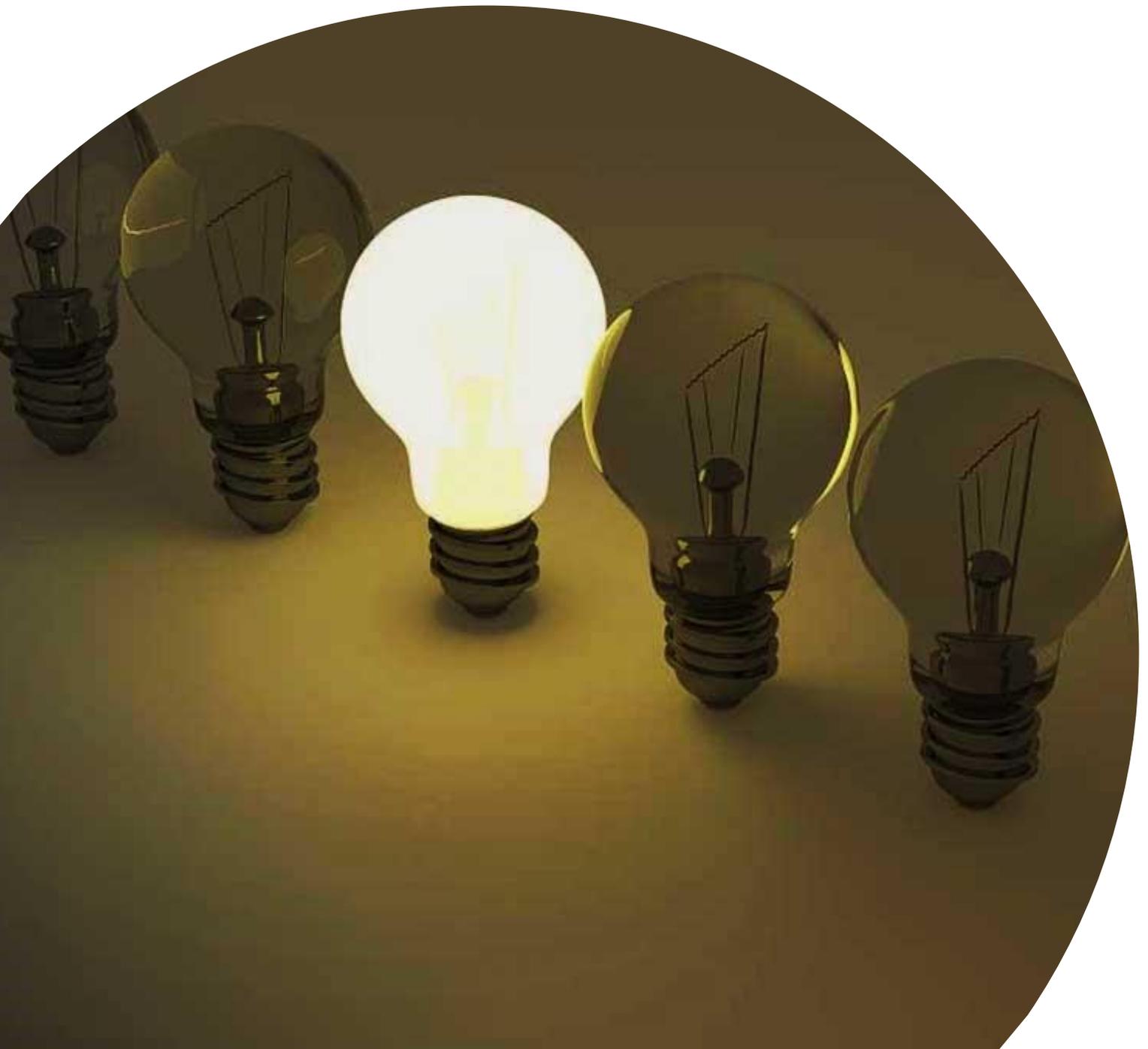




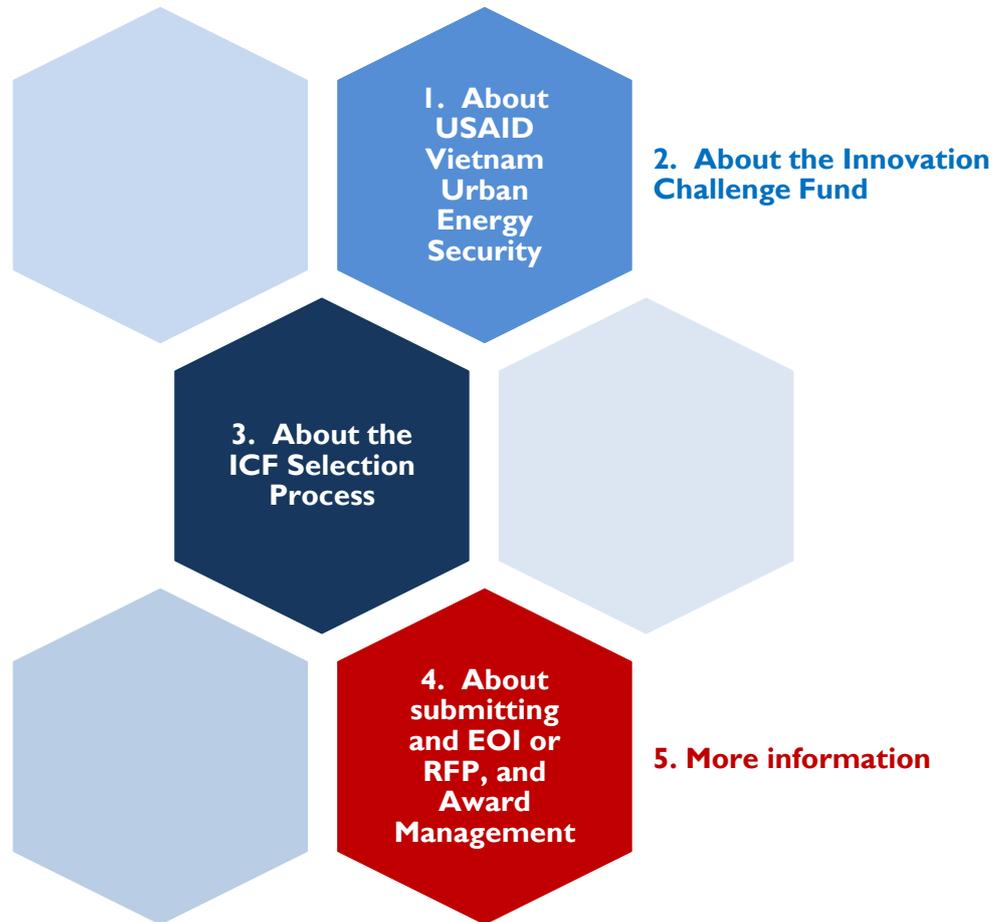
**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

# INNOVATION CHALLENGE FUND USAID VIETNAM URBAN ENERGY SECURITY

## ICF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## ICF FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



## I. USAID VIETNAM URBAN ENERGY SECURITY

### I. What is the USAID Vietnam Urban Energy Security (VUES) Project?

USAID VIETNAM URBAN ENERGY SECURITY  
2019 - 2023 | IMPLEMENTER: DAI Global, LLC |  
PLANNED BUDGET: \$13,974,519

As Vietnam experiences steep increases in energy demand and rising air pollution, there is growing recognition that cleaner, more reliable sources of energy are needed and greater capital investment is required to develop these renewable energy sources. The USAID Vietnam Urban Energy Security project works closely with the Government of Vietnam (GVN) at the city, provincial, and national level to improve legislation related to clean energy, mobilize investment, and increase the adoption and deployment of innovative energy solutions.

