Request for Proposals (RFP)

To: Offerors
From: Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (the Global Partnership)/United Nations Foundation (UNF)
Subject: Investment case for data financing

RFP Issue Date: 10 June, 2022
RFP Closing Date: 23 June, 2022
RFP Closing Time: 17:00 hours U.S. Eastern Time.
Performance Period: 8 weeks

We are looking for a highly experienced consulting firm to produce an investment case to drive investments in data systems and predictive analytics through commitments to the World Bank Global Data Facility and the UN Complex Risk Analytics Fund. The firm should have demonstrated experience in calculating the return on public sector investments and knowledge of data and digital transformation in the international development and humanitarian sector.

The firm will work closely with the leadership of the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data (the Global Partnership) and with the United Nations (UN) and the World Bank Group (World Bank) to develop the investment case which will underpin an advocacy campaign to generate commitments from governments, foundations, the private sector and philanthropists.

The Global Partnership, United Nations and World Bank Group invites qualified firms (“Offerors”) to submit a proposal for the requested services. The Contract resulting from this award will be a Services Agreement.

Offerors are encouraged to read this RFP in its entirety, paying specific attention to the scope of services, instructions, and requirements. Issuance of this solicitation does not, in any way, obligate UNF to award a contract, nor will UNF pay for any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal. The agreement resulting from this RFP will be provided to the most responsive Offeror whose offer will be the most advantageous to the Global Partnership/UNF/UN/World Bank Group in terms of cost, functionality, and other factors as specified in this RFP.
Section 1: Background and purpose

Background: Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data
The Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data is a fast-growing, dynamic international partnership bringing together over 650 different organizations including governments, UN agencies, private companies, civil society organizations, and many others. The Global Partnership convenes, connects and catalyzes action to address the problems of poor data use, access, quality and production, and to work with stakeholders to fully harness the new opportunities of the data revolution in the service of sustainable development. For more information, please visit www.data4sdgs.org.

Background: United Nations Foundation
The United Nations Foundation links the UN’s work with others around the world, mobilizing the energy and expertise of business and non-governmental organizations to help the UN tackle issues including climate change, data, global health, peace and security, women’s empowerment, poverty eradication, energy access, and U.S.-UN relations. The United Nations Foundation hosts and provides administrative, financial and contractual services for the Global Partnership. For more information, visit www.unfoundation.org.

Context
Data is a key resource to power progress towards achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and responding more effectively to global crises. Basing policy on the best evidence is a critical part of accelerating progress, tackling emergencies, and creating the public support and practical partnerships that make progress possible.

However, investments in data in the public sector remain fragmented, insufficient, and uncoordinated. Despite the huge opportunities of the data revolution, funding for data from external sources has remained almost static for nearly 10 years. There are many governments who lack the capacity to fully benefit from the opportunities of the data revolution, and as a result their populations risk falling further behind in the global battles to protect health, the planet and human progress. Data gaps limit the ability of governments and international partners to react to fast moving crises caused by the pandemic, climate change and conflict. The emerging food price crisis is just the latest example.

Without investment in data, it will be impossible to judge how countries are doing on their path towards achieving the SDGs, or whether progress is backsliding, including on climate, health, and other crises. A recent UN/World Bank survey suggested that in two-thirds of low and lower-middle income countries statistical agencies lack sufficient resources to meet the demands for data caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

We urgently need a collective political effort to increase funding for data systems that provide the evidence to power good policy and programs, react swiftly to crises, and combat misinformation. This needs to come from both domestic and external resources, and to be underpinned by the ethics and values that ensure both public- and private-intent data are used for social good.

The World Bank and the UN have both made strong institutional statements around the need for better data systems to underpin progress on global priorities. With the ‘World That Counts’ report in 2014, the
UN’s Independent Expert Group articulated a vision of data as the ‘lifeblood of decision making and the raw material for accountability’. Similarly, the Secretary-General’s Data Strategy highlights the need to identify and leverage “pooled funding for scale” to deliver on priority data actions, mobilize resources and close the funding gap for data needed to deliver on the SDGs and respond to global crises. In 2021, the World Bank’s World Development Report called for the development of integrated national data systems to increase data use and reuse, underpinned by a new social contract for data.

The announcement in late 2021 of both the World Bank’s Global Data Facility (GDF) and the UN’s Complex Risk Analytics Fund (CRAF’s) provides an opportunity to advocate for specific commitments into these mechanisms, and the UN and the World Bank are now committed to leveraging political advocacy on financing for data. The Global Partnership will provide support to plan and execute a strategy aimed at increasing the financing for data systems from both domestic and external resources. We are looking for an experienced firm to produce a compelling investment case to underpin this effort.

Section 2: Scope of Services

The selected firm will produce a compelling investment case to drive multi-year financial commitments to the GDF and CRAF’s. The investment case will include at least the following components:

- Financing needs – This component will bring together existing needs analysis and costing exercises.
- Return on investment – This component will focus on the return on investments in public sector data systems and capacities. It will result in a set of key arguments and strong examples to attract data investments with a specific focus on GDF and CRAF’s investment focus areas. Key research questions may include:

  Outcomes:
  - What is the return on investments in data, data systems, data capital and data use? And how does this play out at a sector level, e.g. how do investments in health systems affect health outcomes?
  - How do investments in data, data systems, data capital, and data use generate improvements in economic growth/reductions in poverty, fragility, and inequality (what is the causal mechanism and how can it be strengthened)?
  - What is the impact of improvements in data, data systems, data capital and data use, on the level and types of private sector investment, both domestic and foreign, and through what channels?
  - How much can improvements in data, data systems, data capital and data use increase the return on investment of ODA, and through what channels?
  - How does investing a proportion of project/program funds in related data, data systems, data capital and data use affect the effectiveness and sustainability of those projects/programs?
  - What are the minimum essential components of a data system that can have impact across key sectors, what impact would it have, how much would it cost, and how much funding is enough?

