

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Subject RFP #:	RFP-CATALYZE-Ethiopia-2021-0168
RFP Issue Date:	May 30, 2021
Terms of Reference / Specifications:	Job Platforms Enhancement Assessment
Project	CATALYZE Innovative Blended Finance
The Company	Palladium International, LLC
Country of Performance	Ethiopia
Closing Date and Time	June 19, 2021, 05:00PM, East Africa Time
Questions Deadline	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Bidders' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> June 09, 2021 (virtual) <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Details for Submission	Submissions will be accepted: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronically: email to EthiopiaMS4G.Procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com <input type="checkbox"/> In hard copy (sealed bids)
Offer Validity Period	3 weeks

Thank you for your interest in the above procurement. As the implementer of CATALYZE: Market Systems for Growth program funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Palladium invites you to submit a proposal for the scope of work attached in Annex A. Your proposal must be valid for the Validity Period.

MS4G will hold an online Bidder's Conference to familiarize interested potential bidders with the opportunity. To receive an invitation to the Bidder's Conference, including detailed information, time, and link to the web event, please send an email to EthiopiaMS4G.Procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com with the subject line "Bidder's Conference: **RFP-CATALYZE-Ethiopia-2021-0168**" prior to the conference date stated above.

Please submit your proposal in accordance with the Details for Submission above by the Closing Date and Time. This RFP in no way obligates Palladium to award a contract nor does it commit Palladium to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal. Palladium bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Yours sincerely,

CATALYZE Procurement Team

Terms and conditions

1. Proposal Conditions

By submitting a proposal, potential suppliers are bound by these terms and conditions. Potential suppliers must submit offers with all details provided in English and with prices quoted in a single currency.

2. Proposal Lodgement

The Company may grant extensions to the Closing Time at its discretion. The Company will not consider any quotes received after the Closing Time specified in the RFP unless the Company determines to do so otherwise at its sole discretion.

3. Evaluation

The Company may review all proposal to confirm compliance with this RFP and to determine the best proposal in the circumstances.

4. Alterations

The Company may decline to consider a proposal in which there are alterations, erasures, illegibility, ambiguity or incomplete details.

5. The Company's Rights

The Company may, at its discretion, discontinue the RFP; decline to accept any proposal; terminate, extend or vary its selection process; decline to issue any contract; seek information or negotiate with any potential supplier that has not been invited to submit a proposal; satisfy its requirement separately from the RFP process; terminate negotiations at any time and commence negotiations with any other potential supplier; evaluate proposals as the Company sees appropriate (including with reference to information provided by the prospective supplier or from a third party); and negotiate with any one or more potential suppliers.

6. Amendments and Queries

The Company may amend, or clarify any aspect of the RFP prior to the RFP Closing Time by issuing an amendment to the RFP in the same manner as the original RFP was distributed. Such amendments or clarifications will, as far as is practicable be issued simultaneously to all parties.

Any queries regarding this RFP should be directed to the Contact Person identified on the cover page of this RFP.

7. Clarification

The Company may, at any time prior to execution of a contract, seek clarification or additional information from, and enter into discussions and negotiations with, any or all potential suppliers in relation to their proposals. In doing so, the Company will not allow any potential supplier to substantially tailor or amend their proposal.

8. Confidentiality

In their proposal, potential suppliers must identify any aspects of their proposal that they consider should be kept confidential, with reasons. Potential suppliers should note that the Company will only agree to treat information as confidential in cases that it considers appropriate. In the absence of such an agreement, potential suppliers acknowledge that the Company has the right to disclose the information contained in their proposal.

The potential supplier acknowledges that in the course of this RFP, it may become acquainted with or have access to the Company's Confidential Information (including the existence and terms of this RFP and the TOR). It agrees to maintain the confidence of the Confidential Information and to prevent its unauthorised disclosure to any other person. If the potential supplier is required to disclose Confidential Information due to a relevant law or legal proceedings, it will provide reasonable notice of such disclosure to the Company. The parties agree that this obligation applies during the RFP and after the completion of the process.

9. Alternatives

Potential suppliers may submit proposals for alternative methods of addressing the Company's requirement described in the RFP where the option to do so was stated in the RFP or agreed in writing with the Company prior to the RFP Closing Time. Potential suppliers are responsible for providing a sufficient level of detail about the alternative solution to enable its evaluation.

10. Reference Material

If the RFP references any other materials including, but not limited to, reports, plans, drawings, samples or other reference material, the potential supplier is responsible for obtaining the referenced material and considering it in framing their proposal. And provide it to the Company upon request.

