

Request for Proposals

Business Advisory/Consulting Services – Georgia

Issue Date:	December 22, 2022
Closing Date For Proposals:	January 27, 2023
Closing Time:	18:00 Tbilisi time
Project Title:	USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program
Offer Reference Number:	RFP-003-2022

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) for the USAID Industry-led Skills Development Program (the Program).

IESC desires to receive proposals from Georgian companies (Offerors) who are interested in and capable to conduct research, draft a report, and deliver a presentation on the upcoming regulation of professions in Georgia and their respective occupational and/or educational standards.

The purpose of this RFP document is to provide potential Offerors with information to assist them in the preparation of their proposals for the services that IESC seeks to source. This RFP document does not claim to contain all the information each potential 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 plans to award one contract. 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. 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. IESC, at its own discretion, may award a service provider to conduct only a part of the activities in this RFP. Any contract resulting from this RFP will be a Firm Fixed Price contract.

Note that the selected Offeror may be subject to the approval of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). Any activities under a final award are subject to and shall be carried out in accordance with the regulation promulgated by USAID, the Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR), and any other subsequently published rule or regulation governing USAID programs.

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

2. 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 implementing the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Industry-led Skills Development Program (the Program) in Georgia. The purpose of the Program is to develop industry-relevant human capacity that will contribute to high-value employment opportunities and increased economic competitiveness in Georgia. The Program will achieve this by systematically engaging employers to equip Georgians with skills demanded in sectors with high growth potential and create direct linkages between training programs and employment opportunities. The Program gives a leading role to the private sector to catalyze demand-driven skills development throughout Georgia.

The Program is headquartered in Tbilisi with Program activities operating throughout Georgia. To ensure national coverage the Program engages with networks of employers, business associations, education and training providers both public and private, chambers of commerce, local and national government representatives, and development partners to effectively engage the private sector, undertake outreach and marketing, deliver tailored and demand-driven grants, implement activities creating a network of employer-led skill development initiatives and partnerships across Georgia.

The Program prioritizes interventions under three components:

Component 1: Incentivize private sector engagement in skills development;

Component 2: Establish skills training programs demanded by the private sector;

Component 3: Increase access to training opportunities for rural and priority populations.

3. Period of Performance

The anticipated period of performance for this assignment will be from February 13, 2023, until May 5, 2023.

4. Scope Statement

Georgia's European Union (EU) Association Agreement aims to facilitate Georgia's accession to the EU from 2024, including integration into its economic, regulatory, judicial, human rights, immigration, environmental, and other legislation and mechanisms, including the EU Internal Market. Georgia has already begun integrating into the EU Internal Market through the establishment of a Deep and Comprehensive Free Trade Area (DCFTA) that is a part of the Association Agreement, which was signed in 2014 and that took effect in 2016. These efforts are providing for far-reaching market access on the basis of sustained and comprehensive regulatory approximation in compliance with the rights and obligations arising from the country's WTO membership. To achieve its goals, Georgia will require expedited changes and regulations in a number of occupations, and thus is gradually regulating professions in various fields of the economy. Regulating professions may be a subject of developing or improving occupational and educational standards.

There is a lack of publicly available knowledge about which professions may be regulated and the specifics of those anticipated regulations, which are topics of great interest to employers and employees alike. Together with Skills Agency Georgia and private-sector firms, the Program has identified a need to systematically compile information on these anticipated regulations. Therefore, the Program has decided to engage a service provider to help identify professions which will become regulated as part of Georgia's EU Association, as well as their relevance to the existing occupational and educational standards, in order to support development of those regulations and standards.

The selected Offeror will support the Program in the identification of upcoming regulated professions and their compliance with the existing occupational and educational standards in Georgia, which is intended to foster a process of skills mapping and qualifications development that will engage the Government and the private sector in planning for future requirements, trigger the development and establishment of new VET programs, and inform relevant donors of how they can best structure their existing programming, as well as design future programming, all with the goal of helping to supply a sufficient skilled workforce for the professions to be regulated. Additional details are below in Section 5.2 Activities.

All quotations must be valid for one hundred and twenty (120) days.

