

REQUEST FOR QUOTES

Procurement Number:	CENTER2024TECHDEM2o
Open Date:	Thursday, August 1st at 10:00 AM (ET)
Questions Deadline:	Tuesday, August 6th at 5:00 PM (ET)
Closing Deadline:	Monday, August 12th at 10:00 AM (ET)
Geographical Area Restrictions:	N/A
Point of Contact:	Aaron Spitler; aspitler@iri.org

Background:

The International Republican Institute (IRI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, organization dedicated to advancing freedom and democracy worldwide. Since 1983, IRI has worked to develop democratic institutions and ideals, carrying out a variety of international programs to promote freedom, self-government and the rule of law worldwide. IRI provides technical assistance in the areas of political party strengthening, developing civic institutions and open elections, promoting democratic governance and advancing the rule of law.

This IRI program will equip beneficiaries who work on countering authoritarian influence and operate in repressive environments to be more adaptive and resilient to changing digital restrictions and authoritarian pressures. To this end, IRI will provide these beneficiaries' access to a range of internet freedom tools that are relevant, trusted, and localized to their context.

The contractors (also referred to internet freedom tool developers) will provide their tools to IRI beneficiaries and update and localize these tools based on beneficiaries' needs to operate more securely in restrictive environments. Specifically, the tool developers will conduct user interface design/user experience design (UI/UX testing) with beneficiaries and solicit their feedback, thus allowing localization and responsive improvements to the tools for beneficiaries' use. In addition, the internet freedom tool developers will also provide video demonstrations services of their tools to a broader IRI network to make them more accessible to beneficiaries.

Eligibility criteria:

- Proven and existing tool or technology designed to promote internet freedom
- Demonstrated experience working in digitally restrictive or repressive environments(1-2 Years)
- Demonstrated experience working with the democracy, rights, and governance (DRG) community (1-2 Years)

Period of Performance:

estimated date of Signature – up to January 31, 2025, with the option to extend if additional funding becomes available.

Statement of Work:

Provide internet freedom tool services to IRI beneficiaries and update and localize these tools based on their needs to operate more securely in restrictive environments. These tool services will allow beneficiaries (civil society organizations, human rights defenders, activists, and journalists operating in the democracy, rights, and governance (DRG) space) to have more access, usage, and knowledge of these tools. Internet freedom tools include any tool focused on addressing the harms caused by censorship, surveillance, internet shutdowns, or access to information.

At the request of IRI, holding a series of user testing sessions with a pre-selected cohort of IRI's global beneficiaries and collect their feedback. Following that, the contractor will conduct iterative tool localization and updates for beneficiaries' use and will conduct training briefings on the updated tools and participate in IRI learning events, as required.

User Testing Sessions

- Design the format and structure of user testing sessions and the elements of user testing to focus on. IRI will review and approve the format proposed prior to the sessions being conducted.
 - o Illustrative elements of user testing may include scenario testing, data privacy and storage practices, effectiveness in evading censorship and surveillance, resilience to adversarial attacks, and other unforeseen risks of the tools.
- Conduct between 2-4 user testing and feedback sessions in total with IRI's pre-selected program participants, who will serve as testers. The contractor will be responsible for all the logistical aspects of these sessions, which will be virtual. IRI will provide the contractor the participant list for these sessions prior to their execution.
- Developing reports summarizing each user testing session conducted and its outcomes. Each report will have a section providing overall feedback, suggested changes proposed by program participants (testers), along with clear explanation of how to implement proposed updates or localization.

Tool/technology update or localization

- Provide development services to adopt a minimum of two recommendations offered by program participants to update and localize the tool after each user testing session and produce a report that provides evidence that changes were incorporated (i.e. before/after screenshots of updated interfaces, short videos of tool demonstrations, links to updated GitHub library, etc.)²

Program Learning Events

- Provide up to three video demonstrations of the tool at IRI-organized events, including sharing event slide decks with IRI staff and their external partners.
- Present at up to two external learning events, where contractors summarize their work completed for this project, including lessons learned from collaboration with project participants.
- Participate in regular check-in calls with IRI staff (at least once a month).

