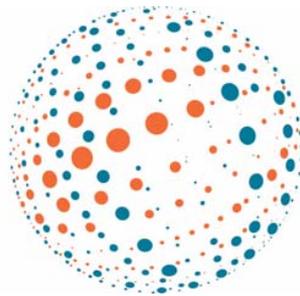


**REQUEST FOR INFORMATION
ISSUED BY**

NETHOPE
COMMITTED TO IMPROVING THE HUMAN CONDITION



GLOBAL BROADBAND AND INNOVATIONS ALLIANCE (GBI)
Reference: USAID Cooperative Agreement No. AID-CIO-A-10-00001

LAST MILE PROGRAM IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

September 2016

NETHOPE GLOBAL BROADBAND INNOVATIONS ALLIANCE

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI) - LAST MILE PROGRAM IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

RFI # 05-09/2016

PURPOSE

The NetHope Global Broadband Innovations Alliance (hereinafter NetHope or GBI) invites initial estimates from qualified firms and individuals to provide pricing information for have broadband Internet provided to the unconnected or lightly connected specific areas in DRC.

This document is not a tender. The sole purpose of this RFI is to inform estimated budgeting parameters for a possible future procurement and to develop a clearer understanding of the relationship between system requirements and costs.

NetHope is pleased to invite you to participate and has developed this RFI for your review. Please submit response by **21 October 2016**.

NetHope requires that suppliers respond to the RFI in the manner the information is requested. This does not preclude the addition of clarifying comments, explanations or remarks by the supplier.

The RFI also explains where and when to submit your response along with a process for asking questions.

GBI is a program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID); NetHope is the implementing partner of the GBI. However, in issuing this RFI, NetHope is not acting as an agent of USAID. Under no circumstances will NetHope or USAID be liable for any costs incurred by any Vendor in responding to this RFI nor will NetHope or USAID be liable for any anticipated outcome from the submission of information in response to this request. NetHope also reserves the right to make no award related to this request in the future.

INDEX - The following are contained in this RFI:

Section I	Background/Information/Schedule of Events
Section II	Response Submittal Guidelines
Section III	Additional Questions
Attachment A	General System Requirements
Attachment B	Terms and Conditions
Attachment C	Additional Business Information

SECTION I: BACKGROUND/INFORMATION/SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Activities conducted by the GBI Alliance are split into two broad categories: (a) Access and (b) Applications.

- For Access projects, the GBI Alliance works with USAID Missions and implementing partners to bring affordable, reliable, and competitively serviced broadband (voice and data) to rural areas in USAID priority countries. This can be achieved in many ways including, but not limited to, competition, improved transparency in the telecommunications regulatory process, the introduction of new technologies, the availability of radio spectrum for use by new broadband network technologies, and the use of energy-efficient telecommunications equipment.
- For Applications projects, the GBI Alliance capitalizes on efficiencies that are introduced through technology to achieve USAID's core objectives in health, humanitarian response, democracy and governance, economic growth and digital inclusion, gender equality, and education. Applications projects are often coupled with Access projects—demonstrating access and applications drive the demand and adoption of each other. The GBI Alliance's Jamaica TV White Space (TVWS) project, for example, supports education efforts, and the GBI Alliance's mobile money efforts require the extension of mobile networks.

Reason for this RFI

The GBI Alliance would like to improve connectivity in the DRC and is looking to receive up to US\$250,000 in funding from USAID to facilitate the build-out of rural networks. In the end, GBI is not only trying to have broadband Internet provided to the unconnected or lightly connected, but also to prove out the model of demand aggregation where large collections of users can be combined to lower the overall cost to end-recipients.

GBI CONTACT:

Questions regarding the content or intent of this RFI or on procedural matters should be addressed in writing by email to: procurementgbi@nethope.org.