5. Statement Of Work

5.1. Schedule of Authorities

The selected Offeror will report to Program's Private Sector Engagement Team Lead.

5.2. Activities

The Selected Offeror is expected to undertake the following tasks:

1. Work with the Industry-led Skills Development Program (the Program) to discuss and agree on the final objectives of the study.
2. In close collaboration with the Program team, identify contacts for discussions including, but not limited to, the Parliament of Georgia, ministries, and governmental agencies, NGOs dealing with the development of occupations, business, and sectoral/professional associations.
3. Develop study design and methodology in close collaboration with the Program team.
4. Identify upcoming regulated professions as per set goals and objectives of the study.
5. Describe the status quo of the regulation process related to each identified profession.
6. Conduct an analysis of identified professions on the subject of relevance to the sectors of the economy and reference to the occupational/educational standards existing in Georgia.
7. Conduct a validation workshop and prepare a PowerPoint Presentation, possibly for one or more audiences including business leaders, state and private training providers, NGOs, and donor agencies.
8. Deliver the presentation(s) for one of more of the above audiences.

6. Contract Type and Deliverables

The contract is anticipated to be Firm Fixed Price. The list of deliverables for use in preparing proposals can be found below; **costs per each deliverable in the table below shall be proposed by the Offeror**. Payment will be made based on the achievement/completion of each deliverable.

Deliverable	Anticipated Due Date	Payment %
Inception report	February 17, 2023	To be proposed by Offeror
Methodology (including questionnaire, if appropriate) and resources	February 24, 2023	To be proposed by Offeror
Results of the conducted research and draft report on the upcoming regulated professions	April 7, 2023	To be proposed by Offeror

Draft report on the Analysis and reference of identified professions to existing occupational and educational standards of Georgia	April 21, 2023	To be proposed by Offeror
Final report on the results of research and the Analysis together with a presentation	May 5, 2023	To be proposed by Offeror

7. Instructions to Offerors

7.1. 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, via the following email: skills@iesc.org

7.2. Clarification and Amendments

Offerors may request clarifications via the following email: skills@iesc.org, no later than **18:00 Tbilisi time on January 16, 2023**. 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 **18:00 Tbilisi time on January 20, 2023**. 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.

7.3. 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 service provider 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) Service Provider Name
- 4) Service Provider Address
- 5) Name of Service Provider's authorized representative
- 6) Contact person if different than Service Provider's representative
- 7) Telephone #, Cellular/Mobile Phone #, Email address
- 8) Duration of Validity of proposal
- 9) Payment terms
- 10) Total Proposed Price (**cover page of cost proposal only**)
- 11) Signature, date, and time

7.4. Chronological List of Proposal Events

The following calendar summarizes important dates in the solicitation process. Offerors must strictly follow these deadlines.

Activity	Due Date
RFP published	December 22, 2022
Deadline for written questions	January 16, 2023, 18:00 Tbilisi
Answers provided to questions/clarifications	January 20, 2023, 18:00 Tbilisi
Proposal Due Date	January 27, 2023, 18:00 Tbilisi
Estimated Start Date of the Contract	February 13, 2023

The dates above may be modified at the sole discretion of IESC. Any changes will be published in an amendment to this RFP.

8. Eligibility Requirements

The program is seeking a service provider with relevant experience to conduct the proposed research. The desired qualifications are as follows:

- The Service Provider must have extensive experience providing paid business research and advisory/consulting services, be commercially oriented, and have a sufficient pool of customers and portfolio of implemented projects.
- The Service Provider must be registered and have been operating for at least five years.
- The Service Provider must demonstrate the ability to carry out research and analytical work.
- The Service Provider must demonstrate experience in quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis.
- The Service Provider must demonstrate experience in conducting and delivering high-quality research reports for USAID or other donors, NGOs, governments, or private sector clients.

- The Service Provider must demonstrate strong research design and coordination experience, as well as a proven track record of producing high-quality deliverables in a timely manner.

Award may be contingent upon USAID final approval.

9. Basis for Award

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

To determine best value, proposals will be evaluated by a selection committee 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.