1 For example: The State of Development Data Funding; The Cape Town Global Action Plan for Sustainable Development Data; Financing Challenges for Developing Statistical Systems.
Modalities:
  o What are the efficiency gains and economies of scale from pooled/at-scale investing in data, data systems, data capital and data use, compared to individual projects or sector specific programs?
  o How will these specific funds support innovation and drive improvements at the systems level in line with global and national priorities?
  ● Description of the international financial architecture for data and the unique role and value-added of pooled funding instruments like GDF and CRAF’d within it.

The Global Partnership will facilitate consultations for the selected firm with a select group of thought leaders and influential decision-makers with deep knowledge of the data for development space, related financial architecture, and past financing efforts, to review and comment on the work as it progresses.

Deliverables
  ● Detailed outline of the investment case and methodology
  ● First draft of the investment case
  ● Final, designed and copyedited, investment case
  ● Two page, designed and copyedited, summary for decision makers
  ● Designed slide deck summary for decision makers

Qualifications
The Global Partnership would look for these qualifications from the lead individual and others likely to be significantly engaged in the work.

Essential
  ● Prior experience in developing investment case for global campaign.
  ● Masters’ degree in economics, econometrics, management, international development, public policy or related field or commensurate years of experience.
  ● Experience with econometric and business case analysis.
  ● Experience in calculating return on investment from public sector expenditure.
  ● Globally recognized expertise in data and statistical systems.
  ● Experience working with technical experts and people from diverse cultures and professional backgrounds.
  ● Excellent research and analytical skills.
  ● Fluency in written and spoken English and ability to work in an environment of diverse languages and cultures.

Desirable
  ● Experience with large scale fundraising efforts in international development and humanitarian sectors.
  ● Experience with investment cases in the international development and humanitarian sectors.

Section 3: RFP Conditions

UNF reserves the right to:
  ● Reject any or all offers and discontinue this RFP process without obligation or liability to any potential Offeror or other party.
• Accept other than the lowest price offered.
• Award a contract on the basis of initial offers received, without discussions or requests for best and final offers.
• Award more than one contract.

Nothing in this RFP is, or should be, relied on by the Offeror as a promise or representation by UNF. UNF does not make any representation or warranty as to the completeness of this RFP or have any liability for any representations (express or implied) contained in, or omissions from, this RFP. This RFP and any replies to any written notifications are transmitted to the Offeror solely for the purposes of the Offeror preparing and submitting a Proposal. Each Offeror shall keep the RFP and its contents confidential.

Any information or materials submitted in response to this RFP and/or as a proposal (whether successful or unsuccessful) shall become the property of UNF and will not be returned. In submitting a proposal, the Offeror must agree that the offer shall remain firm for a period of no less than 120 days from the RFP closing date. Failure to follow the specifications and requirements provided in this RFP may result in disqualification.

Section 4: Proposal Preparation Instructions

Proposals are expected to be comprehensive and include the information set forth below. Elaborate or unnecessarily voluminous proposals are not desired. Proposals must be submitted in English.

1. Proposal narrative, no more than three pages
   The proposal narrative will include:
   • A brief description of the Offeror’s experience and expertise in the field that illustrates overall qualifications and capabilities to meet the terms of the RFP
   • A brief description of the Offeror’s understanding of the scope of services and proposed methodology for the work
   • Any proposals from the Offeror for amendments to the scope of work, with rationale.

2. Resume or CV of each team member for the consultancy

3. List of past and current clients

4. Cost requirements
   The Offeror should include a detailed budget, which at a minimum includes the daily rate and level of effort for each person who will work on the services described above. All budgets must be in U.S. dollars. Do not include costs for travel in the budget, as travel will not be approved.

Proposal Submission: Proposals, including any attachments (limited to 6MB), should be sent electronically in PDF format to: proposals@data4sdgs.org. Be sure to include in the subject line: Investment Case. UNF will not accept proposals received by fax or mail.

All proposals are due by the date and time stated above. Any proposal received after the required time and date specified for receipt shall be considered late and non-responsive. Late proposals will not be evaluated.
Section 5: Selection

The Global Partnership, the UN and World Bank will review candidates with the goal of selecting a consulting firm most advantageous to the successful execution of this work, based on the qualifications listed above, as demonstrated by the resume or CV, proposal narrative, and additional material, if applicable. The Global Partnership will consider the Offeror’s capability to deliver the scope of services, and the feasibility of the approach. The Global Partnership will also consider the overall costs to ensure that they are reasonable to deliver the services. The Global Partnership may meet with one or more Offerors prior to selection.

Section 6: Terms of Payment

Payment terms for the award shall be on a deliverables basis. Payment is dependent upon receipt of valid invoice, and contingent upon successful completion of deliverables and related activities. Payment shall be made in U.S. dollars via check or electronic funds transfer/bank wire. The final payment terms in the contract will control, not this RFP. No advance payments will be provided.