Refugee Tertiary Education Scholarship Online Management Tool

Terms of Reference (Annex A)

Education Section
DRS

2021-RFP-007

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1 Introduction

1.1 *Who we are*

The United Nations Refugee Agency, UNHCR, was established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1950 to provide protection and assistance to refugees. Today, UNHCR is one of the world's principal humanitarian agencies, dedicated to saving lives, protecting rights and building a better future for refugees, internally displaced communities and stateless people. UNHCR strives to ensure that people fleeing violence, persecution, war or disaster at home can seek asylum and find safe refuge.

UNHCR comprises a workforce of over 17,000 people, from 154 countries, and speaking more than 450 languages. We work in 135 countries, with 90% of us based in regional, country, sub and field offices.

Further information on UNHCR, its mandate and operations can be found on its official website, http://www.unhcr.org.

1.2 *Overview and Objectives*

As the world's leading organization charged with protecting and providing solutions for refugees, internally displaced and stateless people, we recognize that we as an organization must make changes to our systems, staffing, culture and ways of working if we are to achieve our mission.

In early 2020, UNHCR underwent a process of decentralization and regionalization, moving colleagues out of headquarters to seven regional bureaus equipped to support country offices in delivering protection and assistance to our people of concern.

Implemented in over 50 countries, the UNHCR's Refugee Tertiary Scholarship Programme (DAFI) will support over 6,000 students to study at tertiary level annually. At the country level, management of the scholarship programme entails processing large numbers of applications, shortlisting, interviewing and awarding scholarships, monitoring student progress, processing payments to students and institutions, supporting student activities, monitoring alumni progress, advocating and liaising with a variety of stakeholders, and reporting to headquarters on a periodic basis.

At headquarters, the oversight and management of the programme includes receiving and maintaining a central database of student information, allocating budget across country programmes according to constantly shifting student enrolment status, providing technical and other support and reporting on the global and country programmes. To date, the management of the scholarship programme student information and reporting is almost entirely manual and done through the exchange of spreadsheets and other documents via email. The result is extensive manual data entry at country and headquarters level and significant risk of and likelihood for error.

Every year, each country programme receives more applications than the actual scholarship places that are available. Through the use of several document templates, the application, shortlisting and selection processes have been harmonized across the country programmes but

the manual exchange of student data is cumbersome, time consuming and error prone. It is particularly challenging to ensure that the selection stage is free from error and bias.

A number of country programmes have expressed a desire for a web-based platform to streamline and secure and minimize error throughout the management cycle, from application and selection through to management of student data, reporting and tracking alumni. Jordan, one of the largest scholarship programme countries, independently developed a web-based system to manage these challenges with the result of reducing the workload and increasing accountability and reliability throughout the programme cycle.

Headquarters considers the adoption of a web-based system across the country operations a high priority in order to support country operations to effectively and efficiently manage larger numbers of student applications and scholarships anticipated in the coming years and to improve the integrity of selection, monitoring and reporting activities.

1.3 *Document purpose*

This document provides a general description of the requirements and lists required features allowing UNHCR to receive competing proposals and subsequently evaluate them for best technical and financial value and contract for the solution.

1.4 *Scope*

The scope of this RFP is to implement and support a digital tool/platform to oversee and manage the UNHCR's refugee tertiary scholarship programme (DAFI).

The bidders' proposals shall include:

- Functional description of the service offering demonstrating its fitness for purpose
- All required software and firmware or SaaS services
- Licensing requirements
- Technical design of the solution
- Integration into UNHCR's infrastructure
- Detailed technical and end-user documentation
- Implementation (including setup & training) process, plan and timelines
- Support services

Note: It is the bidders' responsibility to bridge any information gaps in terms of understanding and addressing the scope of this RFP to provide a solution to UNHCR.

2 Target Hosting Platform

UNHCR uses a 'cloud first' strategy for all applications and solutions where-ever possible.

2.1 *General Considerations*

- Oversight of the solution will be centrally managed and distributed by the UNHCR Education team in headquarters.
- At inception of the project, UNHCR wishes to roll out the digital solution to the programme's existing 53 participating countries.
- There are four administrative personnel in each participating country and a further four at Headquarters.
- UNHCR will scale up the digital solution to more locations where UNHCR has presence, some of which may have limited internet bandwidth.
- UNHCR runs its virtual environments on Windows servers and end-user devices are currently running on Windows 10.
- UNHCR has implemented firewalls and security policies to secure its corporate IT systems.

