

Tender Package — Request for Proposal (RFP)



1. Invitation to Tender

Tender Name: Consultancy for Technology Architect (Individual)	Tender No: MC-AG/NBO/60/MSA/ 2022-24
Location: Nairobi, Kenya	Correspondence Language(s): English
Brief Summary Description of Project: Mercy Corps is looking to engage an individual to provide consultancy services with Technology Architecture services . Sprout is the open content data portal where global agriculture experts and farmer facing organizations meet to share and discover farmer-friendly, digital ready content and services designed to build smallholder skills, resilience and income earning opportunities.	

Tender Package Available from: 13 th June 2022	Tender Package Pickup Location: www.mercycorpsagrifin.org , https://www.mercycorps.org/tender or Interested bidders can submit a request for the tender documents to this email address 'agrifinprocurement@mercycorps.org
Deadline for Offer Submission: 30 th June 2022	Submit Offers to: The Tender box at Mercy Corps Kenya ABC Place, Block A, 3 rd floor OR Via Email to: tenders@mercycorps.org

Mercy Corps reserves the right to accept or reject any late offers

Questions and Answers (Q&A)	
If any, Submit Questions in writing to: agrifinprocurement@mercycorps.org	
Last Day for Questions: 22 nd June 2022	Questions will be answered by: 24 th June 2022
Questions will be answered through: All prospective bidders will access consolidated questions and answers on these websites https://www.mercycorps.org/tender and www.mercycorpsagrifin.org by 25th June 2022 at 5.00 PM pacific time.	

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Documentation Checklist		
These documents are contained within this tender package:	✓	Invitation to Tender
	✓	General Conditions for Tender
	✓	Criteria and Submittals
	✓	Price Offer Sheet
	✓	Supplier Information Form
	✓	Scope of Work
	✓	Sample Contract

2. General Conditions for Tender

Mercy Corps invites proposals for the goods, services and/or works described and summarized in these documents, and in accordance with procedures, conditions and contract terms presented herein. Mercy Corps reserves the right to vary the quantity of work/materials specified in the Tender Package without any changes in unit price or other terms and conditions and to accept or reject any, all, or part of submitted offers.

2.1 Mercy Corps' Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Statement

Mercy Corps strictly prohibits:

- Any form of bribe or kickback in relation to its activities
This prohibition includes any *request* from any Mercy Corps employee, consultant or agent for anything of value from any company or individual in exchange for the employee, consultant or agents taking or not taking any action related to the award of a contract or the contract once awarded. It also applies to any *offer* from any company or individual to provide anything of value to any Mercy Corps employee, consultant or agent in exchange for that person taking or not taking any action related to the award of the contract or the contract.
- Conflicts of interests in the awarding or management of contracts
If a company is owned by, whether directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any Mercy Corps employee or any person who is related to a Mercy Corps employee, the company must ensure that it and the employee disclose the relationship as part of or prior to submitting the offer.
- The sharing or obtaining of confidential information
Mercy Corps prohibits its employees from sharing, and any offerors from obtaining, confidential information related to this solicitation, including information regarding Mercy Corps' price estimates, competing offerors or competing offers, etc. Any information provided to one offeror must be provided to all other offerors.

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- Collusion between/among offerors
Mercy Corps requires fair and open competition for this solicitation. No two (or more) companies submitting proposals can be owned or controlled by the same individual(s). Companies submitting offers cannot share prices or other offer information or take any other action intended to pre-determine which company will win the solicitation and what price will be paid.
- Any form of exploitation, abuse, human trafficking or internal sexual misconduct
Mercy Corps requires its partners to adhere to its Safeguarding policies including its policies on Child Safeguarding, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Beneficiaries and Community Members, Anti-Trafficking and Sexual Misconduct (available at <https://www.mercycorps.org/who-we-are/ethics-policies>). Companies will be expected to ensure that they have the capacity to abide by these policies, that their employees and subcontractors understand these policies, and that they communicate to its employees and subcontractors the duty to report any violation or suspected violation. Mercy Corps will not engage with a company that is found to be in violation of these policies.

Violations of these prohibitions, along with all evidence of such violations, should be reported to:
<http://mercycorps.org/integrityhotline>

Mercy Corps will investigate allegations fully and will take appropriate action. Any company, or individual that participates in any of the above prohibited conduct, will have its actions reported to the appropriate authorities, will be investigated fully, will have its offer rejected and/or contract terminated, and will not be eligible for future contracts with Mercy Corps. Employees participating in such conduct will have his/her employment terminated.

