REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Knowledge Nook (kNook) Maintenance and Enhancement Web Development Support

SUMMARY OF PROCUREMENT

The NDC Partnership Support Unit is searching for a vendor to provide web development support for the Partnership's knowledge management system (the kNook) for two years, throughout 2024 and 2025. This includes:

- Basic administration and maintenance of the hosting environment and platform (Knack);
- Provision of additional development support, as needed, within the hosting platform (Knack) and the kNook Dashboard (in PowerBI) to improve the functionality and user experience and to facilitate integration with the Partnership's Online Partnership Plan Tool (OPPT).

Proposals, along with all requirements, should be submitted by December 6th. The contract will be deliverables-based, set as an open contract, where individual work orders will be issued before work begins. Compensation will be based upon the work negotiated in each individual work order, which will detail separate scopes of work, deliverables and budgets. There will be a fixed price work order for monthly administration and maintenance of the hosting environment (defined under Scope of Work I in this Request for Proposals (RFP)) as well as ad-hoc cost reimbursement work orders for additional development support, as needed, within the hosting platform (Knack) and dashboard (in PowerBI) (see Scope of Work II in this RFP).

About the NDC Partnership

The NDC Partnership brings together more than 200 members, including more than 120 countries, developed and developing, and more than 80 institutions to create and deliver on ambitious climate action that helps achieve the Paris Agreement and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Governments identify their NDC implementation priorities and the type of support that is needed to translate them into actionable policies and programs. Based on these requests, the membership offers a tailored package of expertise, technical assistance, and funding. This collaborative response provides developing countries with efficient access to a wide range of resources to adapt to and mitigate climate change and foster more equitable and sustainable development.

The Partnership's work is facilitated by a Support Unit hosted by the World Resources Institute (WRI) in Washington, DC and the UNFCCC Secretariat and UNOPS in Bonn, Germany. This work will be contracted through WRI and will engage primarily with Support Unit staff in the Washington, DC office, but will have some interaction with Support Unit staff in the Bonn, Germany office and may interact with other consultants/vendors located around the world.

About the Knowledge Nook (kNook)

The Knowledge Nook (kNook), the NDC Partnership's knowledge management system, enables users to quickly access global trends on country priorities and support needs. The kNook draws together data from official requests for support on NDC implementation or enhancement, submitted to the Partnership by country members and includes, where available, details on partner responses.

The kNook system is accessible to all members of the NDC Partnership upon request. Once user accounts are approved, they can read through over 5,000 individual requests stored in the system and search by various fields, including country, region, sector, key topic, type of support, and activity type.

Because of the ease it provides in conducting analysis, the kNook has become an important resource to inform members and shape their support offering.

The kNook is built within the Knack platform and contains an embedded dashboard built in PowerBI. Custom functionalities are built into the Knack platform using the API, JavaScript, PHP, CSS, and HTML, which allows for an advanced user interface not enabled by Knack alone. These custom functionalities are built into a password protected administration/support site (knook.wri.org), which is hosted in Amazon Web Services (AWS). Administration of the AWS domain itself is managed by WRI and will not be within the responsibility of this vendor. The administration/support site server contains automated software updates that require a minimal amount of maintenance throughout the year, including checking for and actioning backups and upgrades. The NDC Partnership Support Unit also has a Google Analytics page connected to the kNook that tracks metrics such as the number of users accessing the application and where they are located. The kNook itself is hosted in Knack. The kNook application in Knack is accessible through the following link, which is password protected: https://ndcpartnership.knack.com/knook#home/. **Those expressing interest in submitting a proposal will be given limited access to the kNook application's front-end upon request.** Pre-recorded training videos are available within the application and accessible once access is approved, upon request.

The kNook was launched in 2019 and redesigned in 2021. Since then, the amount and structure of data stored in the platform, as well as the ways in which users engage with the platform, have changed considerably. There is a need to continue improving the functionality and design of the system to account for these changes. There is also a need to address issues that arise regularly through routine use of the system, such as fixing errors in page loading. There is an existing vendor delivering this work. They and additional vendors are invited to apply for this RFP opportunity.

Additionally, in 2023, the Support Unit led a kNook user survey and conducted key informant interviews to identify areas for improvement. The feedback received from these exercises informed the development of a list of planned improvements to the data structure and user experience, expected to be implemented in 2024 and 2025. While many of these improvements can be delivered by the Support Unit team managing the kNook, some require adjustments to the dashboard or to the custom functionalities built into the Knack. Since feedback is received regularly from users throughout the year, and since the structure of the Partnership's data is regularly changing as new initiatives are launched, new improvements and adjustments will also be identified on an ad hoc basis throughout the year.

In 2024, the Partnership's Support Unit plans to integrate the kNook with another of their data management tools, the Online Partnership Plan Tool (OPPT). The OPPT is a critical tool supporting the NDC Partnership's Country Engagement Strategy, particularly in supporting countries to design and strengthen their Partnership Plans, implement their Partnership Plans, and to assess results and learn based on their Partnership Plans. The public facing pages within the OPPT can be accessed here.