2.2 *Design*

Technical Information:

Based on the information supplied, the bidder should provide a well-documented technical design of the solution including functional requirement and technical and security related requirements needed to be in place to implement the solution. This should include, where appropriate, but not be limited to:

- Geographic hosting location(s)
- Description of physical/logical isolation of UNHCR's environment; full logical isolation required
- Encryption features for data at rest and in transit
- Requirements for UNHCR to perform audit and penetration-test our environments
- Bandwidth requirements for content provisioning in remote locations
- Other related technical requirements
- Technical limitations based on information contained in this document

Technical Integration:

Ability to verify data entered into one (few) fields of the scholarship application with UNHCR's main refugee management system, proGres v4, which is built on top of Microsoft Dynamics 365. The supplier would not necessarily be responsible for developing the integration, but the

scholarship system should be capable of calling Dynamics and APIs and interpreting results from that application.

The solution should also have Web APIs that can be called from external systems to read award data.

Registration with Azure AD for authentication of staff should be possible.

Multi-language support:

Solutions which offer multi-language support will be preferred, with English, French and Arabic being the most commonly employed languages at UNHCR.

Access

Application should be accessible over the internet in countries inclusive of countries with sanctions wholly or partially in place. For example: Iran, Sudan, Syria.

UNHCR Directory Services

The application is expected to be registered with UNHCR's Azure Active Directory, so that authentication of non-applicant users will be provided by AAD.

Technical Support:

UNHCR expects a clear definition of the technical support capabilities available from the supplier and any associated extra costs. Please state these in terms of 'Service Level Agreements' for: level of support; times to respond; working hours; escalation process and time zone availability.

3 Software

3.1 *Scholarship Management Software*

The proposed solution should at the minimum be capable of fulfilling the high-level business requirements as laid out below:

Increase transparency and mitigate risk in the scholarship programme management, including application, short list and scholarship allocation process.

The majority of respondents receive data from applicants in paper format. This overhead would be alleviated with an online application interface that allows potential students to upload their supporting document together with their application. An electronic database of submissions would favour data comparisons with other systems to verify 'refugee' status of the applicants and allow status flags to be triggered as the application passes through the verification and shortlisting process, as well as to minimize human error and time investment of manual data entry.

Streamline transfer of student enrolment, activity and payment information between country operations and headquarters. Increase security of data transfer and storage.

Just over two-thirds of data is transferred between stakeholders via spreadsheet files, in many cases these files are recreated at the start of each application period thereby losing any historical information associated with the applicants. Added to this, a significant number of the country offices share physical files. These two processes minimise the flexibility to hold financial data against the individual successful applications due to the need of manual updating.

Improve reliability and timeliness of reporting on student progress and activities.

The manual efforts needed to follow up with successful applications adds to the time needed to process all the applications, an online secure system would eventually allow for the time taken between call for applications and awarding scholarships to be minimised and thereby allow more time to be used proactively to follow up on successful applicants during their education. An online system will also facilitate communication with applicants including deadline and status updates.

Allow for country-level tailoring of certain programme aspects.

Variations between country programmes will need to be reflected in the online system at country level, for example, in terms of specific application requirements and criteria, deadlines, links to Cash unit and processes, contact points, etc.

As an applicant for a scholarship:

Ref.	Business Requirement	Priority*	Comment
A1.1	I want to be able to create my own profile on the site.	M	
A1.2	I want to be able to upload supporting documentation to my application and to my site profile if accepted as a DAFI student.	M	
A1.3	I want to be able to see the status of my application through my profile on the site.	M	
A1.4	I want to be notified when the result of my application process has been posted on the system	M	
A1.5	I want to be able to access a knowledge base of 'frequently asked questions' regarding the DAFI Scholarship programme	M.	This is already online and should be linked to the tool.
A1.6	I want to be able to pose questions regarding the DAFI Scholarship programme via country level feedback mechanisms.	M.	This should link to an email address for the country office feedback mechanism so that they have only one place for students/ applicants' queries.
A1.7	I want to be able to apply to the Scholarship programme from any device, (i.e. Smartphone, Tablet, Desktop, Laptop).	M	
A1.8	I want to be able to record any activities, internships or training that I may undertake during my scholarship studies.	C	
A1.9	I want to be able to change my password on the portal and have a mechanism for a 'forgotten password'.	M	
A1.10	I want to be able to change my user profile details.	M	

**Priority Key: M=Must have; S=Should have; C=Could have.*

As a Scholarship Administrator (Field location):