Violations will also be reported to Mercy Corps' donors, who may also choose to investigate and debar or suspend companies and their owners from receiving any contract that is funded in part by the donor, whether the contract is with Mercy Corps or any other entity.

2.2 Tender Basis:

- All offers shall be made in accordance with these instructions, and all documents requested should be furnished, including any required (but not limited to) supplier-specific information, technical specifications, drawings, bill of quantities, and/or delivery schedule. If any requested document is not furnished, a reason should be given for its omission in an exception sheet.
- No respondent should add, omit or change any item, term or condition herein.
- If suppliers have any additional requests and conditions, these shall be stipulated in an exception sheet.
- Each offeror may make one response only.
- Each offer shall be valid for the period of [180 days] from its date of submission.
- All offers should indicate whether they include taxes, compulsory payments, levies and/or duties, including VAT, if applicable.
- Suppliers should ensure that financial offers are devoid of calculation errors. If errors are identified during the evaluation process, the unit price will prevail. If there is ambiguity on the unit price, the Selection Committee may decide to disqualify the offer.
- Any requests for clarifications regarding the project that are not addressed in written documents must be presented to Mercy Corps in writing. The answer to any question raised in writing by any offeror will be issued to that offeror. In some cases Mercy Corps may choose to issue clarifications to all offerors. It is

a condition of this tender that no clarification shall be deemed to supersede, contradict, add to or detract from the conditions hereof, unless made in writing as an Addendum to Tender and signed by Mercy Corps or its designated representative.

- This Tender does not obligate Mercy Corps to execute a contract nor does it commit Mercy Corps to pay any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Furthermore, Mercy Corps reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, if such action is considered to be in the best interest of Mercy Corps.

2.3 Supplier Eligibility

Suppliers may not apply, and will be rejected as ineligible, if they:

- Are not registered companies
- Are bankrupt or in the process of going bankrupt
- Have been convicted of illegal/corrupt activities, and/or unprofessional conduct
- Have been guilty of grave professional misconduct
- Have not fulfilled obligations related to payment of social security and taxes
- Are guilty of serious misinterpretation in supplying information
- Are in violation of the policies outlined in Mercy Corps Anti Bribery or Anti-Corruption Statement
- Supplier (or supplier's principals) are on any list of sanctioned parties issued by; or are presently excluded or disqualified from participation in this transaction by: the United States Government or United Nations by the United States Government, the United Kingdom, the European Union, the United Nations, other national governments, or public international organizations.

Additional eligibility criteria, if applicable, are stated in section 3.2 of this tender package.

2.4 Response Documents

Offerors can either utilize the response documents contained in this tender package to submit their offer or they can submit an offer in their own format as long as it contains all the required documents and information specified by this tender.

2.5 Acceptance of Successful Response

Documentation submitted by offerors will be verified by Mercy Corps. The winning offeror will be required to sign a contract for the stated, agreed upon amount.

2.6 Certification Regarding Terrorism

It is Mercy Corps' policy to comply with humanitarian principles and the laws and regulations of the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, the United Kingdom, host nations, and other applicable donors concerning transactions with or support to individuals or entities that have engaged in fraud, waste, abuse, human trafficking, corruption, or terrorist activity. These laws and regulations prohibit Mercy Corps from transacting with or providing support to any individuals or entities that are the subject of government sanctions, donor rules, or laws prohibiting transactions or support to such parties.

3. Criteria & Submittals

3.1 Contract Terms

Mercy Corps intends to issue a fixed price contract to one or several company (ies) or organization(s). The successful offeror(s) shall be required to adhere to the statement of work and terms and conditions of the resulting contract. The anticipated contract is incorporated in [Section 6](#) herein. By submitting an offer, offerors certify that they understand and agree to all of the terms and clauses contained in [Section 6](#).

3.2 Specific Eligibility Criteria

Eligibility criteria must be met and the corresponding supporting documents listed below under “Tender Submittals” **must** be submitted with offers. Offerors who do not submit these documents may be **disqualified** from any further technical or financial evaluation.

Eligibility Criteria:

- The individual consultant must be an eligible person under the applicable laws and regulations of the country(s) of operation.
- The Individual Consultant must be in good standing with the taxation or legal authorities of the country(s) of operation.
- The Individual consultant must have a satisfactory record of performance and business ethics based on information available to Mercy Corps.

