Request for Proposal (RFP)
For the Proof of Concept for Tech Talent Development in Ethiopia
announced by JICA

April 2023
Office for STI & DX, Governance and Peacebuilding Department
Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

JICA plans to host an information session for bidders in the week of April 17th, 2023 (GC) to clarify questions related to the PoC and the proposal submission. Send an email to gpgsd@jica.go.jp if you would like to learn about the details of the session.

1. Project Background and Objectives

Japan International Cooperation Agency (**"JICA"**), an implementing agency for Japan's Official Development Assistance (**"ODA"**), believes that cooperation with developing countries in the digital age needs to change fundamentally. As such, JICA has launched the JICA DXLab, an open-source mechanism to facilitate co-creation with digital partners to transform ODA projects with digital technology and innovation.

As part of the JICA DX Lab's attempts, JICA has been organizing a joint co-creation initiative to promote "Digital Ethiopia 2025" to accelerate digital transformation in Ethiopia that enables an inclusive digital economy for sustainable development along with the Ministry of Innovation and Technology (**"MinT"**) of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Safaricom Telecommunications Ethiopia PLC (**"Safaricom"**), and Sumitomo Corporation (**"Sumitomo Co."**) (collectively, **"the Parties"**). As its inaugural initiative, we decided to launch a digital talent development program to foster innovation and address youth unemployment and underemployment issues in Ethiopia.

As a Proof of Concept (**"PoC"**), the program is planning to conduct a pilot phase in 2023 for approximately 50 graduates/students in Computer Science/Software Engineering and related STEM fields in/near Addis Ababa. The PoC will run for about 9 months, tentatively from the end of 05/2023 to 01/2024, and the cohort will focus on developing employable levels of technical and soft skills to start a career as a software engineer primarily at domestic companies and BPO offices, including Safaricom Ethiopia, and ultimately also at international companies. Upon successful completion of the PoC, JICA and the Parties plan to scale the program to train 500 people in 2024 and 1500 in 2025 while expanding the target participants, geographic coverage, focus domains, etc.

2. RFP Purpose

Through this request for proposal (**"RFP"**), JICA looks for a company to serve as a program implementation provider (**"Digital Partner"**) in this PoC and provide technical expertise to co-develop curriculum, attract and select local students, and deliver the program with the support of JICA and the Parties with an aim to close the gap between the skills of university students/graduates and the skills needed for success in the ICT/BPO industries, including the Digital Service Providers.

3. **Eligibility (Business and Technical Requirements)**
   - At least 2 years of experience in providing highly localized full-stack software engineering education programs and professional development services in Ethiopia or similar countries
     o Experience in offering targeted approach for those with Computer Science/Software Engineering and non-CS STEM background.
     o Experience and capabilities in other specialized course tracks, which may become the target skills areas in the following cohorts, would be a plus. Examples include Front-end, Back-end, DevOps, Cloud, Security, Data Analytics, and UX/UI.
   - Deep understanding of the career development paths for software engineers in Ethiopia
   - Experience in offering professional development and career support to prepare overall job readiness and assist with securing employment
   - Is registered in Ethiopia with a legally active license
     o In case the applicant is a non-Ethiopian company but has experience in other similar countries for more than 2 years, provide legal certificates of the relevant document about the partner organization in Ethiopia. See the Submission Format section for details.
   - Capacity to communicate with relevant stakeholders in English
   - Availability from the end of May 2023 to January 2024 to allocate necessary resources for the design and implementation of PoC
     o Willingness to offer continued support for the digital talent development program after the PoC would be a plus
   - Availability of venues with stable infrastructure and high-speed connectivity is highly preferred (See venue requirement below)

4. **Venue Requirement**

Venues for the PoC may be provided or arranged by the Digital Partner with the assistance of JICA and the Parties. The requirement for the venue is as follows:

   - Located in Addis Ababa
     o Preferably accessible with public transport
     o A cafeteria or a food court/stall in proximity will be a plus

- Stable infrastructure, including water and electricity
    o Diesel generator and UPS (uninterruptible power supply) to combat frequent power interruption are required
- High speed internet connectivity (minimum 50mbps connectivity)
- Computers that can be accessed by all program participants
    o Preferably accessible outside the training hours for self-paced learning

If you are not able to provide a venue that meets the above requirements, please include alternative suggestions in the proposal, such as partnering with an academic institution or a co-working space.