Ref.	Business Requirement	Priority	Comment
A2.1	I want to be able to update the landing page with details of the application process and to be able to set the Application Status as 'open' or 'closed' for the next academic in-take.	M	
A2.2	I want to be able to review inline and/or print any supporting documentation with received applications.	M	
A2.3	I want to be able to set the status of each received application e.g. shortlisted, invited to interview, awarded scholarship etc.	M	
A2.4	I want to be able to sort by the status and other characteristics of all applications in my country of operation according to various criteria and run report on the same e. g. all applications; shortlisted; invited for interview; awarded scholarship.	M	

A2.5	I want to be able to enter the shortlist criteria that the applications will be compared to, save these shortlist 'filter' settings, and share these saved settings with other scholarship administrators.	M	
A2.6	I want to be able to upload the interview notes relevant to each applicant short-listed OR include a customizable section to manage interview notes, scoring, etc. In a consistent way that is built in when I log in as an interviewer to manage applicants being interviewed.	S	
A2.7	I want to be able to confirm the applicant's Refugee status by matching data with PRIMES data.	M	
A2.8	I want to be able to verify the name of the Institution where each student is enrolled.	S	
A2.9	I want to be able to notify HQ scholarship administrator of the students awarded DAFI scholarship programme at any given time.	M	
A2.10	I want a secure file sharing function to be able to share documentation with relevant partners, academic institutions and headquarters.	M	
A2.11	I want to be able to run a report on students with pending Institute attestations so that I can request the relevant documentation pertaining to each student and/ or match the attestations to certain criteria to confirm the continuation of the scholarship.	S	
A2.12	I want to be able to run a report on the activities of the current student cohort.	M	
A2.13	I want to be able to input student academic performance monitoring and student activities reporting.	M	

**Priority Key: M=Must have; S=Should have; C=Could have.*

As a Scholarship Administrator (HQ):

Ref.	Business Requirement	Priority	Comment
A3.1	I want to be able to run a report on the past and current students in the programme for all the operations at any given time.	M	
A3.2	I want to be able to see a dashboard on current scholarship application status across individual countries and across the programme as a whole.	M	
A3.3	I want to be able to see a dashboard showing 'trends' within the data collected over time.	M	
A3.4	I want to be able to review updates on the landing page before being posted.	M	
A3.5	I want to be able to edit (change, add, remove) existing application questions and fields	S	

**Priority Key: M=Must have; S=Should have; C=Could have.*

3.2 *Licensing*

In line with UNHCR's cloud-first strategy, we favor solutions which are hosted in the 'cloud'. Specific licensing requirements and /or limitations should be well documented, including how the licenses may be managed and retained should the contract expire.

At this stage the number of locations that will be required to use the solution will be 53 plus 1 headquarters location. The number of individual users of the solution will be approximately 220 over the headquarters and the field locations. The licensing mechanism envisaged should be well documented, flexible and scalable. UNHCR anticipates gradual growth of locations to be added. Specific items to be explicitly stated include;

- Process of license acquisition for both current locations and addition of locations to existing network
- License transfer and replacement to different locations (if required)
- License number/license metric
- License duration validity – including any minimum license terms or expected license periods
- Mechanism of tracking number of licenses and expiry due dates (if more than one license is required), for example any 'true-up' processes that can be initiated.

3.3 *Training*

3.3.1 Training Requirements

Training requirements must be stipulated in the offer in table format:
Location of training; Duration of training; Number of trainers required; Maximum/Minimum number of participants to training sessions; Training model eg, one-to-one, classroom, 'train the trainer'; Training type, ie end user, administrator, developer, etc. (For number of locations and staff to be trained please refer to para 2.1. However, it is assumed, under current global circumstances, that training will be virtual in most cases).

3.3.2 HQ Scholarship Administrator Training

An administrator training on how to manage the reporting functionality will be provided to pre-selected UNHCR staff overseeing the service. The options to have the training virtually and/or at UNHCR premises should be available. Depending on the participation, the training will be held in English. Topics to be covered in the training should be shared in advance. Assume no more than ten participants.

3.3.3 Location Scholarship Administrator Training

These users will be trained on the operations of the scholarship management platform. More specifically on content creation for the annual call for applications, application management (including, but not limited to, shortlisting, awarding and monitoring of applications, scheduling and working with templates) and managing data for the ongoing students. The options to have the training virtually and/or at UNHCR premises should be available. Depending on the

participation, the training will be held in English or French. Topics to be covered in the training should be shared in advance. Depending upon the model for training proposed, up to 220 participants should be assumed.

