Request for Proposals

Catalog Software Development
January 13, 2022
About DIAL

The Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL) is a “think, do, replicate” tank that investigates digital transformation best practice at the national, regional, and global level. DIAL combines practical research with evidence-based advocacy to identify which digital efforts work, package them as re-usable solutions, and encourage their use. DIAL is funded through a collaboration among the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the United Kingdom’s Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCDO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), and hosted within the UN Foundation in Washington, D.C.

In its new Strategic Plan period, 2021-2025, DIAL is providing more direct support to national governments, beginning with one country in 2021, to enable more low- and middle-income countries to embark on and accelerate a whole of society approach to digital transformation and responsible data use. DIAL believes that if more countries can demonstrate that their digital and data transformation investments improve service delivery, then new countries can accelerate their own digital transformation and responsible data use journeys.

Project Description

The Catalog of Digital Solutions is a tool designed to support governments, donors, and non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) in the discovery, selection, and evaluation of software products that have been developed to address the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The Catalog currently provides detailed information about digital products and provides data about where these tools have been deployed and by whom, as well as information about how the products connect with the SDG Digital Investment Framework, developed by DIAL and ITU.

The Catalog continues to be enhanced with new features and functionalities to support development actors seeking to use digital tools in their projects. The Catalog Product Roadmap provides an overview of software development work planned for 2022. DIAL has developed a roadmap of features to be developed in the Catalog in 2022. We require additional software development capacity in order to deliver these features this year.

Scope of Work

The purpose of this contract is to rapidly and responsively procure software development and maintenance services in support of the Catalog as well as any other software platforms developed by DIAL. Contract developers will provide software development, QA, maintenance and support services for the Catalog and other software platforms developed by DIAL.

Software developers and support staff should have the ability to perform work using the following technologies and frameworks:

- Development of backend APIs and services using Ruby on Rails and GraphQL
- Development of frontend screens and user experiences using JavaScript, React, Next.js, and GraphQL
- Development of test suites for both catalog front end and back end. This will include unit tests, integration tests, and end to end tests using modern test frameworks such as Jest
- Support and enhance the DevOps infrastructure for continuously testing and deploying the Catalog, using tools such as Jenkins and GitLab CI
- Manage issue tracking, sprints, user stories, and code repositories with Jira and GitLab
Under the above objectives, the specific areas of work to be performed in 2022 include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Develop new screens in React/Next.js to allow users to create/edit/delete entities
  - Create GraphQL APIs in Rails to perform necessary CRUD operations
- Implement multi-tenant functionality, allowing multiple independent views of the data within the catalog
- Implement new SEO functionality for Catalog in React
- Enhance the existing test suites for the Catalog
  - Write unit tests and property tests in React/Next.js for Catalog front end
  - Write GraphQL and controller tests in Ruby/Rails for Catalog back end
  - Develop a set of end-to-end tests for selected use cases
- Develop enhanced integration features between Catalog and Discourse forums, using Discourse APIs to display forum data in the Catalog and allow users to post comments from the Catalog
- Develop enhancements to the Product Recommendation Wizard
- Write scripts (Ruby/Rails) to ingest data from machine readable data sources into the Catalog
- Any other features and functions in the Catalog front end or back end as required
- Development tasks related to other DIAL software projects

Contract developers will work in an Agile development environment, developing new software and maintaining existing software features. All development work and tasks will be designed and prioritized by DIAL staff.

The vendor is responsible for writing code along with unit tests and end-to-end testing of new features for DIAL’s Catalog of Digital Solutions as well as other platforms developed by DIAL. DIAL is responsible for functional acceptance testing.

All code must be available on DIAL’s GitLab public repository and conform to DIAL’s standard open license. In addition to meeting all functional requirements, the related code additions and/or modifications must adhere to standard, published guidelines for quality. The guidelines will be vetted through standard linting tools and code reviews performed by DIAL.

Vendor will submit monthly time reports, showing hours worked for each contractor. DIAL will pay contractor based on hours worked per contractor based on agreed-upon hourly rate. The initial bid for this RFP should be developed for two full-time software development contractors working from March 15, 2022, through December 20, 2022. Additional contractors may be added at agreed-upon rates as needed by DIAL, and the contract may be extended beyond 2022.

