



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

REGIONAL E-LEARNING PLATFORM (REP)

Design, Supply and Installation

REFERENCE NUMBER:
RUF/PROC/REP/08/21

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL COVER LETTER

Release date: 9th August 2021

Dear Sir/Madam,

SUBJECT: RFP FOR THE PROVISION OF A REGIONAL E-LEARNING PLATFORM

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is an African owned organization with a membership of 129 universities from 38 countries across Africa. The network envisions *‘vibrant, transformative universities to catalyze sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa’*.

The RUFORUM Vision 2030 mandates the Secretariat to facilitate universities to innovatively use ICT to improve teaching and learning through the Knowledge Hub (K-hub) flagship programme. Through the K-Hub, RUFORUM is expected to facilitate universities to provide relevant and practical training, not only through innovative and creative teaching, but also by using the latest electronic means to deliver and enhance the student learning experience.

RUFORUM invites eligible firms/consultants to submit their proposal for consultancy to provide the E-learning Services. Interested firms should provide proposals demonstrating that they have the required qualifications and relevant experience to provide a functional e-learning platform.

All proposals are subject to the instructions to proposers (ITP) and other provisions specifications and instructions as are attached or incorporated herein by reference “SOLICITATION DOCUMENTS” hereunder include: -

1. Acronyms
2. Instructions to Proposers (Annex i)
3. Terms of Reference (TOR) (Annex ii)

Your proposals comprising of technical and financial proposal are to be submitted as in ITP

Envelopes or softcopy proposals, should reach the following address no later than 15th September 2021 at 5 pm (17.00) East Africa local time.

RUFORUM Secretariat,

Attn: Prof. Adipala Ekwamu

Plot 151/155 Garden Hill,

Makerere University Main Campus,

P.O Box 16811, Wandegaya, Kampala, Uganda,

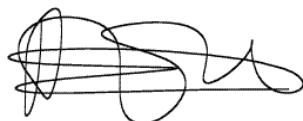
Tel: +256-417-713-300

Email: secretariat@ruforum.org

Firms are welcome to send any query they may have with regard to this RFP through an email provided at least 5 days prior to the last date for submission of proposal. If you request for information, we shall endeavor to provide information expeditiously, but any delay in providing such information will not be considered as a reason for extending the submission date of your proposal.

If the proposal is sent by email, it can be done only at the address(es) provided, clearly indicating the reference number of the RFP and the content of the documents: “RFP – REP”, “technical and financial proposal”.

Yours truly,



Prof. Adipala Ekwamu
Executive Secretary
RUFORUM Secretariat

Acronyms:

PDS	Proposers data sheet
RFP	Request for Proposal
RUFORUM	Regional University Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture
REP	Regional Elearning Platform
JV	Joint Venture
EAT	East African Time
USD	United States Dollars
ITP	Information to Proposers
BOU	Bank of Uganda
TORs	Terms of Reference
K –Hub	Knowledge Hub
UAT	User Acceptance Tool

Annex i

1. Instructions to Proposers

1.1 Scope of proposal

RUFORUM issues this RFP document for the design, supply and installation of the Regional E-learning Platform as specified in the terms of reference.

Throughout this RFP document, the term “in writing” means communicated in written form e.g., by e-mail with proof of sent email and received.

“Day” means working day or an official working days– Monday to Friday for the case of RUFORUM. It excludes official public holidays.

1.2. Source of funds

RUFORUM shall use funds obtained from its funding agencies to implement the e-learning systems development of eligible bidders under this contract(s) for which this RFP document is issued.

1.3. Fraud and corruption

RUFORUM requires compliance from all bidders in line with its business code of conduct, ethics, guidelines and its prevailing policies and procedures.

This shall apply to (whether declared or not), the subcontractors, sub consultants, service providers, suppliers, and their personnel.

1.4. Eligible proposers

A Proposer may be a firm that is a private entity, a state-owned enterprise or institution or any combination of such entities in the form of a Joint Venture (JV) under an existing agreement or with the intent to enter into such an agreement supported by a letter of intent. In the case of a joint venture, all members shall be jointly and severally liable for the execution of the Contract in accordance with the Contract terms.

