

REQUEST FOR QUOTES (RFQ)

Issue Date: 15 October 2019

RFQ Number: 2019-36

RFQ Name: Short-Term Technical Assistance (STTA) CertainTLS Developer

Questions due by: 20 Oct 2019 23h00 UTC

Answers will be provided by: 30 Oct 2019 23h00 UTC

Closing Date for offers: 15 Nov 2019 23h00 UTC

Counterpart International invites written quotes from qualified individuals, organizations and/or firms for the service of a cross-platform application developer.

Introduction

Counterpart International is an NGO working in the international development sector. One of Counterpart International's projects, the ISC, enhances internet freedom by improving the defensive cybersecurity capabilities of local partners in developing countries.

Problem: HTTPS MiTM Online HTTPS communications via a browser, e.g. with an online service such as Facebook or Google, are normally end-to-end-encrypted via TLS. But the security this system provides depends on the TLS cert being "good," which in turn depends on it being "anchored" to a trusted cert—which depends on the anchor being trustworthy. But if the end user is trusting a "bad" cert, a monster-in-the-middle attack (MiTM) will be able to read and decrypt her web traffic, inject fake content in real time, and harvest credentials, thereby nullifying the security the end user believed she had. How can a user know whether the certs she's trusting are all "good"?

Solution: a "trusted certificate checker" ... which would determine whether a device's OS and/or applications is trusting TLS certs it shouldn't. This application is tentatively called CertainTLS.

Objective

The objective of this assignment is to develop and deliver to Counterpart International a fully-functional multi-platform trusted-cert-checking application along with its back end.

Functionalities

CertainTLS will, at a minimum, incorporate the following functionalities:

- scan a device (PC or smartphone) to determine which certs it (and all installed applications) trust,
- determine whether any of those trusted certs "maybe shouldn't be trusted," and
- provide the scan result to the user
- give the user the opportunity to explicitly distrust certificates which are:
 - other than stock, or
 - stock, but perhaps shouldn't be trusted.

Technology

CertainTLS must:

- run under Android, Windows, iOS, and macOS;
- be made available in Google Play and Apple iTunes;
- be secure from malicious tampering, and “signed”;
- apply to all locally-present certificates stores (in all OS and locally-present applications), e.g. from Google, Microsoft, Apple, Moz://a, Oracle, and Adobe;
- automatically keep itself updated per any changes in those stock certification stores;
- have a ‘back end’ in which the CertainTLS operator (e.g. Counterpart International) can see all certificates in the stock certificate stores and mark which ones the end user should consider untrustworthy (e.g. from companies based in a country with a < 40 [Freedom in the World](#) score);
- generate (perhaps through the back end) metrics (but recording no end-user-identifiable information) which allow the CertainTLS operator to understand how often CertainTLS' been run, under what OS, and with what results, including gathering copies of rogue certs; the end user should be able to turn off metric-reporting;
- communicate with its back end encryptedly using key pinning;
- be in English, but easily skin-nable into other languages including right-to-left languages (e.g. use Transifex as source for crowd-source-able skin translations);
- be open-source using an [approved license](#) and a recognized forge to share the source code;
- possibly, avoid:
 - being fingerprinted by in-the-net surveillance, or;
 - being blocked (by in-the-net censorship) from running.

Scope of work

Counterpart International seeks an individual or vendor to:

- write/develop the CertainTLS application and;
- write CertainTLS documentation.

Deliverables

The format, content and phasing of the deliverables will be discussed with and approved by the Chief of Party and the Technical Director. Proposed deliverables are listed in the table in this RFQ's Section 3. The CertainTLS developer will report to and collaborate with the ISC management team.

Period of performance

This assignment is expected to begin o/a 1 Dec 2019 and be completed by o/a 31 May 2020.

Location

Location is irrelevant.

Required qualifications

Offerors must show qualifications in the following areas:

Key Competencies

- ability to establish trusted relationships and develop good communications with the management team;
- a good understanding of the benefits and challenges of cybersecurity;
- a strong technical background in information technology and a firm understanding of internet security issues, including familiarity with methods of encryption for data during storage and transmission, circumvention of censorship, patch management, business continuity principles, social media security/privacy, mobile device security, and secure web hosting;
- a mastery and understanding of a range of tools and technologies that would be appropriate for coding CertainTLS;
- able to develop clear, comprehensive and understandable written documents.

The successful candidate will be

- an enthusiastic team player, good collaborator, but also able to work independently;
- fluent in writing and speaking English;
- able to take ownership of deliverables.

Price Offer

Quotations in response to this RFQ must be priced on a fixed-price, all-inclusive basis, including delivery and all other costs. Pricing must be presented in USD. Offers must remain valid for not less than thirty (30) calendar days after the offer deadline. Offerors are requested to provide quotations on official letterhead or format. In addition, Offerors responding to this RFQ are requested to submit the following:

- *Individuals responding to this RFQ are requested to submit a copy of their identification card;*
- *Rates of the selected candidate will be verified before finalizing price.*

Evaluation Procedures and criteria

The award will be made to a responsible consultant or vendor whose offer follows the RFQ instructions, meets the eligibility requirements and is determined via a trade-off analysis to be the best value based on application of the following evaluation criteria. The relative importance of each individual **criterion** is indicated by the number of points below:

- *Technical* – 50 points: Consultant or vendor should have a strong technical background in information technology and a firm understanding of internet security issues, including familiarity with methods of encryption for data during storage and transmission, circumvention of censorship, patch management, business continuity principles, social media security/privacy, mobile device security, and secure web hosting; Interviews will be conducted to ensure technical competency.
- *Past Performance* – 30 points: At least 8 years' experience in the design and development of varied digital services and strong experience in cybersecurity; timeliness of delivery. References will be contacted to verify previous performance.