**Period of Performance**

Work will start on or around March 2022 and we’re requesting that it be completed by December 2022. During this time, we anticipate a close working relationship with the chosen vendor.

**Outcomes**

The outcome for this engagement will be high-quality software checked in to DIAL’s public repository for the Catalog (or any other projects that are required). Code will be developed to provide functionality in alignment with the product roadmap and issues developed by DIAL.
Proposal Submission Requirements
Proposal submissions, which may be created in Word, PowerPoint, or a combination of the two, must include the following components. Respondents may include additional elements as needed.

- Proposed approach
  - Demonstrate understanding of the project objectives
  - Describe approach and methodologies, as applicable
  - Describe project management approach, including timeline and any recommended updates to timeline provided above, including timing and level of effort on the part of the DIAL team, e.g., to participate in scoping and requirements workshops, iteration junctures, etc.

- Staff and team structure
  - Identify the team structure, including roles, responsibilities, and level of effort of staff and any sub-contracted resources
  - Provide rationale and background on any sub-contracted firms or individuals

- Relevant experience
  - Demonstrate firm and key participants’ experience relative to the scope of work
  - Provide at least three examples of similar work

- Budget
  - Provide a detailed budget, including assumptions and costs and level of effort for staff and any sub-contractors
  - Please provide hourly rates for the two software developer contractors who will contribute to this project.
  - In addition, please provide hourly rates for additional services that may be needed in the future. These rates should include:
    - Software developer
    - Senior Software developer
    - QA Engineer
    - DevOps Engineer
  - Provide professional fees budget, including cost and level of effort per staff member
  - Provide separate line item for any sub-contractors
  - Provide expenses budget by type of expenses, e.g., travel, research, etc. Travel estimates should indicate the anticipated destination and duration of each trip

- References
  - Provide names and email addresses of at least two prior client willing to discuss their experiences working with you.

Submission Format and Timeline

- All submissions are due on January 31, 2022, by 5:00PM EDT. We expect the submissions to be in the 5-to-10-page range but will not penalize submissions that are above or below this range.
- Questions and clarifications will be communicated to Respondents between February 1 and 11th with a kind request for prompt turnaround on part of the Respondents.
- The selected Respondent will be notified on February 15, 2022, by 6:00pm EDT
- Please send all submissions to RFP@digitalimpactalliance.org.
- In case Respondents encounter a problem submitting, please contact sconrad@digitalimpactalliance.org.
Questions and Answers

Please forward any questions to RFP@digitalimpactalliance.org by January 28, 2022. DIAL will make every effort to respond to questions within 24 hours and may choose to share the questions and answers from these bilateral discussions with other Respondents.

Evaluation Process

DIAL will review all written proposals and may request a phone or in-person interview and/or updated submission to address questions or provide clarification. The evaluation committee will use the following criteria to evaluate candidates’ response.

The selection decision will be based on the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Score (1-5)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. Approach</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>The proposed approach shows an understanding of the development sector, project scope, and the end line objectives.</td>
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| **2. Subject Matter Expertise**        |             |
| Key participants can speak with authority and credibility on the key project issues |             |
| Experience working with emerging markets and the field of global development |             |

| **3. Project Management**              |             |
| Demonstrated understanding of their proposed scope of work, including overall project structure and how their scope of work relates to other consultants |             |
| Achievable action plan that will deliver the project on time and on budget |             |
| Effective staffing and/or team structure |             |
| Thoughtful risk identification and mitigation strategies |             |

| **4. Capabilities and Experience**     |             |
| Demonstrable experience in software development, including programming languages specified in description above |             |
| Team members with demonstrated skills and experience with similar projects and activities |             |
| Proven debugging and problem-solving skills. |             |

| **5. Value**                           |             |
| The proposed pricing is within budget |             |
| The proposed pricing demonstrates a competitive price and good value for the money |             |

| **6. Mission**                         |             |
| Preference for firms or organizations based in LCDs |             |
| Preference for firms founded or lead by women |             |
| Preference for firms with staff based in target countries where work will be done |             |
Intent and Disclaimer

This RFP is made with the intent to identify a consultant to deliver results as described in this RFP. Issuance of this RFP does not obligate DIAL to award a resulting contract and any costs incurred in preparation of a proposal is the sole responsibility of the respondent.