11. Price/Cost Basis

Prices or costs quoted must show the tax exclusive price, the tax component and the tax inclusive price.

The contract price, which must include any and all taxes, supplier charges and costs, will be the maximum price payable by the Company for the Goods and/or Services.

12. Financial information

If requested by the Company, potential suppliers must be able to demonstrate their financial stability and ability to remain viable as a provider of the Goods and/or Services over the term of any agreement.

If requested by the Company, the potential supplier must promptly provide the Company with such information or documentation as the Company reasonably requires in order to evaluate the potential supplier's financial stability.

13. Referees

The Company reserves the right to contact the potential supplier's referees, or any other person, directly and without notifying the potential supplier.

14. Conflict of interest

Potential suppliers must notify the Company immediately if any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest arises (a perceived conflict of interest is one in which a reasonable person would think that the person's judgement and/or actions are likely to be compromised, whether due to a financial or personal interest (including those of family members) in the procurement or the Company).

15. Inconsistencies

If there is inconsistency between any of the parts of the RFP the following order of precedence shall apply:

- (a) these Terms and Conditions;
- (b) the first page of this RFP; and
- (c) the Schedule

so that the provision in the higher ranked document will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

16. Collusion and Unlawful Inducements

Potential suppliers and their officers, employees, agents and advisors must not engage in any collusive, anti-competitive conduct or any other similar conduct with any other potential supplier or person or quote any unlawful inducements in relation to their proposal or the RFP process.

Potential suppliers must disclose where proposals have been compiled with the assistance of current or former the Company employees (within the previous 9 months and who was substantially involved in the design, preparation, appraisal, review, and or daily management of this activity) and should note that this may exclude their proposal from consideration.

Potential suppliers warrant that they have not provided or offered any payment, gift, item, hospitality or any other benefit to the Company, its employees, consultants, agents, subcontractors (or any other person involved in the decision-making process relating to this RFP) which could give rise to a perception of bribery or corruption in relation to the RFP or any other dealings between the parties.

17. Jurisdiction

This RFP shall be subject to the laws of the District of Columbia, United States of America. The language of the arbitration will be English.

The Potential Supplier and the Company will use their best efforts to settle amicably any dispute, controversy, or claim arising out of, or relating to this RFP or the breach, termination, or invalidity thereof. If no agreeable settlement can be found, any dispute, controversy, or claim arising out of or relating to this RFP or the breach, termination, or invalidity thereof, shall be settled by mediation through the American Arbitration Association by filing a request for mediation with the AAA and the other party. The Parties will be bound by any arbitration award rendered as a result of such arbitration as the final adjudication of any such dispute.

Company Information

Palladium is a global leader in the design, development and delivery of Positive Impact — the intentional creation of enduring social and economic value. We work with corporations, governments, foundations, investors, communities and civil society to formulate strategies and implement solutions that generate lasting social, environmental and financial benefits.

Project Background

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) CATALYZE: Market System for Growth (MS4G) program focuses on enhancing market systems in Ethiopia as a means of facilitating business growth, creating employment and fostering the development of the foundational elements for continued, transformational inclusive growth. As part of our efforts to strengthen Ethiopian services and institutions in job training and placement, the program aims at building the capacity of market-led workforce skill building institutions to meet the needs of the private sector, and also facilitating the development of a private sector-led digital economy. To achieve these goals, the program will enhance the capacity of job placement platforms to better serve both job seekers and employers.

Purpose

The purpose of RFP is to select a consultancy firm to conduct an assessment to understand the strengths and gaps of job placement platforms using job boards in service delivery in Ethiopia.

A complete scope of work is attached as Annex A.

Type of Contract

Palladium intends to issue pay-for-performance (P4P) subcontracts to the selected offeror.

Anticipated Contract Period of Performance

Contracts will be offered to winning bidders for a period of 6 weeks.

Place of Performance

The activities to be performed under this contract will take place in Ethiopia.

Key Deliverables and Timeline

No.	Deliverable	Due Date from Contract Date	Payment Amount
1	Submission of a detailed workplan	Within 10 days of signing the contract	10%
2	Submission of draft assessment report	Within 4 weeks of signing of the contract	30%
3	Submission of Final assessment report	Within one week after receiving feedback on the draft document	40%
4	Validation of the assessment	Within one week from the submission of final report	20%

Instructions to Offerors

Separate technical and cost proposals must be submitted by email no later than the time and date specified on the cover page.