5. Related Parties
- Target students:
    1. Graduating CS/Software Engineering undergraduates and graduates with entry-level programming skills who wish to advance their knowledge and skills as junior software engineers to increase their chances of hiring. They need to be committed and available to attend a full-day training for the entire program period.
    2. Graduating Non-CS STEM undergraduates and graduates who wish to enter the software engineers labor market and may join the next program cohort as part of the above 1) group upon completing the intensive training They need to be committed and available to attend a full-day training for the entire program period.
- Contractor: The Digital Partner to be selected through this tender.
- Operator: Company engaged by JICA to facilitate the execution of the PoC. JICA contractor will be the contracting counterparty.

6. Scope of Work
(1) Design and delivery of the training program
    a. Assist JICA and the Parties with the co-development of the curriculum, contents, and operating model of the PoC.
        - Two separate tracks should be provided for the abovementioned target groups, though there may be an overlap in the curriculum and shared activities.
        - While the PoC should be primarily driven in person in a classroom environment, we welcome any suggestions for a hybrid-remote structure so that we can test its effectiveness.
            • In the PoC design phase, the Digital Partner should actively consider utilizing Safaricom's digital learning aggregation platform.
        - The PoC ideally includes practical learning experiences for soft skills acquisition, including exposure to a teamwork environment.
    b. Deliver the program and manage daily executions of the program to ensure smooth operations.

c. Offer professional development and career support to assist students with securing employment at companies where students can leverage relevant skillsets acquired through this PoC.
   - Examples include but are not limited to resume/cover letter clinic, assistance with coding test, technical/general interview prep, and referrals/employer pipeline.
d. Conduct a robust assessment of students in terms of the level of technical fluency and job readiness.
e. (Optional) Support students in job search and placement including finding suitable job opportunities, introducing to potential employers, etc.
f. If relevant, grant an appropriate level of permission to utilize and access the learning management platform to the JICA and Parties and the students participating in the PoC to add visibility to the learning/project progress.

(2) Venue management
g. Provide venues for the PoC or assist JICA and the Parties with their selection.
h. Manage classrooms to maintain a conducive environment for 50 students to study software engineering, including necessary utility and high-speed connectivity.
i. Escalate issues with the venues to JICA and addresses conflicts in a timely manner.
j. (Optional) May provide assistance with arranging transportation for students.

(3) Recruitment and selection
k. Conduct student outreach and screening based on the principles of equality and fairness.
   - This program welcomes students of all races, religions, genders, and other legally protected status.
   - The possession of personal computers will not be a prerequisite for student selection. We actively seek opportunities to make the program available for underserved candidates with limited access to laptops and/or the existing education programs in the market.

(4) Reporting and others
l. Generate interim and final reports on the project status and overall progress for the relevant stakeholders.
m. Organize / participate in the following reporting sessions:
   - Weekly meetings with JICA and the Parties' working members
   - An interim review session with extended members of JICA and the Parties
   - A final reporting session with extended members of JICA and the Parties
   - JICA DXLab seminars to be held both internally with JICA investment and evaluation teams, and externally with relevant stakeholders and potential clients interested in the Digital Partner's solution.