3.3 Tender Submittals

Documents and required information listed in tender submittals are necessary in order to support the eligibility criteria and to conduct technical evaluations of received offers (and due diligence). While absence of these documents and/or information does not denote mandatory disqualification of suppliers, the lack of these items has the potential to severely and negatively impact the technical evaluation of an offer.

Documents supporting the Eligibility Criteria:

- ID/Passport Copy
- Tax registration and Compliance documents
- Three References from previous work projects (including contact information)

Documents to conduct the Technical Evaluation and additional Due Diligence:

- Detailed CV and cover letter highlighting qualifications and experience
- Evidence of similar services offered (including contact information, contract value, and geographic locations)
- Detailed Proposal

- Portfolio of work
- Financial offer

Price Offer:

The Price offer is used to determine which offer represents the best value and serves as a basis of negotiation before award of a contract. No profit, fees, taxes, or additional costs can be added after contract signing. Offerors must show unit prices, quantities, and total price, as displayed in the Offer Sheet in Section 4. All items must be clearly labeled and included in the total offered price.

Offerors MUST include VAT in their offer

3.4 Currency

Offers should be submitted in: USD
Payments will be made in: USD

3.5 Tender Evaluation (Trade-Off Selection Method)

Based on the above submittals, a Mercy Corps Tender Committee will conduct a tender evaluation process. Mercy Corps reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, and to accept the offer(s) deemed to be in the best interest of Mercy Corps. MC will not be responsible for or pay for any expenses or losses which may be incurred by any Offeror in the preparation of their tender.

Evaluations will be conducted as described in the following subsections:

3.5.1 Scoring Evaluation

Trade-Off Method

Mercy Corps Tender Committee will conduct a technical evaluation which will grade technical criteria on a weighted basis (each criteria is given a percentage, all together equaling 100%). Offeror's proposals should consist of all required technical submittals so a Mercy Corps committee can thoroughly evaluate the technical criteria listed herein and assign points based on the strength of a technical submission.

Award criteria shall be based on the proposal's overall **"value for money"** (quality, cost, delivery time, etc.) while taking into consideration donor and internal requirements and regulations. Each individual criterion has been assigned a weighting prior to the release of this tender based on its importance to Mercy Corps in this process.

Offeror(s) with the best score will be accepted as the winning offeror(s), assuming the price is deemed fair and reasonable and subject to the additional due diligence in [section 3.5.2](#).

When performing the Scoring Evaluation, the Mercy Corps tender committee will assign points for each

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criteria based on the following scale:

Point	Rationale
0	Not acceptable; has not met any part of the specified criteria
1-4	Has met only some minimum requirements and may not be acceptable
5	Acceptable
6-9	Acceptable; has met all requirements and exceeds some
10	Acceptable; has exceeded all requirements

Evaluation Criteria	Weight (%)	Possible Points (1 to 10)	Weighted Score
	(A)	(B)	(A*B)
Unique qualifications			
At least 10 years' experience in system architect roles in medium to large customer environments	10%	10	xx
Experience managing small development teams across different programming disciplines including cloud, mobile, IoT, and AI	10%	10	xx
Experience establishing technology operations and developing technology standards across multiple project teams	10%	10	xx
Ability and experience steering multiple software products and teams simultaneously	10%	10	XX
Experience in, and knowledge of, complex architectural customer, business, applications and, where appropriate, Infrastructure environments.	10%	10	XX
Required deep knowledge of architect processes tools and offering and ability to translate customer requirement into Sprout Platform and services	10%	10	xx
Experience in Architect roles in medium to large customer environments in relevant Industry sectors	5%	10	xx
Proven experience in tech design for Developing markets	5%	10	xx
Experience developing Platforms/APIs	5%	10	xx
Prior experience with Comprehensive Knowledge Archive Network (CKAN) highly preferred	5%	10	xx

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Cost of the proposal and terms of payment			
The pricing is well documented, with the preferred payment schedule and is within the budget	5%	10	XX
The proposal addresses all items requested by us whether verbally, electronically or in the TOR	10%	10	XX
The proposed fee is reasonable based on the experience, unique value and knowledge the firm/individual brings to the engagement.	5%	10	XX
	100%	XX	XX

3.5.2 Additional Due Diligence

Upon completion of both the technical and financial evaluations Mercy Corps may choose to engage in additional due diligence processes with a particular supplier or supplier(s). The purpose of these processes is to ensure that Mercy Corps engages with reputable, ethical, responsible Suppliers with solid financials and the ability to fulfill the contract. Additional due diligence may take the form of the following processes (though it is not limited to):

- Reference Checks

4. Offer Form

Offerors must submit their own independent offer including at least (but not limited to):

- All documents requested in the “Eligibility Criteria” section of this Tender Package
- All documents requested in the “Tender Submittals” section of this Tender Package
- All information listed in the “Documents Comprising the Proposal” section below

All offers must be duly signed (including position and full name of the signer) and stamped, with the date of completion.