1. Technical Proposal

For the technical proposal, the offeror must submit:

- (a) Cover letter with the following information:
 1. Firm contact info. and address
 2. Type of Company or Organization
 3. DUNS Number (Company must have a DUNS number or obtain one within 5 days of being notified of selection)
 4. Signed by an authorized representative of the company
- (b) Background on the firm and relevant expertise (max. 2 pages)
- (c) Past Experience Information/Capability Statement
- (d) Technical Proposal & Management Approach
- (e) Description of relevant assessments previously performed by the firm, demonstrating expertise in job platforms, job placement for women and youth ages 18-35, and assessments that lead to change and impact (max. 4 pages)
- (f) Contact details for three referees (max 1 page)
- (g) All supporting documentation specified below in the pass/fail evaluation criteria.

2. Cost Proposal

Offers must submit a cost proposal. CATALYZE will provide a budget template upon request through EthiopiaMS4G.Procurement@thepalladiumgroup.com. The cost proposal consists of:

- (a) Budget in Microsoft Excel with all formulas visible (unlocked)
- (b) Accompanying Word Document with all cost assumptions and explanations

Key assumptions

- Budget in Ethiopian Birr
- All prices are to be inclusive of relevant taxes
- Separate unit cost and number of units
- Break down activity costs into as much detail as possible
- Offeror should budget for: Labor, travel, and other direct costs

The selected offeror will be required to complete the Due Diligence Questionnaire (attachment 1) and provide a DUNS number within 5 days of being notified of selection.

Submission of Offers

Electronic proposals must be submitted by sending two separate emails, one for technical proposal and one for cost proposal with the RFP number in the subject lines. Ensure all required documents are attached. The RFP number can be found on the cover page.

Offers received past the deadline stated on the cover page will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for award.

Evaluation and Award Process

Proposals will be evaluated using a best value trade off methodology. This is a three-stage process.

- (1) The first set of criteria is graded on a pass/fail basis. Offerors must meet the following minimum eligibility qualification criteria and provide supporting documentation:

	Requirement	Supporting Documentation
(a)	Must be a registered legal entity in Ethiopia for a minimum of one year	Copy of certificate or articles and memorandum of associate
(b)	Must not have any active exclusions from the working with the US government (www.sam.gov), the UN (Sanctions List), or the US Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control	N/A

(2) If these minimum criteria are met, the offer's technical proposal will be evaluated as follows:

Evaluation Criteria	Documents Evaluated	Points
1. Key personnel a. CVs of key personnel/ls demonstrating ability to support and carry out the SOW stated in this RFP.	Curriculum vitae of each key personnel/s	10
2. Past Performance a. Demonstrated experience in conducting assessment on skills training, employment and service providers including evidence and description of these assignments.	Evidence of description and impact of recent, relevant assignments, and references	30
3. Technical proposal a. Provide technical proposal of possible recommendations to support job placement platforms using job boards based on your experience and understanding of support needed. Include recommendations to enhance service delivery for employers and job seekers, including women, and including secondary cities.	Technical approach. Breadth and depth of stakeholders to be consulted. Quality and comprehensiveness of questions to be addressed.	60
TOTAL		100

(3) The offeror's cost proposal will be evaluated for:

- Proposed total price, relative to other offers received.
- Realism and reasonableness of the work to be performed.
- Price reflects a clear understanding of the requirements.
- Price is consistent with various elements of the technical proposal.
- Compliance with USAID cost principles (select one: Non profit entities – Cost Principles in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E or For profit entities – Cost Principles in FAR Part 31)

Palladium reserves the right to award under this solicitation without further negotiations. The offerors are encouraged to offer their best terms and prices with the original submission.

PROCUREMENT INTEGRITY AND ETHICS

It is Palladium's Policy that no gifts of any kind and of any value be exchanged between vendors/contractors and Palladium personnel. Discovery of the same will be grounds for disqualification of the vendor/contractor from participation in any Palladium's procurements and may result in disciplinary actions against Palladium personnel involved in such discovered transactions.

Resulting Award

This RFP in no way obligates Palladium to award a contract. Palladium may opt to select multiple offers in response to this RFP.

Any contract/purchase order resulting from this solicitation must be signed by both parties in order to be considered valid and in force. All costs associated with, but not limited to, production, preparation and/or delivery of goods or services, including deliveries, accepted by Palladium staff, without a fully executed (signed by both parties) contract/purchase order, are at the vendor's risk only. Palladium shall not pay for any costs, without limitation, associated with production, preparation or delivery of goods and/or services under this or any other contract/purchase order, which has not been signed by both parties.