#### IMPROVE POLICIES AND REGULATIONS

USAID and the GVN will work together to harmonize national strategies, policies, and regulations that encourage the deployment of cost-effective clean energy. This includes drafting regulations and standards for rooftop solar or electric vehicle charging, facilitating technical exchanges, and creating a national network of experts, among other actions. While activities will be implemented at the city level, USAID will engage a broad array of stakeholders to ensure buy-in at all levels.

#### MOBILIZE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT

USAID Vietnam Urban Energy Security works with the GVN, private enterprises, and financial institutions to facilitate deployment of 400 megawatts of renewable energy generations and energy efficiency gains. The project will also mobilize \$600 million in new investment to overcome key challenges in clean energy financing by building innovative partnerships.

#### INCREASE ADOPTION OF INNOVATIVE SOLUTIONS

To achieve the above objectives, USAID will provide funding and technical assistance for innovative solutions that address urban energy and environment issues. The project will balance its portfolio between early stage activities that are testing new approaches and developed projects ready for commercialization. The knowledge and data generated through these innovative activities will be captured and shared widely to increase the broader energy community's understanding of the best approaches to improve Vietnam's urban energy security.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

<http://www.usaid.gov/vietnamMAY2020>

### 2. What is DAI LLC?

DAI Global, LLC is a private development company based in Bethesda, Maryland, United States with additional corporate offices in London and Hemel Hempstead in the United Kingdom.

DAI operates worldwide, with a particularly strong presence in Central America, South America, Africa, the Middle East, Central Asia, South Asia, and the Asia-Pacific region. It has worked in 160 developing and transition countries in the areas of water and natural resources management, energy and climate change, governance and public sector management, private sector development and financial services, economics and trade, agriculture and agribusiness, crisis mitigation and stability operations, and HIV/AIDS and avian influenza control.

More information about the company can be found at [www.dai.com](http://www.dai.com)

## 2. THE INNOVATION CHALLENGE FUND

### 1. What is the Innovation Challenge Fund?

The Innovation Challenge aims to fund 20 pilots and/or demonstrations of new products, business models, or financing models for advanced, distributed urban energy systems.

Advanced energy solutions exist in areas such as building efficiency, transportation, and electricity generation. These can contribute to the goal of greater urban energy resilience and energy security, however, there is resistance to their uptake for reasons that include:

- proof of concept has not yet been demonstrated
- potential customers do not know solutions exist and are therefore unaware of the potential benefits

Through the Innovation Challenge, USAID VUES will support the piloting and/or demonstration of innovative ideas in Da Nang and/or Ho Chi Minh City that have the potential to achieve scale and commercialization.

Organizations that are registered in Vietnam, particularly female-led organizations (including U.S. and local non-governmental organizations, universities, private for-profit organizations, technology suppliers/developers, and training institutions) with bold ideas across the following categories will be encouraged to apply:

- Transportation
- Building efficiency
- Electricity generation
- Electricity delivery and management
- Water efficiency

### 2. What is meant by the term “advanced energy solutions”?

Advanced energy encompasses the technologies and services, both emerging and established, that make the energy system secure, high-performing, clean, and affordable. It is a dynamic and complex combination of resources, technologies, and services working together to collectively meet the evolving energy needs. These solutions are roughly broken down into six main categories: 1) electricity generation, 2) electricity delivery and management, 3) building efficiency, 4) water

efficiency, 5) transportation, and 6) fuel production and delivery.

### 3. What is meant by the term “distributed energy”?

Distributed energy refers to energy generated at the point of or near to point of consumption (mostly connected to the distribution grid) and encompasses a diverse array of distributed energy assets (i.e. generation, storage, etc.), digital services, electric vehicles (dynamic charging), management solutions and value-added services that include financing. They reduce costs, improve reliability, and offer monetization of energy assets, e.g., through participation in flexibility/demand response markets.