In submitting a proposal, the respondent certifies that information contained therein is truthful and accurate to the best of the respondent’s ability. Should any information later be found to not be in-line with this certification, DIAL reserves the right to terminate any resulting contract(s) and/or select an alternative contractor. DIAL assumes it can be confident in the Consultant’s ability to deliver the product(s) and/or service(s) proposed in response to this RFP.

If DIAL amends the RFP, copies of any such amendments will be sent to all respondents.

DIAL is partially funded by SIDA with a commitment to women and non-US owned organizations, DIAL will consider all proposals in consideration of the selection criteria but will give preference to women and non-US owned businesses.

Contract Terms

The UN Foundation/DIAL will negotiate contract terms upon selection. A copy of the contract terms and conditions will be provided upon pre-selection. All contracts are subject to review by UN Foundation’s Business Services Budget Reporting (BSBR) team. Once a draft contract is reviewed by BSBR, DIAL’s Program Manager will contact the Vendor. The project will start upon the execution of the contract. The contract will outline terms and conditions, scope, budget, and applicable flow-down terms proscribed by the funding partners and the UN Foundation.

Release

Consultant understands that DIAL has chosen to solicit an RFP for consulting services, and that consultant’s response does not guarantee that DIAL will enter into a new contract with Consultant or continue any current contract(s) with Consultant.

Consultant agrees that DIAL may, in its sole discretion:

- Amend or cancel the RFP, in whole or in part, at any time
- Extend the deadline for submitting responses
- Determine whether a response does or does not substantially comply with the requirements of the RFP
- Waive any minor irregularity, informality or nonconformance with the provisions or procedures of the RFP
- Negotiate with all consultants UNF deems acceptable
- Issue multiple awards
- Copy the responses

This RFP is not an offer to contract. DIAL assumes no responsibility for Consultant’s cost to respond to this RFP. All responses become the property of DIAL.

The Consultant, by submitting a response to this RFP, waives all right to protest or seek any legal remedies whatsoever regarding any aspect of this RFP.
Consultant represents that it has responded to the RFP with complete honesty and accuracy. If facts provided in Consultant’s response change, Consultant agrees to supplement its response in writing with any deletions, additions, or changes within ten (10) days of the changes. Consultant will do this, as necessary, throughout the selection process. Consultant understands that any material misrepresentation, including omissions, may disqualify it from consideration for a contract award.

Consultant understands it may receive proprietary and confidential information from DIAL during the RFP process (“Confidential Information”). Consultant agrees to not use Confidential Information for any purpose other than its participation in the RFP process and to not reveal Confidential Information directly or indirectly to any other person, entity, or organization without the prior written consent of DIAL. Consultant further agrees to exercise all reasonable precautions to maintain the proprietary and confidential nature of Confidential Information where it can best demonstrate its value and capacity to delivery ecosystem-wide, meaningful value.

**Intellectual Property (IP) Considerations**

DIAL’s mission is to create public goods that enable a more efficient digital economy for everyone’s common benefit. To serve this goal in partnership with other organizations and individuals, DIAL funds the development of important hardware and software, databases, computer protocols, research and useful industry standards.

Intellectual property ("IP") is at the heart of all things creative and inventive. DIAL's IP policy is shaped by our key funders’ (i.e., the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) policies. DIAL’s work products thus must comply with BMGF’s "Open Access" policy. Further, any IP DIAL funds should be licensed for free use worldwide. This is accomplished through open source and Creative Commons licensing and by open standards, unencumbered by restrictive copyrights and patents.

The scope of work for this project and deliverables will, as such, abide by DIAL’s intellectual property (IP) policy and its donor’ compliance requirements. If special considerations are required, DIAL will negotiate those on a case-by-case basis with selected vendors.

As required by its donors, DIAL is committed to “Global Access”. As such, DIAL will ensure that knowledge and information gained from any project and any deliverable produced will be prompt and broadly disseminated under a creative commons license, and any funded developments will be made available at an affordable price to:

- People most in need within developing countries and /or
- In support of the U.S. educational system and public libraries, as applicable

DIAL will take into consideration consultants’ intellectual property issues as part of the selection process.