

To: Respondents

Date: December 7, 2020 (*Originally released July 24, 2020; this is the amended version*)

From: Procurement and Partnerships Team, INVEST Project; Implemented by DAI Global, LLC

Subject: Expression of Interest INVEST-002: Vietnam Renewable Energy Transaction Assistance Fund (Amended)

Due: **2:00PM EST on January 15, 2021 (2:00AM ICT on January 16, 2021)**

Dear Prospective Partner:

Through this Expression of Interest (EOI), INVEST, on behalf of USAID/Vietnam, is offering in-kind technical assistance for renewable energy projects in Vietnam. This activity is based on the premise that if risk/transaction costs can be offset with USAID support, then renewable energy developers will be more likely to invest in new projects that help Vietnam meet its energy needs via sustainable sources.

In order to access this in-kind assistance, firms should submit an EOI that outlines the kind of support needed to offset risk/transaction costs, how USAID support for this will help accelerate or de-risk the proposed renewable energy project, and the development impact and estimated additional output the project will/could have should the EOI be selected. Examples of technical assistance support include feasibility studies, investment transaction advisory services, environmental analyses, legal advisory services, or other activities.

Depending on the focus of the selected EOIs, INVEST will procure the services directly and provide them as in-kind technical assistance to the selected firms. Concepts should be for a discrete activity, which should not exceed \$300,000 in value. However, the activity may be part of a larger activity, which should be explained in the concept note.

Potential and interested partners are requested to submit an Expression of Interest (i.e. concept note) detailing their renewable energy project(s) following the instructions below.

Expression of Interest Summary

For more details on the Expression of Interest process, submission requirements, and evaluation details, please see corresponding sections in the document below.

Submission Requirements	<p>Interested firms should submit a PowerPoint presentation, maximum 10 slides in English, that includes a description of:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The applicant’s experience working in the renewable energy sector in Vietnam or the region. 2. The proposed renewable energy project and its potential impact. 3. The specific obstacle or need that the project is facing that external assistance would help address. 4. The specific activity that the firm is requesting support for. 5. How the project will benefit vulnerable or underserved populations. 6. Additional information on the applicant’s company, including gender inclusion strategies, if applicable.
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Written Q&A	<p>INVEST will provide clarification on written questions. Questions must be submitted electronically no later than 2:00 AM ICT on Tuesday, December 15, 2020 (2:00 PM EST on Monday, December 14, 2020) via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com. Answers to these questions will be sent to bidders on Friday, December 18, 2020 before the virtual Q&A session. Questions may be submitted in English or Vietnamese.</p>
Virtual Questions and Answers (Q&A)	<p>INVEST will host a virtual Q&A session, simultaneously translated in English and Vietnamese on December 22, 2020 at 8:00am ICT (December 21, 2020 at 8:00pm EST). Summarized responses to the written Q&A session will be shared during this meeting and will also provide offerors an opportunity to ask further questions. The session will be recorded and available online after the session.</p> <p>If you would like to join the Q&A session, please send your contact information to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com and VanAnh_Do@dai.com.</p>
Deadline for EOI Submissions	<p>EOIs are due 2:00 AM ICT on Saturday, January 16, 2021 (2:00 PM EST on Friday, January 15, 2021)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INVEST_Procurement@dai.com, copying Matthew_Mitchell@dai.com and Carly_Gorelick@dai.com. • The email subject line should read: [Firm Name], Submission under EOI INVEST-002 Vietnam Renewable Energy Transaction Assistance Fund”. <p>Proposals must be in English. Please limit file submissions to 10 megabytes or less.</p>
Anticipated Budget	<p>The transaction assistance activity request should not exceed \$300,000.</p>

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST INVEST-002 (Amended): Vietnam Renewable Energy Transaction Assistance Fund

Introduction

Through the INVEST Project, USAID seeks to unlock the potential of the private sector to drive inclusive growth in countries around the world. Increasingly, private investors and businesses are looking to emerging markets for better returns and new market opportunities. Encouraging private investment and activity in high-impact areas important to USAID, such as agriculture, financial services, infrastructure, energy, clean water, health, and education requires new forms of collaboration between USAID and the private sector.

Specifically, USAID can leverage its resources to help raise awareness of investment opportunities, lower transaction costs, and mitigate the risk of investments that generate positive social, economic, and environmental impact.

In support of its efforts to mobilize private investment within the agency, the USAID Office of Private Capital and Microenterprise (USAID/PCM) awarded the INVEST contract to DAI in September of 2017. Through INVEST's flexible buy-in mechanism, USAID Missions and Operating Units can access an unprecedented network of firms and individuals that have the range of technical expertise needed to identify opportunities and effectively mobilize private capital toward development priorities.