### 4. What are the advantages of applying for ICF funding?

The ICF provides an opportunity for firms to:

- Showcase solutions to government, the private sector, and other important stakeholders, and gain recognition;
- Commercialize and scale their solution; and
- Help Vietnam achieve energy and climate change goals

### 5. How many funding rounds will there be?

There will be a total of four funding rounds, with the final call for expressions of interest in mid-2022.

### 6. How many pilots/demonstrations does the ICF intend to fund?

The Innovation Challenge Fund aims to fund a total of 20 pilots/demonstrations that will be spread across four separate funding rounds.

### 7. Who can apply to the ICF?

Organizations that are registered in Vietnam may apply, including U.S. and local non-governmental organizations, universities, private for-profit organizations, technology suppliers/developers, and training institutions.

Female-led organizations are particularly encouraged to apply.

### **8. Is it necessary for the applicant to be a Vietnamese company?**

Under the authorized geographic code for its contract, DAI may only procure goods and services from the following countries.

Geographic Code 937: Goods and services from the United States, the cooperating country, and “Developing Countries” other than “Advanced Developing Countries”: excluding prohibited countries. A list of the “Developing Countries” as well as “Advanced Developing Countries” can be found at:

<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/310maa.pdf>  
and

<http://www.usaid.gov/policy/ads/300/310mab.pdf>,  
respectively.

DAI must verify the source and nationality of goods and services and ensure (to the fullest extent possible) that DAI does not procure any goods or services from prohibited countries listed by the Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) as sanctioned countries. OFAC sanctioned countries may be searched within the System for Award Management (SAM) at [www.SAM.gov](http://www.SAM.gov). The current list of countries under comprehensive sanctions includes Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, and Syria.

Offerors must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law and must be legally able to perform or participate in subcontract activities in Vietnam.

### **9. Can Vietnamese citizens with an innovation, but who do not have their own firm, apply?**

Offerors must be legally recognized organizational entities under applicable law and must be legally able to perform or participate in subcontract activities in Vietnam.

This solicitation is issued to firms or organizations holding a valid business registration.

### **10. Can firms form a partnership and apply as a consortium?**

Firms can partner and submit a consortium-based proposal. The proposal should clearly state which firm will be the prime subcontract holder, for

whom (first-tier subcontractor) a DUNS number is required.

### **11. How long will each pilot/demonstration last?**

The pilot/demonstration phase is not expected to last more than six months. Only in exceptional circumstances will a longer implementation phase be allowed.

### **12. With whom will successful firms enter into a contract?**

Successful firms will enter into contract with DAI LLC.

### **13. Where will pilots/demonstrations be located?**

Pilots/demonstrations will take place in Da Nang and/or Ho Chi Minh City **only**. Within these cities, appropriate sites will be identified for the pilots/demonstration and may include factories, commercial buildings, etc.

### **14. If a firm wants to implement a pilot/demonstration in another city, other than HCMC or Da Nang, is that possible?**

Pilots/demonstrations will take place in Da Nang and/or Ho Chi Minh City **only**.

### **15. Why will there only be pilots/demonstrations in Ho Chi Minh and/or Da Nang, and not other cities/provinces?**

USAID and the Government of Vietnam have determined that the geographic scope of the Project should be Ho Chi Minh City and Da Nang, in partnership with Department of Industry and Trade (DOIT) in both cities.

### **16. What is the value of funding available?**

Each award (for piloting/demonstrating) will have a maximum value of USD 100,000. This threshold is subject to change at the discretion of USAID/DAI LLC.

## **17. What activities/expenses will the ICF fund, and what will the ICF not fund?**

The ICF is able to support the following activities/expenses:

- Transportation (of equipment and people)
- Hiring premises for the pilot/demonstration
- Venue hire for workshops, trainings, etc.
- Staff time
- Technical assistance (through consultants)
- Costs associated with installing the pilot/demonstration
- Etc.