Documents Comprising the Proposal

The following information must be included in the offer of any potential offeror:

- Cover Letter** explaining interest to be a contracted vendor or supplier, and the details of the Proposal. The content of the cover letter shall include the following information:

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- A detailed specification of the offered goods, services and/or works (Proposal)
 - Warranty (if necessary and appropriate)
 - Delivery time
 - Price validity date (for this purpose and as stated on the advertisement, quote given shall remain unchanged for 180 working days)
-
- A Price Offer detailing the unit price only, using the **Price Offer Sheet** template provided in section 7
 - Completed and signed Mercy Corps **Supplier Information Form** (template provided in section 7)
 - Other important documents offeror feels need to be attached to support their proposal

The original proposal shall be signed by the offeror or a person or persons duly authorized to bind the offeror to the contract. Financial offer pages of the proposal shall be initialed by the person or persons signing the proposal and stamped with the company seal.

Any interlineations, erasures, or overwriting shall be valid only if they are initialed by the person or persons signing the proposal.

5. Scope of Work/Technical Specifications

5.1 Background

Nearly one and a half billion poor people live on less than US\$1.25 a day. One billion of them live in rural areas where agriculture is their main source of livelihood¹. An estimated 70 million Small Holder Farmers (SHF) live in Sub Saharan Africa, over half of whom are women². Smallholders, who typically farm two hectares or less, provide over 80% of the food consumed in a large part of the developing world, contributing significantly to poverty reduction and food security³. However, increasing fragmentation of landholdings, especially infrastructure, coupled with reduced investment support, competition for land and water, rising input prices and climate threaten this contribution, leaving many smallholders increasingly vulnerable.

Given increasing world populations and demand for food, occupy an important segment of the global agricultural value Multinational buyers will increasingly rely on smallholders to their supply of commodities and to help satisfy consumer sustainability preferences⁵. At an estimated \$450 billion, the demand for smallholder agricultural finance is large—and largely unmet. Credit provided by informal and formal financial institutions, as well as value chain actors, currently only meets an estimated USD 50 billion of the more than USD 200 billion need for smallholder finance in the regions of sub-Saharan Africa, Latin America, and South and Southeast Asia⁶. Impact driven smallholder agricultural lenders, such as Root Capital in Kenya and elsewhere, currently satisfy less than two percent of the demand.⁷ The volume and value of savings, lending and payment transaction SHFs in most African countries is not specifically measured.

Mobile phones are a powerful tool to access the electronic national retail payments system and enable vast numbers of clients to use a range of financial and informational services at lower cost. In agriculture, progressively more services are being delivered via mobile phone and as it was revealed in the 2015 Farmer Benchmark and Payment Study, 92% of the respondents owned at least one mobile phone. Applications such as iShamba and Arifu direct specific, timely information on agricultural production methods to farmers through their mobile phones. Moving beyond one-to-one communication, M-Farm is an Internet- and SMS-based service in Kenya that allows farmers to aggregate; it publishes wholesale price

Transformational Potential of Agriculture

Agriculture has been found to play a powerful role in poverty reduction, especially when agricultural development has focused on small farms grow. It is estimated that a 1% increase in

in growing change

SHFs chain⁴. secure

global

¹ IFAD, Smallholders, food security, and the environment, 2013

² IFAD, "Sub-Saharan Africa: The state of smallholders in agriculture", Schonberger and Delaney 2011.

³ Peck, Anderson, "Segmentation of Smallholder Households: Meeting the Range of Financial Needs in Agricultural Families", CGAP Focus Note #85, April 2013.

⁴ Dalberg, 2013

⁵ Dalberg, 2013

⁶ MasterCard Foundation, "Inflection Point: Unlocking growth in the era of farmer finance", April 2016

⁷ Dalberg, 2013

information on 42 crops and provides a platform for smallholders to collectively sell crops and buy inputs, thereby lowering costs and accessing new markets.