USAID/Vietnam launched the INVEST Activity in August 2019 to explore and facilitate private investments in the energy, healthcare, education, and infrastructure sectors. The Renewable Energy Transaction Assistance Fund (the subject fund of this EOI) was designed to offset transaction costs and reduce the risk profiles of renewable energy projects for American, Vietnamese, and regional firms who are hesitant to invest or unable to secure investment in the current climate. USAID and INVEST believe that with the right incentives, renewable energy companies will be more likely to invest in renewable energy projects to help Vietnam meet its energy needs via sustainable sources.

Depending on the obstacles or needs stated in the EOIs, INVEST will procure and provide as in-kind support external expertise to help address the specific obstacle or need identified. Types of support include, but are not limited to, pre-feasibility and feasibility studies, legal analyses/risk assessments, environmental analyses, investment transaction advisory services, or other discrete activities that would provide a boost to moving the project forward. USAID and INVEST believe that with the right incentives, clean and renewable energy companies will be more likely to invest in new projects to help Vietnam meet its energy needs via sustainable sources.

Background

According to the USAID/Vietnam Country Development Cooperation Strategy 2020 to 2025¹, in order to keep pace with increasing energy demand, electricity sector investments will need to increase substantially, to around \$8–10 billion annually through 2030. Without foreign capital, technology and expertise, the Government of Vietnam predicts power shortages beginning in 2021, which will negatively impact economic growth. To meet both the need for electricity and address the climate impacts of traditional energy sources, the Government of Vietnam is committed to expanding the use of renewable energy; for example, over the past few years the country supported rapid private-sector solar power development totaling from 5-10 percent of Vietnam's energy capacity.

¹ USAID/Vietnam Country Development Cooperation Strategy (CDCS), May 29, 2020 to May 29, 2025.

Nevertheless, developers and investors have identified barriers to renewable energy project development, including but not limited to policies and regulations, financing, legal frameworks, and high transaction costs. Additionally, the government has yet to approve the Power Development Master Plan 8 (PDP-8); and while the PDP-8 strongly emphasizes renewable energy, the delay in approval, now expected in March 2021, has made some developers and investors more reticent to move forward.

To help accelerate renewable energy project development, Vietnam INVEST will provide in-kind support to developers, investors, and other organizations with proposed projects in Vietnam. American, Vietnamese, or regional firms, particularly those with sustainable, socially impactful renewable energy projects, are encouraged to apply.

Objectives and Selection Process

The purpose of this call for Expressions of Interest concept notes is to:

- a) Validate the challenges that developers and investors face in advancing their renewable energy projects;
- b) Identify a concrete need or activity that would help de-risk and/or accelerate a project;
- c) Select projects that INVEST can support via direct, discrete in-kind assistance.

Following the selection process, INVEST will work with firms to develop a scope of work for the requested activity. To ensure the best quality provider and transparency, INVEST will competitively procure the service on behalf of the selected firm(s).

Please note that INVEST **cannot provide cash grants directly to a firm** but can provide in-kind support.

What types of activities would be eligible for in-kind support?

- Feasibility studies
- Environmental analyses
- Due diligence
- Legal advisory services
- Investment transaction advisory services
- Other analyses or specific technical assistance that would help advance the project. The above activities are an illustrative list, but applicants are also encouraged to suggest activities which align best with their needs

What energy types are eligible?

Solar, wind, hydropower, geothermal, and biomass projects, as well as waste to energy projects, are eligible for consideration.

Who May Respond?

Renewable energy developers and investors based in Vietnam, the United States or the Southeast Asian region. Respondents must be organizations, companies or firms, and not individuals or government entities. Projects must be in Vietnam.

Evaluation of Proposals

The following criteria will be applied to all Expressions of Interest. Submissions are not evaluated against other submissions, but solely against the following evaluation criteria:

1. Demonstrated understanding of the opportunities and weaknesses in the renewable energy sector in Vietnam.

2. Clear description of the renewable energy project being developed.
3. Clarity in describing the request for in-kind support and how it will help advance the overall renewable energy project.
4. Estimated increase in production of clean energy in Vietnam, to be measured in estimated megawatts (mW) to be generated by proposed project.
5. Potential contribution to broader development impacts and inclusion, including community-level engagement and benefits to underserved populations, gender integration programs implemented by the respondent organization, and increase in economic activities as a result of the renewable energy project.²

Submissions are not evaluated against each other but solely against the criteria outlined above.