- *Price* – 20 points: The overall cost presented in the offer.

If there are significant deficiencies regarding responsiveness to the requirements of this RFQ, an offer may be deemed “non-responsive” and thereby disqualified from consideration.

Counterpart International reserves the right to waive immaterial deficiencies at its discretion.

Best-offer quotations are requested. It is anticipated that award will be made solely on the basis of these original quotations. However, Counterpart International reserves the right to conduct any of the following:

- Counterpart International may conduct negotiations with and/or request clarifications from any consultant prior to award.
- While preference will be given to consultant who can address the full technical requirements of this RFQ, Counterpart International may issue a partial award or split the award among various suppliers, if in the best interest of the Project.
- Counterpart International may cancel this RFQ at any time.

In submitting a response to this RFQ, the consultant or vendor understands that USAID is not a party to this solicitation and the consultant agrees that any protest hereunder must be presented—in writing with full explanations—to the Project for consideration, as USAID will not consider protests regarding procurements carried out by implementing partners. Counterpart International, at its sole discretion, will make a final decision on the protest for this procurement.

Instructions on Submission of Offers

You are requested to email your offer at or before the exact time specified in this solicitation.

Consultant or vendor must provide the following information:

- a. solicitation/RFQ number,
- b. name, addresses (street, email, other), IM ID, and telephone number of the consultant or vendor,
- c. cover letter detailing offerer’s describing capabilities and ability to perform this task,
- d. CV of consultant(s) who will undertake the work,
- e. a list of three references, with e-mail and IM IDs for each,
- f. price quote, and
- g. copy of your government-issued identification card and/or business license (so we know you’re “real”).

Offers should be submitted by [e-mail](#) with the subject line: “STTA - CertainTLS Developer.” One fixed-price vendor contract will be awarded to the responsive consultant or vendor whose offer has the highest evaluation score. Counterpart International reserves the right to make an award based on initial submission. Counterpart International reserves the right to make no award if it is determined that the offers submitted do not satisfy the needs of the organization. Offers received after the specified time and date will be considered late and will be considered only at the discretion of Counterpart International All written proposals submitted must be valid for a period of at least 90 calendar days from the stated closing date.

Questions and Requests for Clarifications

Questions regarding the technical or administrative requirements of this RFQ may be submitted no later than 23h00 UTC on 20 October 2019 by [e-mail](#). Questions must be submitted in writing; phone calls will not be accepted. Questions and requests for clarification—and the responses thereto—that Counterpart International believes may be of interest to other consultants will be posted on Counterpart International's website as an amendment to the RFQ. **No phone inquiries.**

Only the written answers posted by Counterpart International will be considered official and carry weight in the RFQ process and subsequent evaluation. Any verbal information received from employees of Counterpart International or any other entity should not be considered as an official response to any questions regarding this RFQ.

Notification of Selection

Prior to the expiration period of proposal validity, Counterpart International will notify the consultant who submitted the highest scoring proposal in writing by e-mail. Clarifications and revision of minor errors and omissions may be requested. Upon completion of either, consultant may be required to submit a revised quote.

Acceptance of Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions

By Submitting quotation/proposal to Counterpart International, the company or the individual consents to [Counterpart International's privacy policy terms and conditions](#), and provides Counterpart International permission to process the company's or individual's personal data *specifically and only for* the performance of, and purposes identified in, this solicitation document and in compliance with Counterpart International's legal obligations under applicable United States and European Union laws, data protection and regulations and any other applicable legal requirements. The company/Individual may withdraw their consent at any time by [e-mail](#). If consent is withdrawn Counterpart International reserves the right to accept or reject the offer.

Section 3: Specifications and Technical Requirements

The table below contains the technical requirements of the commodities/services. Offerors are requested to provide quotations containing the information below on official letterhead or official quotation format. In the event this is not possible, offerors may complete this Section 3 and submit a signed/stamped version to Counterpart International .

Line Item	Description and Specifications	Items and Specifications Offered	Total Price USD
1	A work-plan and detailed methodology within the first week of consultancy		
2	A CertainTLS alpha version for all OS mentioned in the technology section & source code		
3	A CertainTLS beta version for all OS mentioned in the technology section & source code		
4	A CertainTLS RC v1 for all OS mentioned in the technology section & source code		
5	Source code available in a recognized forge		
6	User documentation available in a recognized forge		
7	Operator documentation		
Subtotal			
Other Costs		(Describe)	
Grand Total (USD)			

Section 4: Offer Cover Letter

The following cover letter must be completed/signed/stamped:

To:
Counterpart International
2345 Crystal Dr #301, Arlington, VA 22202

Reference: ...

To Whom It May Concern:

We, the undersigned, hereby provide the attached offer to perform all work required to complete the activities and requirements as described in the above-referenced RFQ. Please find our offer attached.

We hereby acknowledge and agree to all terms, conditions, special provisions, and instructions included in the above-referenced RFQ. We further certify that the below-named firm—as well as the firm’s principal officers and all commodities and services offered in response to this RFQ—are eligible to participate in this procurement under the terms of this solicitation and under USAID regulations.

Furthermore, we hereby certify that, to the best of our knowledge and belief:

- We have no close, familial, or financial relationships with any Counterpart International staff members;
- We have no close, familial, or financial relationships with any other offerors submitting proposals in response to the above-referenced RFQ; and
- The prices in our offer have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or agreement with any other offeror or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition.
- All information in our proposal and all supporting documentation is authentic and accurate.
- We understand and agree to Counterpart’ prohibitions against fraud, bribery, and kickbacks.

We hereby certify that the enclosed representations, certifications, and other statements are accurate, current, and complete.

Authorized Signature: _____

Name of Signatory: _____

Date: _____

Official name associated with bank account (for payment): _____