The challenges in agriculture in Africa, particularly for the smallholder farmers producing 80% of its' food for consumption, are complex, and no single solution exists to reverse age-old issues around markets, infrastructure, poverty and exclusion. Digital solutions can provide relatively low-cost solutions that reach scale quickly, open new markets, and surpass the traditional brick-and-mortar approach to customer acquisition and the distribution and sales of products and services. Over the past five years, AgriFin has worked both to build capacity of fintech and agtech innovators to scale and also worked to broker partnerships for them onto larger digital platforms, typically hosted by banks, mobile network operators, large agricultural enterprises and government. Digital platforms are evolving as drivers for impact and viability in delivery of key services for agriculture and also for scale up of young, breakthrough technology providers. Digital platforms can host multiple service providers, working to offer “end to end” services to drive transformation in agricultural markets and impact for smallholders, while decreasing risks and increasing revenue models for fintechs, agtechs and other market actors.

5.2 Scope of Work

Sprout is a **B** (content/service creator) to **B** (content user/farmer facing organizations) **platform**. The Sprout Platform is not primarily intended to serve farmers directly. Currently, Sprout offers a wide range of high quality, digital ready, farmer friendly agriculture and cross cutting content in flat files that can be searched, downloaded and used as is or contextualized by the organization for their farmers. Sprout also offers Sprout Learning, a WhatsApp for Business service that has content available in English that can be copied by the content using organizations to their own WhatsApp platforms.

Sprout is currently built on DKAN, but the project team is in the process of moving to CKAN shortly. Sprout Learning WhatsApp for business service is built on Turn.io.

The Chief Technical Architect (CTA) will take the lead in designing the new features and the next phase of development of Sprout Platform with the Mercy Corps AgriFin team and the Kenyan Agriculture and Livestock Organization (KALRO). The CTA will also work with the following sets and types of organizations:

- Content creators (KALRO, AGRA, Ethiopian ATA, Ministries of Agriculture, Research Institutes, CIP, and many others.)
- Content/Service Providers (CIAT, CGIAR, CYMMT, Ignitia, aWhere, PlantVillage, Tomorrow.io, and many others)
- content user partners (One Acre, Pula, KALRO, Digifarm, Mshamba, FSPN, CoAmana, and many others)
- digitally enabled farmers

The CTA will be expected to lead and work with the project team on how best to identify and how to best enable Sprout Platform to offer intelligent advisory and marketplace services through the platform. These services will be built upon the existing platform, capabilities and offer:

- platform content /services organizations the ability to connect to the Sprout platform and directly reach farmer facing organizations and their millions of users in a uniform way
- content/service users (farmer facing organizations) who connect into the platform to have the ability for their respective farmer to have access advisory information and services based on the data that farmer facing

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organizations have about their farmers (i.e. GPS coordinates, plot size, primary and secondary commodities, etc. in a uniform way

The CTA will be responsible for identifying the technical approach, developing a roadmap for implementing an MVP with 1-2 content providers, 1-2 service providers and 4+ farmer facing organizations.

The CTA will:

- Engage with the AgriFin and KALRO teams to develop the short-term project strategy and longer-term growth strategy for the Sprout Platform to evolve toward a global open access platform for any actor in the digital ecosystem that is intends to support and/or provide services towards smallholder farmers;
- Engage and meet with partners & farmers to further define and understand use cases, prerequisites, and capabilities to design the requirements for the platform.
- Provide recommended specifications around the technology architecture for the pilot MVP delivery, as well as recommendations for its future development.
- Identify potential solution providers and/or technical design partner or skills required for implementation
- Provide advisory and guidance around the MVP product parameters and support testing the newly designed features

Support the development of the next phase development of this facility with DAA, as well as the longer-term product roadmap for the facility as an AgriFin initiative moving forward.

Deliverables

The consultants will provide the following deliverables, with specific timelines to be agreed in the approved consultant workplan:

1. Weekly check-ins minutes with the Task Managers and Sprout Platform Product Lead
2. Monthly report updating Sprout Platform Project status, potential risks, and any other updates from partnership implementation in the month.
3. Provide support on short/long -term Sprout Platform Strategy and Systems Architecture
4. MVP design, new products, and systems architecture schema
5. Identify and develop list of suppliers and or resources required for the Sprout Platform MVP product development
6. Support implementation of new products and MVPs
7. Develop long term digital technology vision, road map, and systems architecture

6. Sample Contract

This is the anticipated contract. However, if required, additional terms and conditions may be added by Mercy Corps in the final contract.



Master Service Agreement Template.

7. Attachments to the Tender Package

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Supplier Information |



Copy of price offer
sheet-final_v2.xlsx