7. **Deliverables**
   a. Deliverables (in English)

      i. Monthly reports summarizing key activities, achievement, challenges faced in the month and plans for the following months

     ii. One final report that includes but not limited to:
1. An outline of the PoC results, including a list of alumni's post-program employment records
2. Details of the PoC activities, including the curriculums
3. Evaluation of the PoC along with key performance indicators
4. Technical, operational and strategic recommendations
5. A preliminary strategy proposal for the next phases

b. Method of submission
      i. Electronic data

8. Timeline (Tentative)

(1) Contract Period
- Approximately 9 months from the end of May 2023 to January 2024
- Other key milestones are as follows:
   o Late May to late July 2023: Curriculum development
   o Late May to June 2023: Mobilize the teaching team
   o Mid-June to July2023: Student selection
   o Late July 2023 to January 2024: Program delivery
   o Last 1-2 weeks: Wrap up and discuss next steps

(2) Bidding and contractual process
- Opening of the proposal: April 13, 2023
- Closing date and time for submission of proposal: April 27, 2023
   o Interviews and Q&A sessions will be conducted on a rolling basis
- Award Notice: Mid-late May 2023
- Signature of contract: End May 2023

9. Proposal Evaluation

The selection process will be four-folds: 1) Candidates to submit responses to the RFP in a form of the pitch deck; 2) JICA to shortlist candidates for presentation, 3) Shortlisted candidates to give an oral presentation/Q&A in English based on the submitted pitch deck and; 4) JICA to select the Digital Partner based on the results of the submitted documents and pitch/Q&A.

The Digital Partner candidates will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1) Organizational capacity

- Technical requirements

- o Track record of successfully conducting the relevant training provided in the past, including the relevance and quality of the existing software engineering courses and professional development assistance
    - o Outcomes achieved in terms of job readiness and securing employment
- Financial standing

2) Program proposal

- Team structure and the qualifications of the core team
- Operating/delivery model for the work defined in the Scope of Work
    - o While the PoC should be primarily driven in person, we welcome any suggestions for complementing it with asynchronous learning, including the use of the existing digital contents library.
- Proposed program contents for the target students
    - o Contents proposal need to cover technical/soft skills and professional development. While optional, you may also suggest a post-program job placement program.
    - o Applicants are highly encouraged to leverage the company's existing resources to increase access to the labor market, including job marketplace and talent pipeline.
- A preliminary brief suggestion on the potential commercial business model to sustain the operation of the digital talent development program after the PoC

Note the proposal should include two separate tracks for the two target groups, though there may be an overlap in the curriculum and shared activities. See "5. Related Parties" for detailed information about target students.

3) Venue proposal

The proposal should clearly outline the 1) infrastructure and connectivity; 2) PC availability and; 3) transportation access and neighborhood information of the suggested venue (either in-house or sourced externally). You may suggest separate classrooms to accommodate the two aforementioned student groups.

Note that the venue proposal may be excluded from the evaluation criteria depending on the course of ongoing venue search by the Parties.

10. Submission Format

Electronic submission must be received at gpgsd@jica.go.jp by the latest 23:59 Japan Standard Time on 27th April 2023. The email subject needs to be changed to "RFP-Ethiopia-PoC", followed by your company name (for instance, RFP-Ethiopia-PoC-Name).

The submission shall consist of the two separate files, Overview of General Information and Proposal Pitch Deck, both in the form of PDF. Note that all submission materials need to be prepared in English.

a. Overview of General Information (PDF format)

Provide all the following information by filling out the form provided in the Attachment. Where relevant, include the corresponding document in the same file and submit a merged PDF file.

    a. Contact information
    b. Certification of incorporation
    c. Tax certificate
    d. Business license
    e. Audited financial statement for the last 2 years
    f. Company description
    g. Years of experience in providing software engineer education/training
    h. Any other additional information that will facilitate our evaluation of the company's capacity

b. Proposal Pitch Deck (PDF format)

Your company's description and business/technical qualifications should be presented concisely in this order to include the following information:

    a. Company overview
- This may include but is not limited to the company's history, structure and management, number of employees, location, and management policy.