There is overlapping data between the two tools, which is currently transferred manually from the OPPT into the kNook. The objective of integrating the two systems is to improve efficiencies and data quality by automating data management between the two systems. This integration will likely utilize Knack's API. While this integration process is being led by another vendor, the vendor supporting kNook will be expected to uphold the kNook's functionality within Knack, PowerBI, and the custom coding upon system integration. Note the vendor is not being asked to manage the integration project, but may be asked to provide technical input based on functionalities within kNook to facilitate effective integration.

SCOPE OF WORK AND ACTIVITIES

This RFP is divided into two sets of activities to be delivered between January 2024 and December 2025:

- Scope I: Basic administration and maintenance of the hosting environment and system (Knack);
- Scope II: Specific development support to maintain and improve the functionality and user experience of the kNook, including through the integration with the OPPT, and provide input to

facilitate the system integration as needed based on familiarity with kNook's technical specifications.

Scope of Work I: Basic administration and maintenance of the hosting environment and system

The basic administration and maintenance support includes the following work:

- Knack hosting and routine maintenance activities, including:
  - Monitor Knack app developments to ensure that knook.wri.org enhancements/functionality works in the context of Knack API updates/upgrades.
- General maintenance and backups of the Administrative page (knook.wri.org), including:
  - Ensure that the knook.wri.org code base (Javascript/PHP/HTML/CSS) continues to work with any changes and developments in these languages, making adjustments as needed.
- Timely support to fix bugs in the system as they arise.
- Project management of the activities, including ad-hoc support meetings.

Work under this Scope of Work will be compensated on a fixed price basis per month. It is estimated that approximately **6 hours** of support is needed per month for this Scope of Work.

Scope of Work II: Specific development support to maintain and improve the functionality and user experience of the kNook, including through the integration with the OPPT.

The NDC Partnership wants to deploy a flexible process to allow for on-demand major maintenance and development of new functionalities identified through stakeholder input and prioritized by the NDC Partnership Support Unit team. Specific scopes of work will be determined on a periodic basis via work orders, which will detail expected deliverables and budget. Requested work may be on any part of the kNook. This process entails two steps:

1. Upon request, the vendor will draft and submit, for approval to the NDC Partnership Support Unit, technical proposals covering improvements or new functionalities that respond to user feedback. These should be in the form of work orders (template attached below) and should include a detailed list of deliverables, a timeline, a workplan, the budget breakdown and technical specifications such as specifics on the software. Approval by the NDC Partnership Support Unit is needed of any work order before work is to begin on any project under Scope of Work II.

2. Upon approval of the work order by the NDC Partnership Support Unit, the vendor will develop and implement the new feature or system improvement, including giving opportunities for comments and feedback from the NDC Partnership team and core users.

Outputs and deliverables under Scope of Work II may include, but are not limited to:

- Major updates or improvements to kNook to account for Knack software updates.
- Update custom functionalities within Knack and PowerBI dashboard to ensure new or updated fields and tags – or other data adjustments - are reflected across the kNook.
- Update functionalities within the Support Unit's Google Analytics page linked to the kNook application
- Support to enhance existing pages or create new pages, which may include:
  - Creating a standing link for a new page that contains the latest month's circulation of country requests.
  - Updating custom functionalities within Knack to reflect separation of different data sources into different pages and visualizations.

- o Improve loading speed of kNook pages, including through reviewing and cleaning existing coding.
- o Updating or build new custom functionalities to refine filter options across kNook pages and visualizations.
- o Explore opportunities to enhance mobile friendliness.
- o Explore opportunities to more prominently visualize support gap data in the dashboard.
- o Embed instructional videos and updated user guidance into Help page.
- o Create linkages between datasets stored in different pages to enable more granular analysis.
- Support exploration of implications of removing account-based access, support implementation.
- Advise on considerations and options for translating the kNook interface for users.
- Identify and action updates to or new developments of custom functionalities within Knack and PowerBI dashboard to facilitate OPPT/kNook integration efforts and ensure continued usability.
- Provide technical input to vendor leading system integration so that kNook's functionality is fully understood and considered during integration work.
  - o This may include responding to questions about Knack's API, the custom code.
  - o This may involve desk research and testing to interpret and advise on how Knack's functionalities and the custom code would operate in specific circumstances, upon request by the vendor.
- Project management of the activities, including ad-hoc support meetings.

In all new developments, the NDC Partnership expects the following deliveries together with the improvement or development of the new functionalities:

- Documentation
- Technical Scoping
- Prototype/Mockup design (if applicable)
- Interface Development (if applicable)
- Quality Assurance

Compensation under Scope of Work II will be based upon the work negotiated in each individual work order. Payment will be made on a cost reimbursement basis upon submission to and approval by the NDC Partnership team of invoices and work order deliverables.