A Proposer shall not have a conflict of interest. Any Proposer found to have a conflict of interest shall be disqualified. A Proposer may be considered to have a conflict of interest for the purpose of this RFP process, if the Proposer:

- i. has the same legal representative as another Proposer; or
- ii. any of its affiliates participates as a consultant in the preparation of the design or technical specifications of the E-learning System that are the subject of the Proposal
- iii. has a close business or family relationship with staff of RUFORUM who: (i) are directly or indirectly involved in the preparation of the RFP document or specifications of the Contract, and/or the Proposal evaluation process of such Contract; or (ii) would be involved in the implementation or supervision of such

- 1.5. For the purposes of this RFP document, the term “E-learning System” means, all:-
- i. the required information technologies, including all information processing and communications-related hardware, software, supplies, and consumable items for a functional e-learning platform that the Supplier is required to supply and install under the Contract, plus all associated documentation, and all other materials and goods to be supplied, installed, integrated, and made operational; and
 - ii. the related software development, transportation, insurance, installation, customization, integration, commissioning, training, technical support, maintenance, repair, and other services necessary for proper operation of the E-learning System to be provided by the selected Proposer

1.6. Qualification of the proposer

By submission of documentary evidence in its Proposal, the Proposer must establish to the RUFORUM’s satisfaction:

- i. That it continues to meet the qualification criteria. The Proposer shall, as part of its Proposal, submit updated information with its application for Initial Selection;
- ii. That for all powered (active) hardware and/or software components of the E-learning System which the Proposer does not itself produce, the Proposer must be duly authorized by the producer to supply those components in Uganda under the Contract(s) that may result from this procurement. This must be documented by including Manufacturer’s Authorizations certificate in the Proposal
- iii. that, in the case of a Proposer not doing business within Uganda, the Proposer is or will be (if awarded the Contract) represented by an Agent in that country who is equipped and able to carry out / manage the Proposer’s maintenance, technical support, training, and warranty repair obligations Technical Requirements (including any response time, problem-resolution norms or other aspects that may be specified in the Contract).

2.0. Proposal Data Sheet

PDS 2.0.1	Information
	The reference number: RUF/PROC/REP/08/21 The Purchaser is: RUFORUM The name of the RFP is: REGIONAL E-LEARNING PLATFORM
PDS 2.0.2.	Electronic – Procurement System
	RUFORUM and its network websites and RUFORUM Emails shall be used to manage this procurement process and all communication regards to this procurement - RFP
PDS 2.0.3. Request For Proposal and submission Address	

1. Clarification, submission and RFP address	<p>For submission of Proposal, please use address below:</p> <p>RUFORUM Secretariat, Attn: Prof. Adipala Ekwamu Plot 151/155 Garden Hill, Makerere University Main Campus, P.O Box 16811, Wandegaya, Kampala, Uganda, Tel: +256-417-713-300 Email: secretariat@ruforum.org Web page: www.ruforum.org;</p> <p>Requests for clarification should be received by RUFORUM no later than 7 days from the time of sending RFP</p> <p>The Proposers in addition to the hard copies shall have the option of submitting their Proposals electronically</p>
<i>PDS 2.0.4. Site inspection</i>	
Pre – proposal meeting	A Pre-Proposal meeting shall not take place however, a site inspection shall be conducted at RUFORUM Secretariat to facilitate proposal development process as shall be required. Applicants are permitted for a day before the application deadline
<i>PDS 2.0.5 Preparation of Proposals</i>	
1. Language	<p>The language of the Proposal shall be English</p> <p>All correspondence exchange and communication shall be in English.</p>
2. Copies of proposals	In addition to the original of the Proposal, the number of copies shall be four (4) for hardcopy submissions
3. Documents and attachments	<p>The Proposer shall submit with its Proposal the following additional documents to support in the different stages of proposals and Evaluation</p> <p>Attachment 1: Proposer’s Eligibility</p> <p>This including but not limited to documentary evidence that the Proposer is legally registered firm in the country of operation</p> <p>Attachment 2: Proposer’s Qualifications</p> <p>Documentary evidence establishing that the Proposer meets the qualification requirements. The proposer should show evidence of manufacturers authorization and subcontractor agreement.</p> <p>Attachment 3: Proposed Subcontractors</p>