If your proposal is successful, you will be required to enter into the Company's standard contract for the types of goods or services being provided. In the provision of the Goods and Services, you will be required to comply with the Company's policies, including (without limitation) its Business Partner Code of Conduct and any relevant client terms and conditions. Potential suppliers must also comply with the Company's Business Partner Code of Conduct in the submission of any proposals pursuant to this RFP.

If you are bidding as part of a joint venture, partnership or similar, please make this clear in your submission. Likewise, if you propose to subcontract any part of the goods or services provision, then disclose this fact within your submission. The Company may require additional information from you and approval for subcontracting will not be automatic as subcontractors will be subject to Palladium's Due Diligence process.

Attachments

Attachment 1- Due Diligence Questionnaire

Palladium Business Partner Code of Conduct and Child Protection Guidelines can be downloaded in full at: <http://www.thepalladiumgroup.com/policies> or request through email from Catalyze.procurment@thepalladiumgroup.com

Annex A: Scope of Work

1. Objective

Selected consultancy firm will assess at least the six major job placement platforms using job boards in Ethiopia to understand the strengths and gaps in their service delivery. The assessment shall also explore potential intervention areas to address the gaps and strengthen their connections with employers and jobseekers, particularly women, and including job seekers in secondary cities. The interventions may include capacity building, technological enhancement, partnership and business development and adaptation of innovative models.

2. Activities:

a. Selected consultancy firm will be expected to undertake the following activities: -

- Identify and review major strengths and gaps in the service delivery of at least six job placement platforms using job boards in Ethiopia. In detailed workplan, recommend at least six job placement platforms to assess. Recommended job placement platforms should, as group, include the leading platform(s) serving large numbers of Ethiopians, the leading platform(s) serving secondary cities, the leading platform(s) serving youth ages 18-35, the leading platform(s) serving women, the leading platform(s) serving the Freelancing, Outsourcing, and Gigs (FROG) sector, the leading platform(s) serving the agriculture sector, and other platform selection criteria recommended by the consultancy to assist MS4G to accomplish its mission of enhancing the job placement ecosystem in Ethiopia.
- Analyse the perspective of jobseekers (particularly women), youth, employers and government stakeholders towards the placement platforms. Interview or survey the MS4G Youth Advisory Board and at least 4 other youth-led or youth-serving organizations to gain their insights on how well the placement platforms meet the needs of Ethiopian youth.
- Identify opportunities and benefits of using job placement platforms with job boards by employers and job seekers. Include the opportunities and benefits of using job placement platforms in secondary cities, and for the FROG sector.
- Identify and recommend major capacity building strategies and technological enhancement mechanisms of the job placement platforms using job boards.
- Identify and recommend partnerships and business development mechanisms and others ways to adapt innovative models in order to enhance the reach of the mechanisms to more employers/opportunities, women, and youth, as well as enhance the quality of service delivery.

b. Upon the submission of the draft assessment and review from the technical team, the firm will be expected to submit the final assessment report addressing the feedback and inputs forwarded.

C. The firm will also be required to present the major findings of the assessment during a validation session.

3. Acceptance of Deliverables

Deliverables will be reviewed by the Technical team for completeness before being accepted and approved for payment.

No.	Deliverables	Acceptance Criteria
1	Detailed workplan	The detailed workplan shall outline how the team will accomplish the consultancy, including a list of stakeholder interview and illustrative interview questionnaires, and a recommended list of platforms to assess, approved by the Technical Lead
2	Draft assessment report	The draft report shall include overview of job placement platforms using job boards, understanding of their business models, identifying strengths and gaps of job placement platforms and recommendations for possible interventions, approved by the Technical Lead
3	Final assessment report	The final assessment report shall include feedback and inputs from the technical team, approved by the Technical Lead
4		The firm shall present the findings of the assessment during a validation session. The firm shall develop and present slides

	Validation of the assessment findings	summarizing the assessment findings and recommendations, and participate in in discussion and questions and answers with key stakeholders and USAID participants to demonstrate the validity of the assessment findings, approved by the Technical Lead.
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4. Payment Schedule

- First installment of 10% of the total agreed fee upon the submission of a detailed workplan.
- Second installment of 30% upon submission of draft assessment report.
- Third installment of 40% of the total agreed fee after the submission and acceptance by technical team of the final report.
- Final installment of 20% upon presenting the findings during a validation session.