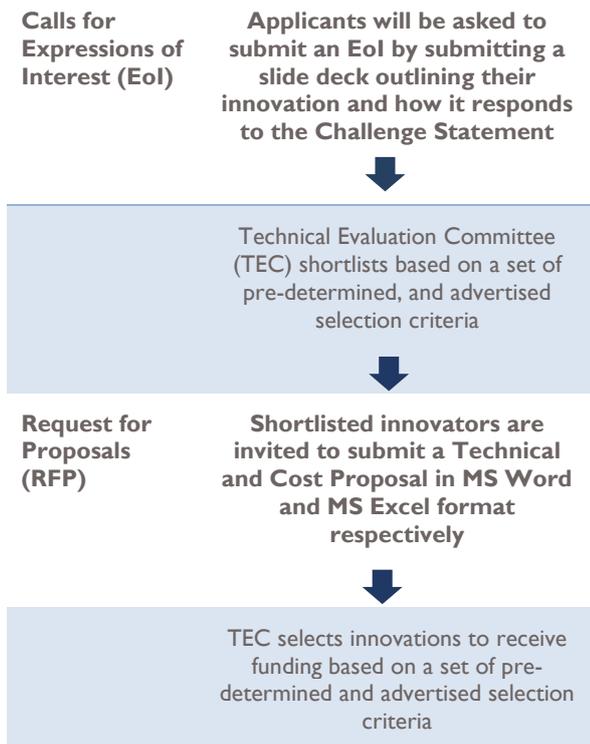
The ICF is **NOT** able to support the following activities/expenses:

- Loyalty programs
- The owners of the demonstration sites purchasing the innovation
- Etc.

### 3. THE ICF SELECTION PROCESS

#### 1. What is the selection process?

The ICF design envisages supporting twenty pilots/demonstrations over four funding rounds between April - June 2021 and January - March, 2023. Each funding round will involve a two-step process for applicants, which is envisaged to take three months:



#### 2. How long does the selection process last?

The selection process is expected to last at least three months, between USAID VUES issuing an Expression of Interest and contract signing.

#### 3. If I miss the application deadline, can I still apply for ICF funding later?

Yes. The ICF design envisages supporting twenty pilots/demonstrations over four funding rounds. If a firm/consortium misses the deadline for one round, they may apply during a later funding round.

#### 4. I was unsuccessful in a previous funding round; can I still apply for funding at a later date?

Yes. A firm/consortium may submit the same application, or a modified version, in later funding rounds.

#### 5. I have already received funding for a pilot/demonstration. Can I apply for additional ICF funding?

Yes, but only if the pilot/demonstration is different from the one that has already received funding.

#### 6. What are the selection criteria?

Please check the Call for Expressions of Interest and the Request for Proposal.

#### 7. What happens at the end of the pilot/demonstration?

At the end of the pilot/demonstration, all firms will attend a workshop facilitated by a USAID VUES partner. Results of each pilot/demonstration will be discussed with stakeholders that include USAID, HCMC DOIT, Da Nang DOIT, an Accelerator, VUES staff etc. (Accelerators are organizations that offer a range of support services.)

Additional support may be available for pilots/demonstrations that are successful and that have the potential to be commercialized and scaled and contribute to improve urban energy resilience and energy security in Vietnam.

## 4. SUBMITTING AN EOI OR RFP, AND AWARD MANAGEMENT

### 1. What is the role of DAI vs. USAID in contract award and management?

The contract award and management will be administered by DAI, the prime contractor to USAID under the USAID Vietnam Urban Energy Security Project.

### 2. In response to DAI RFPs, how should Technical and Financial Proposals be submitted?

Cover letters and Technical and Financial Proposals should be sent to the following email address: [VUESActivityFund@dai.com](mailto:VUESActivityFund@dai.com)

The electronic submission of proposals is adequate. No hard copies are required.

Technical proposals should be submitted in both PDF and Word format.

### 3. What does “An award will be made based on the Trade Off Method” mean?

The award will be issued to the responsible and reasonable offeror who provides the best value to DAI and its client, using a combination of technical and cost/price factors. DAI may award to a higher priced offeror if a determination is made that the higher technical evaluation of that offeror merits the additional cost/price.