	<p>A list of all major items of Goods or Services that the Proposer proposes to purchase or subcontract from others, and the name and nationality of the proposed Subcontractor, including vendors, for each of those items;</p> <p>Attachment 5: Conformity of the E-learning System to the RFP documents</p> <p>Documentary evidence that the Goods and Services components of the E-learning System to be supplied, installed, and/or performed by the Proposer conform to the RFP documents;</p> <p>Attachment 6: Deviations</p> <p>Proposers shall give details of all deviations in their Technical-Only Proposal with respect to the contractual terms and conditions</p> <p>Any other documents as specified in the PDS.</p>
<p><i>PDS 2.0.6. Submission of Proposals</i></p> <p><i>Submission of Technical Proposals and Financial Proposals</i></p>	
1. Proposal submission and labelling	<p>The Proposer shall prepare and sign 1 original and 3 copies/sets of the Proposal specified in the PDS, clearly marking each one as: “Technical and Financial Proposal – Original,” and in case of hardcopy “Technical and Financial Proposal – Copy No. 1,” “Technical and Financial Proposal -- Copy No. 2 and 3,” respectively . bearing the Contract (s) name, the Invitation for Proposals (RFP) title and Reference number</p> <p>In the event of any discrepancy between the original and any copy, the original shall govern.</p>
2. Deadline	<p>The deadline for Proposal submission is:</p> <p>15th September 2021, Time: 5:00PM EAT</p> <p>RUFORUM may, at its discretion, extend the deadline for submission of Proposals by amending the RFP documents in which case all its rights and obligations and Proposers will thereafter be subject to the deadline as extended.</p> <p>RUFORUM shall not consider any Proposal that arrives after the deadline for submission of Proposals. Any Proposal received by RUFORUM after the deadline for submission of Proposals shall be declared late, rejected, and returned unopened to the Proposer.</p>
<p><i>PDS 2.0.7. Proposal evaluations</i></p>	
1. Technical proposal	<p>RUFORUM will examine the Technical Proposals to determine whether they are responsive to the RFP, complete, have been properly signed, and are generally in order.</p> <p>A detailed technical evaluation shall be carried out to determine responsiveness in accordance with the requirements set forth in the RFP documents taking into account the following factors:-</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. overall completeness and compliance with the Business and/or Functional Requirements; the technical merits of any alternatives offered, and deviations from the Business and/or Functional Requirements; ii. suitability of the E-learning System offered in relation to the conditions prevailing at the site; and the suitability of the implementation and other services proposed, as described in the Project Plan included in the Proposal; iii. achievement of specified performance criteria by the E-learning System; iv. with the price schedule called for by the Implementation Schedule and any alternative time schedules offered by Proposers, as evidenced by a milestone schedule provided in the Project Plan included in the Proposal; v. long-term availability of maintenance services and of any critical consumable items necessary for the operation of the E-learning System; vi. any other relevant technical factors that RUFORUM deems necessary or prudent to take into consideration as specified in Evaluation and Qualification Criteria; and vii. Any proposed deviations in the Proposal to the contractual provisions stipulated in the RFP documents.
<i>PDS 2.0.8. Proposal composition</i>	
	<p>The Proposal shall comprise of two Parts, namely the Technical Part and the Financial Part. These two Parts shall be submitted simultaneously.</p> <p>The Technical Part shall comprise of all the necessary documents stated in ITP and attachments as in other stage</p>
<i>PDS 2.0.9. Financial proposal</i>	
<p>1. price quotation/schedule</p>	<p>Shall consist of letter of Proposal, Price Schedules and any other document required in the PDS and using relevant forms</p> <hr/> <p>Unless otherwise specified in the PDS, Proposers shall quote for the entire E-learning System on a “single responsibility” basis such that the total Proposal price covers all the Supplier’s obligations mentioned in or to be reasonably inferred from the RFP including the design, manufacture, supply, installation, testing, pre-commissioning, commissioning of the E-learning System and, where so required in the RFP document, the acquisition of all permits, approvals and licenses, etc.; the operation, maintenance and training services and any other items and services</p> <hr/> <p>Each Proposal shall be numbered, any modification to the unit or total price shall be initiated by RUFORUM Representatives</p> <hr/> <p>The Letter of Proposal and Price Schedules submitted by proposers shall be witnessed by representatives of RUFORUM conducting Proposal opening</p>