Technical Bid:

All bids submitted to IRI must include:

1. Information addressing your experience in providing each of the services identified in the above Statement of Work and your proposed specific approach for providing those services to IRI under this contract, including sufficient information to determine a clear definition of services as it relates to other providers that may be involved.
2. The name, address, and telephone and facsimile numbers of the bidder (and electronic address if available); If the Bidder is a firm, name(s) should be provided for individuals authorized to conduct business on behalf of the firm.
3. Bidders shall provide contact information for a minimum of three professional references with whom the applicant has had a working relationship within the last 3-years period. IRI may contact these individuals.
4. If the Bidder is a U.S. organization/resident, or a foreign organization/resident which has income effectively connected with the conduct of activities in the U.S. or has an office or a place of business or a fiscal paying agent in the U.S., the technical bids must contain Bidder's Taxpayer Identification Number.
5. Each Proposals will not exceed 5 pages (not including cover page), Times New Roman with font size 12 and must be in English.
6. What is the title of your tool?
7. 1-2 paragraph description of your internet freedom tool or technology, taking note of its current stage of development, past successes (# of users, # of downloads, etc.) and where/by whom it is currently used? Please emphasize examples of your experience working in repressive environments and with at-risk users and how it benefits that community of users
8. Where are your current users/audiences located?
9. Where are your intended users/audiences located?
10. Attachment requirements:
 - CV/Resume
 - Expert Service Rate Form provided at the end of this solicitation. IRI may contact previous clients and employers for professional references and compensation confirmation.

Price Bids must adhere to the following criteria:

IRI will pay directly (to the hotel, airline, train, etc.) for all preapproved travel related expenses including transportation, lodging, and meals for the contractors' participation in IRI activities and events. If it is more feasible for the contractor to use his/her own vehicle for travel to an IRI event, IRI will reimburse the cost of the transportation to the contractor

based upon the prescribed formulas used by the funder of the event, calculated according to the kilometers traveled and the type of vehicle used. The daily and hourly rates submitted should, therefore, not include an assumption of costs incurred by the contractor for travel related expenses. All other expenses should be included within the daily and hourly rates, as no other expenses will be covered or reimbursed by IRI. Bids must be submitted in USD, payments under any resulting contract will be made in this currency.

Labor Category	Years of Professional Experience	Education Level	Hourly Rate

RFQ Terms and Conditions:

1. Prospective Bidders are requested to review clauses incorporated by reference in the section “Notice Listing Contract Clauses Incorporated by Reference”.
2. IRI may reject any or all bids if such is within IRI’s interest.
3. Payment will be made upon receipt of detailed invoices and deliverables/services.
4. Proof of costs incurred, such as but not limited to receipts, pictures and financial documents may be requested during and for up to three years after the end of the contract period.
5. The Bidder’s initial bid should contain the Bidder’s best offer.
6. IRI reserves the right to make multiple contracts or partial contracts if, after considering administrative burden, it is in IRI’s best interest to do so.
7. Discussions with Bidders following the receipt of a bid do not constitute a rejection or counteroffer by IRI.
8. IRI will hold all submissions as confidential and shall not be disclosed to third parties. IRI reserves the right to share bids internally, across divisions, for the purposes of evaluating the bids.
9. If IRI continues to require the goods and services and the price remains reasonable and within market norms, resulting contract may be renewed each year for up to 5 years with 30 days’ notice to the Contractor. Bidder must establish any price increase for each renewal year in the initial bid.
10. By submitting a bid, Bidder agrees to comply with all terms, conditions, and provisions included in the solicitation and agreement to the services identified above and will specifically identify any disagreement with or exceptions to the terms, conditions, and provisions.
11. Bidders confirm that the prices in the bid/proposal/application/quote have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other bidder or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition.
12. By applying to this RFQ, applicant is certifying that if it is awarded a contract, none of funds payable under the resulting contract will be used to (1) procure or obtain, extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain; (2) enter into a contract (or extend or renew a contract) to procure; or (3) obtain the equipment, services, or systems that uses covered telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part

of any system in compliance with the National Defense Authorization Act. Covered telecommunications equipment and services mean any of the following:

- a. Telecommunications equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).
- b. For the purpose of public safety, security of government facilities, physical security surveillance of critical infrastructure, and other national security purposes, video surveillance and telecommunications equipment produced by Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, or Dahua Technology Company (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).
- c. Telecommunications or video surveillance services provided by such entities or using such equipment.
- d. Telecommunications or video surveillance equipment or services produced or provided by an entity that the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Director of the National Intelligence or the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, reasonably believes to be an entity owned or controlled by, or otherwise connected to, the government of a covered foreign country. ([2 CFR 200.216](#)).