    b. Organizational capacity
      i. Years of experience in delivering education programs to develop tech/digital talents
      ii. An overview of the relevant courses, including focus skills, target participants, number of the students and pre-requisite
      iii. An overview of professional development services, if any
      iv. Number of students who completed the programs and their employment rate post-program
      v. An overview of the learning management platform used in your programs, if any
      vi. Any similar partnerships in the past or ongoing affiliations with relevant professional or academic bodies, if any

    c. Technical proposal
      i. Team structure and the qualifications of the core team, including their education and employment history

        ii. Operating/delivery model for the work defined in the Scope of Work

       iii. Proposed program contents for the target students

       iv. Brief suggestions on the post-PoC financing scheme

   d. Venue proposal during the PoC

       i. Infrastructure and internet connectivity

       ii. PC availability

       iii. Transportation access and neighborhood information

   e. Financial proposal with a breakdown of the following items

       i. Expenses for human resources

       ii. Cost for venues and other necessary equipment/utility

       iii. Any other cost

Bidders can make inquiries through email to gpgsd@jica.go.jp. For any inquiry, the email subject must be changed to "Inquiry-Ethiopia-PoC", followed by your company name (e.g., "Inquiry-Ethiopia-PoC-Name). The deadline for receipt of inquiry is 23:59 April 20th Japan Standard Time.

11. Budget ceiling

The maximum budget for the services is USD100,000 including all taxes and expenses.

12. Confidential Information

Any confidential information in the proposal response should be marked accordingly.

13. Intellectual Property and Other Rights

   a. The intellectual property rights of Deliverables set out in "7. Deliverables" created by the Digital Partner for this PoC shall be assigned to JICA (or party designated by JICA) upon completion of the inspection.

   b. The intellectual property rights of the Digital Partner that existed before the start of this work under this agreement shall remain with the Digital Partner.

   c. The intellectual property of the curriculum jointly developed by the Digital Partner and Safaricom specifically for the purpose of this PoC will be co-owned by the Digital Partner and Safaricom, unless negotiated otherwise before or during the PoC.

   d. The handling of personal information and other data obtained with necessary consent and approval for use during the PoC shall be conducted in accordance with all applicable local and international laws, rules and guidelines.

   e. The consideration for the assignment of rights set forth in the preceding paragraph a. shall be included in the commission fee.

f. Items a) through d) above shall survive the termination of this Agreement.

14. Other considerations

a. The Digital Partner will grant JICA and Safaricom access to view the curriculum and operating model free of charge for approximately six months after the PoC period, unless agreed otherwise between the Digital Partner and JICA/the Parties during PoC. The Digital Partner will also cooperate in making these available free of charge or for a fee for an additional six months, if requested by Safaricom.

b. b. In case of using the Digital Partner's learning management system during the PoC, the Digital Partner will also grant JICA and Safaricom access to the anonymized data at free of charge for approximately six months after the PoC period, unless agreed otherwise between the Digital Partner and JICA/the Parties during PoC.

Attachment

Form for The Overview of General Information

Electronic submission must be received at gpgsd@jica.go.jp by the latest 23:59 Japan Standard Time on 27th April 2023. The email subject needs to be changed to "RFP-Ethiopia-PoC", followed by your company name (for instance, RFP-Ethiopia-PoC-Name). The submission shall consist of two separate files, Overview of General Information and Proposal Pitch Deck, both in the form of PDF. In order to be considered for funding, submission documents must be prepared in English and fulfil each of the following items.

Fill out this form and include it as a cover page of the Overview of General Information.

Category	Item	Check/ Completed
Contact information	Main contact person and title: Email address: Direct telephone number with a country code:	
Company description	Provide a company description in 200 words:	

Company registration certificate in Ethiopia	Please include a copy in the same PDF file.	
Active business license	Please include a copy in the same PDF file.	
At least 2 years of audited financial statements	Please include a copy in the same PDF file.	
Tax certificate	Please include a copy in the same PDF file.	
Any other additional information (optional)	Please include a copy in the same PDF file. Otherwise, please elaborate.	