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

September 23, 2016
October 21, 2016

Release of RFI
RFI Closes, 10:00 A.M. EDT USA

SECTION II: RESPONSE SUBMITTAL GUIDELINES

Respondents are asked to review the general system requirements outlined in Attachment A and to provide a written response to a solution description of no more than 5 technical pages (not including cover page) that includes:

- An integrated, coherent business, technical and operational plan to sustainably deliver service to anchor NGO facilities as well as underserved communities (see note above regarding geographies to be served) in the DRC.
- Explanation of the last mile broadband challenge that the service provider perceives to be addressing (in other words – details how their approach solves a long-standing issue of rural connectivity).
- Clear articulation of innovative proposal elements, e.g., description of new technologies, new business model, new power solutions, etc.
- Proposed network specifications and architecture including guaranteed throughput per location.
- Provide pricing/cost scheduled for broadband service delivery (individual and organizational).
- Key performance metrics, including throughput, latency, uptime, reliability, etc.
- Network service and maintenance plan.
- Capabilities statement, citing relevant examples and case studies/rural markets that the service provider has successfully served in the DRC/Africa and other challenging environments.
- Project budget with detailed description of resources the service provider is willing to commit to the project, as well as what resources would they need from GBI; (Please include as Annex: This is not counted against the five page limit).
- Corporate background and key points of contact. (Please include as Annex: This is not counted against the five page limit).

DUE DATE - Quotes must be typewritten and submitted to the following e-mail address: procurementgbi@nethope.org.

Responses are due no later than 10:00 A.M. EST USA on **21 October 2016**.

SECTION III: PROGRAM UNDERSTANDING

When NetHope and the Global VSAT Forum (GVF) evaluate responses, we will seek to understand the following elements to demonstrate to USAID that the program has merit:

1. **Project Rationale:** Why the proposed approach will solve a rural broadband challenge?
2. **Sustainable and scalable:** The degree to which sustainable and scalable business and technical models are being demonstrated or rolled out successfully. Any proposal must describe convincingly how the approach can and will be scalable both technically and business-wise and provide timeline for scaling.
3. **Network design and performance:** what service levels are included in the offering? Does the proposed design take factors such as reliability, system throughput, end-user experience?
4. **Leveraging Funds:** What kinds of resources does the partnership bring beyond the USAID resources? The proposed approach must have at least 1:1 leveraging of resources.
5. **Development outcome:** Activity must propose a concrete development outcome, ideally tied to outcomes/objectives already targeted by the relevant USAID Mission, e.g., increasing the development impact of a USAID program, connecting NGOs and the local community¹.
6. **M&E:** Approach includes a lean but meaningful monitoring and evaluation plan to determine if scalability and replicability are feasible and realistic. The M&E plan can be executed internally or by a knowledgeable third-party.
7. **Timing:** One goal of GBI is to move quickly. Is there a reasonable and persuasive plan for (for example) a turnkey project that can be implemented in the immediate or near term?

¹ USAID Country Development Cooperation Strategies (CDCS) are a useful resource in determining key objectives for individual country missions. The CDCS for the DRC Mission can be found at <https://www.usaid.gov/documents/1860/democratic-republic-congo-country-development-content-strategy-2015-2019>

Attachment A

ADDITIONAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Two Global VSAT Forum (GVF) partner organizations in the humanitarian sector have requested information for satellite-enabled connectivity solutions in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The Global Broadband and Innovations (GBI) Alliance is a partnership between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and NetHope that seeks to apply ICT solutions across the developing world. The GBI program focuses on connectivity, mobile and innovative solutions to broadband challenges with priority given to extending the reach of networks into rural areas. With up to four billion people around the world without Internet, GBI is one of many entities helping to solve rural broadband challenges and is seeking input on expanding ICT access through partnerships with leading communications and ICT companies from around the world. The GBI Alliance has core funding provided by USAID and is implemented by NetHope. NetHope is an association of 49 of the world's largest Internet Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs). These NGOs have operations in more than 180 countries.

Examples of Last Mile Access projects include:

- In the Kenya Dadaab Connectivity Project, the GBI team expanded connectivity within the world's largest refugee camp. The GBI Alliance and its partners invested in five local community centers supporting education, medical programs, Internet access, and youth-related projects; this also included the implementation of value-added applications including VoIP, video conferencing, and file services to the target community center. The GBI team optimized the network to improve reliability, sustainability, and scalability and transitioning management to the DadaabNet team and local Internet Service Providers (ISPs). Network capacity is increased and customers are now ordering and expanding services in the community without the need for further intervention.
- USAID through the GBI Alliance has adopted a holistic approach to broadband and application deployment in Indonesia, working with the Government of Indonesia in drafting and implementing an ambitious National Broadband Plan. As part of this initiative, GBI has supported a cost-effective TV White Space pilot which has migrated into a low-cost, rural, wireless access solution with a deployment schedule of 800 rural sites.
- The GBI Alliance partnered with Mawingu Networks, an innovative rural-focused wireless enterprise in Kenya, to support their affordable access solution to deliver nomadic broadband and off-grid electricity in rural contexts. The initial GBI Alliance investment facilitated network expansion covering an area of more than a 1,000 Km² rural area in a region that mainstream telecom operators previously refused to serve.