13. Bidders agree to disclose as part of the bid submission:

- a. Any close, familial, or financial relationships with IRI staff and agents. For example, the bidder must disclose if a bidder's mother conducts volunteer trainings for IRI.
- b. Any family or financial relationship with other bidders submitting bids. For example, if the bidder's father owns a company that is submitting another bid, the bidder must state this.
- c. Any other action that might be interpreted as potential conflict of interest.

Evaluation and Award Process:

1. Bids will be evaluated by IRI for compliance with administrative requirements, recent and relevant past performance and experience in performing of similar projects by the Bidder, technical capabilities and proposed technical approach, the qualifications of the personnel for the project, and price. IRI may contact any Bidder for clarification or additional information, but Bidders are advised that IRI intends to evaluate the offers based on the written bids and reserves the right to make decisions based solely on the information provided with the initial bids. IRI may but is not obligated to conduct additional negotiations with the most highly rated Bidders prior to award of a contract and may at its sole discretion elect to issue contracts to one or more Bidders.
2. Mathematical errors will be corrected in the following manner: If a discrepancy exists between the total price proposed and the total price resulting from multiplying the unit price by the corresponding amounts, then the unit price will prevail and the total price will be corrected. If there were a discrepancy between the numbers written out in words and the amounts in numbers, then the amount expressed in words will prevail. If the Bidder does not accept the correction, the offer will be rejected.
3. IRI may determine that a bid is unacceptable if the prices proposed are materially unbalanced between line items or sub-line items. Unbalanced pricing exists when, despite an acceptable total evaluated price, the price of one or more contract line

items is significantly overstated or understated as indicated by the application of cost or price analysis techniques. A bid may be rejected if IRI determines that the lack of balance poses an unacceptable risk.

4. IRI will conduct a source selection based as follows:

a) Technical evaluation, (including technical capabilities, proposed technical approach, and personnel qualifications) – 65% percent

- *Proposed tool is existing and proven- 25 percent.*
- *Evaluation of approach to user testing and incorporating participant feedback- 40 percent.*

b) Institution's record and capacity – 20 percent

- *Past performance and experience in performing similar projects- 10 percent.*
- *Past history working in digitally restrictive or repressive environments- 10 percent.*

c) Price – 15 percent

IRI intends to evaluate Offerors' proposals in accordance with these factors and make an award to the responsible Offeror whose proposal is most advantageous to the program.

5. If a cost realism analysis is performed, cost realism may be considered in evaluating performance or price.

Submission Instructions:

Bids must be submitted via email to Aaron Spitler; aspitler@iri.org with the subject line "CENTER2024TECHDEM2o - Internet Freedom Tool Developers" by the deadline listed above.

IRI Obligations

Issuance of this RFQ does not constitute a contractual commitment on the part of IRI, nor does it commit IRI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a bid.

Notice Listing Contract Clauses Incorporated by Reference

IRI is required to make the Bidder subject to the clauses of the prime award. The resulting agreement incorporates one or more clauses by reference, with the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. Where "flow-down" to the Bidder is appropriate and applicable, references to "USAID" or "Department of State" shall be interpreted to mean "IRI", "Recipient" to mean "Contractor", and "Subrecipient" to mean "the Bidder". Included by reference are 2 C.F.R. 200 and USAID Standard Provisions for Non-US Non-governmental Organizations/US Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions.

EXPERT RATE INFORMATION

Name (<i>Last, First, Middle</i>)	Proposed Rate:	Daily	Hourly
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Rates should be given for the last three (3) years. If employment history/salary information is applicable, list salaries separate for each year. If expert services is applicable, indicate the type of rate daily/hourly.

EMPLOYMENT HISTORY - SALARY

POSITION TITLE	EMPLOYER'S NAME AND ADDRESS POINT OF CONTACT & TELEPHONE #	Employment Period (M/D/Y)		Annual Salary ¹ U.S. Dollars
		From	To	

SPECIFIC EXPERT SERVICES

SERVICES PERFORMED/TITLE	CLIENTS NAME AND ADDRESS POINT OF CONTACT & TELEPHONE #	Service Period (M/D/Y)		Units at Rate	Daily/Hourly Rate ² In U.S. Dollars
		From	To		

CERTIFICATION: To the best of my knowledge, the above facts as stated are true and correct.

Signature	Date
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¹ Basic periodic payment for services rendered. Exclude bonuses, profit-sharing arrangements, commissions, consultant fees extra or overtime work payments, overseas differential or quarters, cost of living or dependent education allowances.

² A form of management fee whereby the client pays a set fee for providing professional services. Exclude cost reimbursements, bonuses, overtime work payments, overseas differential or quarters, cost of living, and any other allowances.