BUDGET AND COMPENSATION

The maximum available budget for the duration of this contract (2024 – 2025) for Scope of Work I is $15,000. The budget for Scope of Work II for the duration of this contract will be determined on a needs basis but will not exceed $50,000. The price offered in the proposal will be an important element of the evaluation criteria.

For the budget proposal for Scope of Work I, the proposal should include the proposed cost for completing those services, ensuring an average of of 6 hours per month are available to complete the work and address urgent bug fixes.

For the budget proposal for Scope of Work II, the bidder should only provide information on hourly rates per type of specialist as this will be the price for the cost reimbursement of each approved work order under this Scope of Work.

The budget proposal should be handed in by filling the following template table:

Budget Proposal		
Scope of Work I	*Estimated number of hours*	*Fixed price per month*
Basic administration and maintenance support		
Scope of Work II		*Daily rate per specialist type*

Specialist Type 1	
Specialist Type 2	
Specialist Type 3	
Specialist Type 4	
…	

TIMELINE

The vendor procurement for this RFP will follow the below timeline (all dates are considered by 11:59 pm EST):

RFP issued	**November 22, 2023**
Deadline for submission of proposals	**December 6, 2023**
Selection of vendor and start of contract development	**December 12, 2023**
Signing of contract and start of work	**January 1, 2024**
All activities completed	**December 31, 2025**

PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

Requirements

The selected vendor must demonstrate capacity in similar work, particularly:

- In-depth knowledge of the Knack platform, Google Analytics, and PowerBI.
- Experience with JavaScript, PHP, CCS, and HTML.
- Experience building and managing websites that reflect and visualize complex data.
- Experience manipulating large datasets.
- Experience with improving the user-friendliness of complex, data-heavy webpages.
- Experience with development and climate change topics as an asset.

Content

Prospective vendors should submit the below:

- A statement of interest describing the proposed team and how it meets the above requirements, what makes them a good fit for the scopes of work outlined above;
- CV of the team members, clearly stating project manager and development team if applicable;
- Examples of and references of similar previous work as described in the requirements;
- Description of process for regular exchange with the NDC Partnership Support Unit, including any mechanisms to roll over hours as applicable (e.g. weekly check-ins, regular review of progress against scope of work and annual budget, etc.)
- For Scope of Work I: A brief description of how the vendor would take on and continue the seamless management of this tool;
- For Scope of Work II: A maximum five-page non-binding draft proposal explaining a generic methodology for approaching the types of functionalities explained above, including an indicative timeline, your approach to coordination with the NDC Partnership Support Unit team, and your approach to managing uncertainty.
- A description of how the work and/or vendor is environmentally sustainable;
- A proposed budget with a breakdown of costs separated by Scope of Work which is sufficient to assess reasonableness and compliance with our funder requirements, following the table provided above:
  - For Scope of Work I: a fixed price for monthly administration and maintenance
  - For Scope of Work II: an hourly fixed rate per type of specialist.

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST, DEADLINE FOR QUESTIONS, AND PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

All questions to the RFP, including requests for limited access to the kNook, must be received via email to the contact below by December 4, 2023, 11:59 EST. Answers will be shared with all parties who have asked questions or otherwise expressed interest in submitting a proposal.

All proposals must be submitted by **December 6, 2023, 11:59 EST** to sara.wolf@ndcpartnership.org. Please use the following format for the email subject line: kNook_RFP_[ORGANIZATION NAME]. All proposals must be submitted in electronic format.

EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Evaluation Criteria

The following elements will be the primary considerations in evaluating all proposals submitted in response to this RFP.

- Completeness of all required elements;
- The extent to which the vendor's proposal fulfills WRI's stated requirements as set out in the RFP;
- Experience with similar projects;
- Quality of the proposal presented under Scopes of Work I and II;
- Vendor's technical expertise relevant to the stated requirements of the RFP;
- Vendor's ability to regularly staff monthly maintenance activities and scale up support as needed for work orders;
- Overall cost of the vendor's proposal and best value for money;
- Debarment and sanctions – WRI will not consider proposals from vendors that are presently debarred by the U.S. government or named on any restricted parties lists;
- Sustainability – WRI values sustainability and all other factors being equal, will favor a proposal to more sustainably perform the work.

The bidder offering the best overall value will be selected. For this procurement, price and non-price aspects are considered to be of approximately equal importance.

Selection Process

No proposal development costs shall be charged to WRI; all related expenses are to be borne by the bidders. WRI may award to the bidder offering best value without discussions. However, WRI reserves the right to seek bidder clarifications and to negotiate with those bidders deemed to be within a competitive range. WRI may, at its discretion and without explanation to the prospective vendors, choose to discontinue this RFP without obligation to such prospective vendors, or make multiple awards under this RFP.