### 4. The DAI RFP states: “When assessing an Offeror’s responsibility, the following factors are taken into consideration:

- **Having adequate financial resources to finance and perform the work or deliver goods or the ability to obtain financial resources without receiving advance funds from DAI**
- **Have a satisfactory past performance record**
- **Have a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics, etc.”**

### What evidence does DAI require?

DAI may request additional information to aid the assessment including, but not limited to, the organization’s audited financial statements, policies on subject matters, reference checks, or

other reasonable information deemed relevant and necessary.

### 5. The DAI RFP states that offerors have to comply with all Representations and Certifications of Compliance listed in Attachment G. This refers to the Point 10.7 in the Attachment G.

### Do offerors need to declare compliance to every single point in the Attachment G?

By submitting a proposal, offerors agree to fully comply with all the terms and conditions specified and all applicable U.S. federal government clauses included in the RFP. The winning offeror will be asked to sign these Representations and Certifications upon award.

### 6. Do offerors need to certify that they have not/will not attempt to bribe or make any payments to DAI employees in return for preference, nor have any payments with terrorists, or groups supporting terrorists, been attempted?

Offerors must provide full, accurate, and complete information in response to this solicitation. By submitting an offer, offerors certify that they have not/will not attempt to bribe or make any payments to DAI employees in return for preference, nor have any payments with terrorists, or groups supporting terrorists, been attempted.

### 7. If a consortium is submitting a proposal, is a DUNS number required for both firms?

The proposal should clearly state which firm will be the prime subcontract holder, for whom (first-tier subcontractor) a DUNS is required. A DUNS is not required for other consortium firms.

### 8. Is there a page limit to the technical proposal?

Technical proposals should be limited to ten pages excluding appendices and supporting documents, e.g., the three one-page summaries of past performance and proposed staff CVs.

**9. The DAI RFP mentions that bidders should provide a list of up to three recent awards of similar scope and duration. Can a bidder mention more than three recent awards of similar scope and duration?**

Offerors are asked to limit their one-page summaries of similar work to the three most relevant awards of similar scope and duration. Additional activities may be listed in the table, but only three relevant activities will be considered in the evaluation of the proposal.

**10. Can DAI share a technical proposal format?**

Proposals should be submitted in Word and PDF, in English, and respond to the Statement of Objectives and criteria as laid out in the RFP. There is no set format.

**11. Is the technical proposal evaluated only on the three following criteria: Technical Approach, Management and Staffing Approach, and Institutional Capacity/Past Performance (up to 3 recent projects awarded)? Can an offeror provide other detailed information?**

Technical proposals will be evaluated according to the criteria (and their sub-criteria) as laid out

in the RFP document. Points are clearly allocated to criteria.

**12. When submitting a proposal, the cover letter format is addressed to “DAI Global, LLC” whereas the RFP issuing agency is “USAID Vietnam Urban Energy Security Project”, Vietnam. Which of these will be the contracting agency, and where are they based (United States or Vietnam)?**

The contract award and management will be administered by DAI, which is the prime contractor to USAID for the management of the USAID Vietnam Urban Energy Security Project. The contract will be signed by DAI Global, LLC, which is based in the United States.

**13. When should offerors submit a DUNS number? At the proposal stage or at the contracting stage?**

DAI prefers offerors to include their DUNS numbers in their proposal submission. Without a DUNS number, DAI cannot deem an Offeror “responsible” to conduct business with. The determination of a successful offeror resulting from this RFP is contingent upon the winner providing a DUNS number to DAI. Offerors who fail to provide a DUNS number will not receive an award and DAI will select an alternate Offeror.

## 5. MORE INFORMATION

**Where can I find out more information about the ICF?**

If you have more questions about the ICF, please write to [VUESActivityFund@dai.com](mailto:VUESActivityFund@dai.com)