10. 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 **10.1 Technical Evaluation Criteria** and numbered accordingly. Please stay within 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.

10.1. 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: 4 page limit – 40 possible points

Proposals will be scored on the demonstration of technical and management approach for conducting activities and delivering the deliverables as outlined in **Section 5.2 Activities**

and **Section 6. Contract Type and Deliverables** and will be reviewed based on outline of the action plan and methodology for conducting the respective research

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

The proposal must provide a detailed account of the Offeror's record in implementing similar activities to those outlined in the tasks and activities, which will help the committee to evaluate technical expertise and capabilities of the offeror. The technical proposal shall include a summary of past performance. Offerors should provide experience in general, and specifically include experience in conducting research and the ability to carry out analytical work.

This section should include sufficient information to demonstrate the Offeror's performance for the above tasks and activities and include how the overall approach, including analytical work, is based on extensive prior experience in conducting the research.

Offerors should provide a minimum of three (3) references for past and present projects and include the contact information of three prior or current clients for which the Offeror has completed a similar task. References must include contact information.

[3] Offeror's Personnel Experience and Capacities: 3 page limit (not including resumes or CVs, which are attachments) - 20 possible points

The technical proposal must include a description (biographical sketch acceptable) of a program manager and proposed key experts 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 or its personnel have experience in conducting the required research and analytical work.

11. Cost Proposal Evaluation

The Offeror shall submit a separate cost proposal that includes the cost of performing the activities as described above. These costs should be broken down to show the separate cost elements of each deliverable and the **total estimated cost for all deliverables listed in Section 6. Contract Type and Deliverables**. As noted above, IESC will pay a fixed price per approved completion of each deliverable listed in Section 6. Contract Type and Deliverables.

All proposed costs must be in accordance with the U.S. Government Cost Principles under FAR Part 31.

The cost proposals must include:

1. A spreadsheet that lists each deliverable per **Section 6. Contract Type and Deliverables** and the proposed payment price for each deliverable.
2. The Offeror must provide either a detailed budget showing major line items such as salaries, allowances, travel cost, other direct costs, or an activity budget. The budget must show unit prices, quantities, and total price.
3. The cost proposal shall also include a budget narrative that explains the basis for the estimation of each cost element or line item. Supporting information must be provided in sufficient detail and include unit cost information to allow for a complete analysis of each cost element or item. IESC shall request additional cost information if the Evaluation committee has concerns of the reasonableness, necessity, and realism of an Offeror's proposed cost.
4. If it is an offeror's regular practice to budget an indirect rate for overhead costs, the Offeror must explain the rate and the rate's base of application in the budget narrative. IESC reserves the right to request additional information to substantiate an Offeror's indirect rate.

Cost proposals are not assigned points, but for overall evaluation purposes of this RFP, technical evaluation factors other than cost, when combined, are considered approximately equal to cost factors. If technical scores are determined to be equal or nearly equal, cost will become the determining factor.

12. Source of Funding, Authorized Geographic Code, and Source and Origin

Any subcontract resulting from this RFP will be financed with USAID funding and will be subject to U.S. Government and USAID regulations.

All goods and services offered in response to this RFP 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, available at: <http://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2012-title22-vol1/pdf/CFR-2012-title22-vol1-part228.pdf>.

The cooperating country for this RFP is Georgia.

Offerors must not offer or supply any products, commodities or related services that are manufactured or assembled in, shipped from, transported through, or otherwise involving any of the following countries: Cuba, Iran, North Korea, (North) Sudan, Syria. Related services include incidental services pertaining to any/all aspects of this work to be performed under a resulting contract (including transportation, fuel, lodging, meals, and communications expenses). Offerors also must not offer, or supply telecommunications equipment or services prohibited by Section 889 of the U.S. Government's National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). The list of prohibited companies as defined by the U.S. Government under Section 889 is as follows:

- Huawei Technologies Company
- ZTE Corporation
- Hytera Communications Corporation
- Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company
- Dahua Technology Company

and associated subsidiaries or affiliates.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. 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 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 the Award made from USAID.

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