	<p>The Price Schedules shall include but not limited:-Grand Summary Cost, Supply and Installation Cost Summary, Recurrent Cost Summary, Supply and Installation Cost (s) etc.</p> <p>The Proposal price shall only be adjusted by factor reflecting local inflation during the period of extension, and the foreign currency portion of the Contract price shall be adjusted by a factor reflecting the international inflation (in the country of the foreign currency) during the period of extension.</p>
<i>PDS 2.0.10. Currency and exchange rates</i>	
	<p>The prices quoted by the Proposer shall be subject to adjustment after submission and during the performance of the Contract.</p> <p>The Proposer is required to quote in the United State Dollars (USD). The currency (ies) of the Proposal and currencies of payment shall be the same. The Proposer shall quote in the currency as specified in the PDS</p> <p>The currency(ies) of the Proposal shall be converted into a single currency as per prevailing exchange BOU rates within 28 days prior to deadline for submission of the proposals nor later than the original date for the expiry of Proposal validity</p>
<i>PDS 2.0.11. Proposal validity</i>	
	<p>The Proposal validity period shall be 120 days from the following day of submitting the proposals</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, prior to expiry of the Proposal validity period, RUFORUM may request that the Proposers extend the period of validity for a specified additional period. The request and the responses to the request shall be made in writing</p>
<i>PDS 2.0.12 Clarification meetings</i>	
	Clarification meetings upon request from the proposers and RUFORUM shall be conducted before the deadline
<i>PDS 2.0.13.</i> Conflict resolution	There will be no Adjudicator under this Contract. However, all conflicts shall be managed by REP Project managers
<i>PDS 2.0.14.</i> Procurement complaints	The procedures for making a Procurement-related Complaints shall be as per RUFORUM procurement Policy
<i>PDS 2.0.15</i> <i>Payment</i>	Payments will be made to the Supplier in the currency or currencies indicated under each respective item. As specified in the PDS

PDS 2.0.16. PROPOSAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

For the initial selection the following shall apply to ensure that firms meet the preliminary criteria before evaluating their technical proposals. Only the selected firms will be considered in the next stages of evaluation

RUFORUM shall use the following criteria to evaluate Proposals and qualify Proposers.

i. Combined Evaluation

RUFORUM will evaluate and compare the Proposals that have been determined to be substantially responsive taking into account both the technical factors and cost factors.

An Evaluated Proposal Score (B) will be calculated for each responsive Proposal using the following formula, which will permits a comprehensive assessment of the evaluated cost and the technical merits of each Proposal:-

$$B = \left(\frac{C_{low}}{C} X + \frac{T}{T_{high}} (1 - X) \right) * 100$$

where

C = Evaluated Proposal Cost

C_{low} = the lowest of all Evaluated Cost among responsive Proposals

T = the total Technical Score awarded to the Proposal

T_{high} = the Technical Score achieved by the Proposal that was scored best among all responsive Proposals

X = weight for the Cost

The Proposal with the best evaluated Proposal Score (B) among responsive Proposals shall be the Most Advantageous Proposal provided the Proposer is qualified to perform the Contract.

ii. Evaluation of Technical Proposal (70 marks)

The total technical points assigned to each Proposal in the Evaluated Proposal Formula will be determined by adding and weighting the scores assigned by an evaluation committee to technical features of the Proposal in accordance with the criteria set forth.

(a)

iii. Evaluation of Financial Proposal (30 marks)

The following factors and methods will apply:-

(a) Recurrent Costs

Since the operation and maintenance of the system being procured form a major part of the implementation, the resulting recurrent costs will be evaluated according to the principles given hereafter, including the cost of recurrent cost items for the initial period of operation stated based on prices furnished by each Proposer in the Price Schedule

Recurrent cost items for post- warranty service period if subject to evaluation shall be included in the main contract or a separate contract signed together with the main contract.

Such costs shall be added to the Proposal price for evaluation.

The recurrent cost factors for calculation of the implementation schedule shall be:-

- (i) hardware maintenance
- (iii) software licenses and updates
- (iv) technical services
- (vi) Other services (if any).