- The GBI Alliance partnered with the Government of Jamaica, Microsoft, and a local wireless solutions company to pilot TV White Space technology and connect more than 30 schools, libraries, and other community locations in rural Jamaica.

The Importance and Opportunity of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

The DRC is a country profoundly in need of robust broadband Internet development. Using Budde Report statistics from 2014, the country has an Internet penetration figure of 3.2% and a mobile penetration of 44%. Given a largely untapped market of nearly 80 million people and low baseline Internet penetration figures, the DRC is a significant potential market for a broad array of advanced telecommunications services across its 2.3m square kilometers.

Geography to be Served

NetHope has more than ten international NGO members operating in over eighty locations spread across the DRC, most of which are using VSAT to communicate. Some of the NGO operating sites are within line of sight of one another, but most are not. While GBI members are found in Bandundu, Bas-Congo, Equateur, Ksai-Occidental, Kasai-Oriental, Maniema, Oriental, they are concentrated in four primary areas – Kinshasa, North Kivu, South Kivu, and the Katanga. The aggregate amount of bandwidth that NetHope members procure on a monthly basis is more than 100 MegaBytes.

A key factor that would distinguish this initiative from other similar initiatives is that NetHope wants to leverage its membership base as commercial “anchor tenants” to encourage service providers to not only provide the NGO community with reliable and dedicated broadband, but also to expand access into the adjacent local communities that NetHope members serve. As such, the RFI isn’t only about service to members, but creating a way that the communities in which the members serve can also have broadband Internet as a way to close the global Internet gap. For example, if Goma is currently being served by the ISP community, respondents should focus their response on unserved areas *outside* of Goma or Bukavu, other regions currently without service for example. Service provider should also be able to offer services to NGOs in other areas such as Kinshasa where setting up a local network is not required but that does help with driving the price down to the end-users as more overall subscribers are on the network.

ATTACHMENT B

TERMS AND CONDITIONS

1. Currency All prices shall be quoted in US dollars. Total price estimate must be fully inclusive (e.g., delivery, insurance, etc.).
2. Sales or Use Taxes Unless otherwise definitely specified, the prices quoted herein do **not** include sales or use taxes.
3. Customs, Shipping, Transportation Charges The charges for shipping, customs duties, transportation, unloading, containers, packing, etc., needs to be included in the estimate as stated in Attachment A and as set forth in the RFI at Section IV.
4. Infringement Indemnity Vendor shall defend at its expense any suit against NetHope based on a claim that any item furnished under this RFI submission thereof infringes any United States Letters Patent or copyright and Vendor shall pay costs and damages finally awarded in any such suit, provided Vendor is notified in writing of the suit and given authority, information, and assistance at Vendor's expense for defense of same if the use of said item is enjoined as a result of such suit. Vendor, at no expense to NetHope, shall obtain for NetHope the right to use and sell said item or shall substitute an equivalent item acceptable to NetHope and extend this patent indemnity thereto.
5. Assignments and Subcontractors Neither this RFI submission or any interest herein nor claim hereunder may be assigned by Vendor voluntarily or by operation of law nor may all or substantially all of this RFI submission be further subcontracted by Vendor without the prior written consent of NetHope. Consent by NetHope shall not be deemed to relieve Vendor of its obligations to comply with the requirements hereof.
6. Indemnification Vendor agrees to hold harmless, indemnify, and defend NetHope, its officers, employees, agents, representatives, and successors-in-interest against any and all loss, damage, cost, or expenses which NetHope, its officers, employees, agents, representatives, and successors-in-interest may incur or be required to pay by reason of any injury or property damage caused or incurred by Vendor, its employees, contractors, or agents in the performance of this RFI submission.
7. Authorized Geographic code: The authorized geographic code for procurement of goods and services under the NetHope award is 937.

Attachment C – Additional Business Information

BUSINESS INFORMATION REQUEST

Business Name	
Division of:	
Subsidiary of:	
Website Address	
Type of Business	

REMITTING ADDRESS INFORMATION

Address			
City/Town			
State/Province / Country		Zip	
Phone	() - Ext	Fax	() -
Contact		Title	
E-mail Address			
Payment Name if Different			