors simultaneously via email and posted on the IESC website with the RFP before the close of business on/or before **Friday, February 18, 2022**. IESC may 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.

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) Offer Reference Number (from the front page of this RFP document)
- 3) Company Name
- 4) Company Address
- 5) Name of Company's authorized representative
- 6) Contact person if different than Company's representative
- 7) Telephone #, Cellular/Mobile Phone #, Email address
- 8) Duration of Validity of proposal
- 9) Payment terms
- 10) DUNS # (Applies to companies, not to individuals)
- 11) Total Proposed Price (**cover page of cost proposal only**)
- 12) Signature, date, and time

7. Eligibility Requirements

Offeror may be required to present a business license and must have experience in developing ICT solutions. Offerors may need to obtain a DUNS number and an eligibility notice prior to receiving any award. **Award will be contingent upon USDA final approval.**

8. Basis for Award

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

To determine the successful offer, 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 text or pages exceeding the page limitation for each section of the proposal may be redacted and not 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.

[1] Technical and management approach: 3 pg. limit; possible points 40

Proposals will be scored on the effectiveness of the proposal to meet the requirements, successfully achieve tasks, and produce the project deliverables, as outlined in **Section 4.2 Activities**.

Proposals will be scored based on:

- Explanation and planned deployment of the [Agile] Schema-driven or Framework Development to be used, especially for integration developments or solutions that include web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s).
- Summary of the technical specification of the technologies to be used (IDE(s), DevOps (if apply), Database Management Systems, Agile Software, Programming language, GIT, or other).

[2] Offeror's past performance and references: 3 pg. limit (not including samples of previous work, which may be attachments and/or references); possible points 40

The proposal must provide a detailed account of the Offeror's record in implementing similar activities to those outlined in the tasks and activities. The technical proposal shall include a summary of past performance developing solutions (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) and integration with middleware. Offerors should provide experience in general, and specifically include experience with web service(s) and API(s) (SOAP/REST/XML).

This part should include sufficient information to demonstrate the Offeror's performance for the above tasks and activities and include how the overall approach, including problem solving, is based on extensive prior experience with the technologies to be used: (IDE(s), DevOps (if apply), Database Management Systems, Agile Software, Programming language, GIT, etc.). Preferred experience includes: Demonstrated experience working with Phytosanitary Certificate Systems within national plant protection organization (NPPO); demonstrated experience in successful ePhyto Hub connection projects following the International Plant Protection Convention (IPPC) guidelines for joining the ePhyto Hub; and/or demonstrated experience in developing solutions (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) with Dominican government institutions.

The offeror should provide examples or demo(s) to web development project(s) that the offeror has worked on in the past and that includes solutions (web service(s), API(s), or system(s) and database(s)) and integration with middleware. Examples or demos should include weblinks or videos and in annexes the flow diagrams of the development components.

Offerors should provide a minimum of three (3) references for past and present programs/projects, to include the contact information of three prior or current employers or clients for which the firm has completed a similar task related to the design and integration of middleware applications and solutions. References must include contact information included as an annex and will not count towards page limitation.

[3] Offeror's Personnel Experience and Capacities: 3 pg. limit (not including resumes or CVs, which are required as attachments); possible points 20

The technical proposal must include a description (biographical sketch acceptable) of the senior management personnel, who would directly work on the activities in the contract. In the case of TRASA RFP-001-2022, this includes the Certified Scrum Master, the Product Owner and the full stack developers. 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 or its personnel meet the following requirements:

3.1 Scrum Master

- 3.1.1 Must be certified as a professional Scrum Master by a recognized certifying entity
- 3.1.2 At least 2 years of demonstrable experience in development projects and in the use of Agile methodology tools, preferably in Atlassian Jira.
- 3.1.3 Advanced Spanish and English (speaking, listening, and writing).

3.2. Product Owner

- 3.2.1 Committed to vision: be able to communicate the product vision with all stakeholders.
- 3.2.2 Constant availability: be available at all times and open to communication.
- 3.2.3 Understanding of Return on Investment (ROI): responsible for making sure the ROI is positive in the end.
- 3.1.4 Technical skills: the product owner needs to understand everything from software development to product marketing.
- 3.1.5 End-user perspective: the ability to think long-term. PO needs to develop his vision and processes from an end-user point of view.
- 3.1.6 Advanced Spanish and English (speaking, listening, and writing).
- 3.1.7 Secondary qualifications:
 - 3.1.7.1 Product development.
 - 3.1.7.2 Product management.
 - 3.1.7.3 Business analyst.
 - 3.1.7.4 Leadership and management.

- 3.1.7.5 Responsibility
- 3.1.7.6 Flexibility and adaptability.
- 3.1.7.7 Time management.
- 3.1.7.8 Creativity.
- 3.1.7.9 Domain knowledge.

3.3 Full Stack Developers (3)

- 3.3.1 Advanced knowledge and at least 5 or more years of experience using developments languages such as: .Net (C#, MVC, VB, ASP and Core), HTML5, CSS3, UX/UI Framework, Java, Web API (handling with SOAP/REST), XML and SQL (T-SQL and RDB).
- 3.3.2 Knowledge and experience working with DBMS such as: MSSQL.
- 3.3.3 Experience in systems integration via API (Inbound & Outbound Services) is preferred.
- 3.3.4 Knowledge and experience working with Operating Systems such as: Windows Server and Linux Distros like Ubuntu, Debian, Red Hat.
- 3.3.5 Knowledge and experience working with VMWare ESXi and Hyper-V.
- 3.3.6 Knowledge to create and manage CA, X.509, WDSL, TLS and encryption keys and experience working with tools to generate self-signed certificates such as OpenSSL.
- 3.3.7 Secondary qualifications:
- 3.3.8 Knowledge and experience working with: JSON, JQuery and Phyton is a plus.
- 3.3.9 Knowledge and experience working with JavaScript: AngularJS, React Native, Vue.js and Ember.js. Additionally, JSON, JQuery and Phyton is a plus.
- 3.3.10 Knowledge and/or experience working with DBMS such as: MariaDB, MongoDB and MySQL.
- 3.3.11 Knowledge and experience working with DevOps is a plus.
- 3.3.12 Knowledge and/or experience working with Kubernetes, Docker technologies.
- 3.3.13 Knowledge and experience of Code version control (CI/CD) skills (Git / GitHub and GitLab).
- 3.3.14 Knowledge and experience working with CA API Gateway or similar technologies is a plus.
- 3.3.15 Experience in single window system development is desirable.
- 3.3.16 Experience in successful ePhyto Hub connection projects following the IPPC guidelines for joining the ePhyto Hub is a plus.
- 3.3.17 Experience working with Phytosanitary Certificate Systems within NPPO is a plus.

10. Cost Proposal Evaluation

The Offeror shall submit a separate cost proposal in Excel and PDF formats that complies with the TRASA RFP-001-2020 budget template at Annex A. All worksheets must be filled in and linked accordingly to the offeror's budget template.

All proposed costs must be in accordance with the U.S. Government Cost Principles under 2 CFR 200 found here: <https://www.ecfr.gov/>

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. 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, 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 USDA 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 the Award made from USDA.

-END-