(b). Financial Resources

The Proposer must demonstrate access to, or availability of, financial resources such as liquid assets, unencumbered real assets, lines of credit, and other financial means, other than any contractual advance payments to meet:

Technical Proposal Evaluation

i. Firm's experience in similar projects

Key areas of evaluations	Points obtainable	Name of the Firm
Expertise of firm / organization submitting proposal	15	
Reputation of Organization and Staff (Competence /Reliability). Lead staff should experience of at least 5 years in similar field	10	
General Organizational ability to implement the project (i.e. loose consortium, holding company or one firm, size of the firm / organization, project financing capacity. (Please indicate all legal entity document required to prove this)	10	
Quality assurance procedures, warranty etc.	10	
Relevance of: Specialized Knowledge, Experiences in Similar Projects , Experience on Projects in the Region	25	
Total	70	

Annex ii

TERMS OF REFERENCE

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE REGIONAL ELEARNING PLATFORM

Background

The Regional Universities Forum for Capacity Building in Agriculture (RUFORUM) is an African owned organization with a membership of 129 universities from 38 countries across Africa. The network envisions *‘vibrant, transformative universities to catalyze sustainable, inclusive agricultural development to feed and create prosperity for Africa’*.

The RUFORUM Vision 2030 mandates the Secretariat to *facilitate universities to innovatively use ICT to improve teaching and learning* through the K-hub flagship programme. Through the K-Hub, RUFORUM is expected to facilitate universities to provide relevant and practical training, not only through innovative and creative teaching, but also by using the latest electronic means to deliver and enhance the student learning experience. The K-Hub flagship programme aims at facilitating the establishment of customized user-friendly Virtual Learning Environments built for students to attend real-time lectures, access learning materials, post assignments, enter discussions with their peers, check their university email accounts, search, download, and read in the RUFORUM and various universities e-libraries, and keep in constant contact with their course tutors.

Objective of the of the assignment

The objective of this consultancy is to develop and operationalize the Regional eLearning Management platform to facilitate member universities to provide relevant and practical teaching and learning using the latest electronic means to deliver and enhance the student learning experience.

Scope of Work

This consultancy will focus on operationalization of the Regional E-learning platform with ability to host and deliver courses in Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) with seamless integration to the Learning Management Systems (LMSs) of the participating institutions.

Duties of the Firm/Consultant

The prospective firm/consultant will be responsible for undertaking the following activities related to the aforementioned task:

1. Provide a clear methodology for undertaking the task in the inception report
2. Conduct an in-depth assessment of the required infrastructure (including hardware and software) and skills for a reliable E-learning platform
3. Development and deployment of the Regional E-learning platform
4. Provide capacity building of the technical personnel and end users
5. Assess the capacity of the participating universities to establish satellite e-learning centres and make recommendation for capacity building and integrating the Regional E-learning platform with the satellite e-learning centres
6. Make a provision for integration with member university E-learning platforms
7. Train content developers and instructional designers to effectively use of Regional E-learning platform
8. Document a final report on the project

Expected outcome

An operational Regional E-learning platform is expected with ability to facilitate member universities to provide relevant and practical teaching and learning online using the latest electronic means and enhanced student learning experience. It will host a number of common interest courses.

Timeframe of the assignment

The firm/consultant is expected to complete the assignment within a period of not more than 6 months from the effective date of the contract. The activities to be undertaken must be in synchrony with the approved inception report.

Project monitoring and evaluation

The consultant will develop a detailed work plan indicating key activities to be undertaken as well as the reporting timelines. On a monthly basis, the Consultant will submit reports to the Project Coordinator highlighting progress made, challenges faced, and the way forward. The final reports to be submitted including the draft report as well as the final report will be preceded by a presentation/demonstration of the platform to RUFORUM Secretariat.

Consultant qualifications and experience

Interested firms/consultants should have a lead person with the following qualifications: -

- i. At least a Master's degree in Information Technology, Computer Science, Computer/software engineering, Information systems or other related disciplines;
- ii. At least seven years' experience in information management in higher education institution at managerial level;
- iii. Proven professional experience in developing large information management systems and interactive platforms;
- iv. Demonstrated understanding of e-learning concepts and working with learning management systems.
- v. Knowledge of online pedagogy and training of trainers skills

Preparing an Implementation Schedule

Once a set of anticipated work tasks, and their sequencing has been prepared, an indicative implementation schedule will be developed.

Eligibility

Firms/consultants with vast experience in developing e-learning systems are all welcome to express their interest to undertake the assignment.