Submission and Formatting Instructions

Expressions of Interest must be submitted no later than Saturday, **January 16, 2021 2:00 AM ICT (Friday, January 15, 2021 2:00 PM EST)**. Submissions must:

- Be in English;
- Be submitted via email to the following email addresses: INVEST_Procurement@dai.com, copying Matthew_Mitchell@dai.com and Carly_Gorelick@dai.com.
- Use 12 point font or larger, with legible graphics;
- Include two attachments in the submission email, one in .ppt and one in .pdf format; and
- Include a title slide (not counted against slide limit) with the following information: Respondent Organization Name; Contact Information; Partner Organization(s); Response Title; and Date of Submission.
- Be no longer than ten (10) PowerPoint slides in length and include the following (please note that the title slide does not count toward the slide limit):

Challenges and Opportunities in Vietnam’s Renewable Energy Sector: Respondents must include a description of their firm and its experience working in the renewable energy sector in Vietnam and/or the region. Slide(s) should address the following:

- Prior and current experience in developing and carrying out renewable energy projects in Vietnam or the region.
- Challenges and obstacles that the firm is currently facing in advancing renewable energy projects (regulatory, financial, market, etc.), how they are directly impacting a potential project, and what you have done/are doing to address them.
- If a challenge identified is related to securing investment, explain the type of investment(s) sought – debt, equity, grants – and what potential investors have identified as the barriers.

The Renewable Energy Project. These slide(s) should describe the overall renewable energy project, including:

² Firm has in place or is actively developing a gender integration plan to recruit, hire, maintain, and promote women in their firm and has a track record of consistent and equitable community engagement to ensure that proposed projects have inclusive input from the population. Please note that because the firm will not be distributing energy, this does not cover women’s access to electricity.

- Location (or possible locations if not yet determined).
- Description of population that would benefit; if benefits low-income communities (rural or urban), or other underserved populations, please elaborate.
- Renewable energy type/technology; if innovative or new to Vietnam, please elaborate, including risks and opportunities.
- Estimated mW of renewable energy that would be generated.
- What stage the project is in (pre-feasibility, feasibility, early implementation, late implementation, etc.), and the projected timeline to completion.
- A short description of the partners and/or subcontractors you anticipate engaging in the project (if available or known).
- Anticipated total cost of the project (total overall investment of the project, inclusive of requested support from INVEST).

The Specific Request for Support

This section should describe the specific activity for which you are requesting in-kind support to carry out. As mentioned, the objective of this EOI is to address a concrete, discrete need or activity that would help de-risk the project and help accelerate the project along its projected timeline. These slides should include:

- A clear description of the assistance/support requested.
- Explanation of how this in-kind support will help advance the renewable energy project, in particular how it incentivizes additional investment.
- Cost estimate for the requested in-kind support; may be based on previous project experiences or services provided.
- Why USAID support is beneficial, timely, and/or opportune for moving the project forward.

Broader Development Impacts

In addition to renewable energy objectives, USAID is also interested in advancing social economic, and gender inclusion. The applicant should describe the population that would benefit from increased access to energy, and include potential economic and local market development impacts the project would have. Additionally, include any information on how your company's practices demonstrate a commitment to social inclusion, for example recruiting and retaining women and other traditionally underrepresented groups, a focus on investing in underserved communities, or other relevant information about your firm.

Virtual Questions and Answers (Q&A) Session

To address applicant's questions and provide clarification on the EOI process, INVEST will offer a virtual Q&A session, with simultaneous translation in English and Vietnamese, December 22, 2020 at 8:00 am ICT (December 21, 2020 at 8pm EST). During the Q&A, the INVEST team will give an overview of the INVEST project and review the objectives of this EOI. Participants in the Q&A will be welcome to ask any questions regarding the EOI submission process.

The Q&A session will be recorded and be made available to all interested applicants after the virtual session.

If you would like to join the Q&A session, please send your contact information to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com and VanAnh_Do@dai.com. Access and dial details for the Q&A will be shared with participants 24 hours before the event.

Selection Process

INVEST and USAID/Vietnam will review all Expressions of Interest received in accordance with the guidelines and criteria in this solicitation. INVEST reserves the right to exclude any EOIs that do not meet the guidelines. Please note that INVEST is unable to provide detailed feedback to those EOIs that are not selected.

Step 1: INVEST and USAID will shortlist selected EOIs, and unsuccessful respondents will be notified. Successful applicants will be contacted by INVEST.

Step 2: INVEST and the selected applicant(s) will develop Scopes of Work that detail the specific in-kind activity that INVEST will support, timeline, and expected deliverables.

Step 3: INVEST will release Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the specific activities each selected EOI requires, and subcontract with service providers on the partners' behalf.

***NOTE:** While INVEST and USAID are looking for renewable energy projects to be fully realized, firms are under no obligation to move forward with their project if it is no longer viable.*

Protection of Information

We request that Expressions of Interest responses be free of any intellectual property that the applicant wishes to protect. Should offerors wish to include proprietary intellectual property that they believe would be helpful for INVEST and USAID, please note the proprietary nature of such information. Costing information will be kept confidential and will not be shared beyond INVEST and USAID.

Issuance of this EOI does not constitute a commitment, award, or engagement on the part of DAI nor does it commit DAI to any future commitment, award, or engagement.