3.4 *Documentation*

As part of the overall implementation, the following documentation is expected from the successful bidder;

- Detailed technical diagrams
- Detailed description of implemented system including features contained therein
- Administrator and user training guides that should include first level troubleshooting guides
- License and service activation and service acceptance notices duly signed

Documentation should be provided in electronic format in English.

3.5 *Maintenance and Support*

Any potential regular maintenance and/or updates to the system should be stated in the proposal including any vendor-based feature upgrades and cost implications that may arise. All necessary patches must be applied by the bidder at no additional cost to UNHCR.

The bidder should specify the service delivery process through a service level agreement including support and escalation matrices. Support should be available across all time zones, Monday through to Friday during typical working hours (8 hours per day) as agreed between UNHCR and the selected provider. All interventions will be chargeable at rates included in the financial offer of the selected provider as per service agreement contract, including any out of hours support necessary.

3.5.1 User Account Management

The bidder should specify exactly where the applicant's personal data is stored and what measures are in place to secure it. It is expected that the minimum data required by UNHCR Education Unit will be kept within the application; where possible data will be referenced from other UNHCR applications.

The proposed solution must have support for Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) (including for example one-time passwords) and complex passwords. The proposed solution is expected to provide 'forgotten password' and password reset functionality for the applicant.

As mentioned above (see Section 2.2), any additional costs associated with levels of support should be clearly stated.

3.6 *Security Practices and Controls*

The bidder is expected to establish and maintain key security controls as follows:

- designate a security focal point;
- accept UNHCR's privileges and immunities and inviolability;
- host and store the UNHCR Data in a country that is a party to the 1946 Convention on the Privileges and Immunities of the United Nations;
- ensure the logical segregation of UNHCR Data from other information to the fullest extent possible;
- employ encryption in transit and at rest to current standards;
- employ Azure AD for staff authentication;
- report to UNHCR any suspected or confirmed incidents affecting UNHCR or shared data;
- provide UNHCR with rights to periodic audit; and
- provide UNHCR with right to perform periodic penetration tests.

During the term of the Contract, the bidder(s) will be expected to provide a copy of its most recent and recurring certificates and reports for:

- ISO 27001; and
- SOC 2 Type 2 Report.

The bidder should describe its current security controls, and ability/willingness to meet each of the requirements listed above.

3.7 *Out of Scope*

The following is considered out of scope for this proposal:

- Internet provision
- Supply and delivery of hardware
- Maintenance, support and management of any data or solution handshake provided by UNHCR to allow verification of applicants' data

4 Technical Response

Technical responses should be concisely presented and structured in the following order (using Annex F – Technical Compliance) to include, but not necessarily be limited to, the following information:

IMPORTANT: The technical offer must not contain any pricing information. Including pricing with the technical response may disqualify your submission.

4.1 *Company Qualifications*

- A description of the company with evidence of the company's capacity to perform the services required, including:
  - Company's full name, corporate address, telephone number and fax number;
  - Brief company profile (one page)
  - Primary contact and a back-up contact for this RFP process. Please include title, address, telephone number and email address; and
  - Financial statements covering the last three years.
- If a multi-location company, please specify the location of the Company's headquarters, and the branches that will be involved in the performance of the services.
- A list of Customer references with special focus on international organizations, such as the United Nations and their (Specialized) Agencies.
- Three or more letters of reference, with contact information.

4.2 *Personnel*

- UNHCR expects to receive the names and curriculum vitae of the Contractor's designated staff to be involved with the services including but not limited to:
  - Key Account Manager
  - Backup Account Manager
  - Billing Manager
  - Other key personnel
- UNHCR reserves the right to ask for more information on some or all the listed staff.

4.3 *Proposed Services*

- Contractor **must** complete the Technical Compliance Form set forth in Annex F **and provide a written response** that addresses each of the requirements set out in Sections 2 and 3 above.
- Contractor **must** provide a brief description of the implementation process and anticipated timelines.

5 RFP Contractual Requirements

5.1 *Contract Terms and Conditions*

Any contract awarded pursuant to UNHCR 2021-RFP-007 will be governed by a standard UNHCR contract for the provision of services, including the "UNHCR General Conditions of Contract for the Provision of Services" that is attached as Annex E to the RFP, which are in turn, based on terms and conditions common to all UN agencies. Acceptance of, and compliance with, these terms and conditions is a prerequisite for establishing any contract with UNHCR.

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In addition to accepting the UNHCR General Conditions of Contract for the Provision of Services, the awarded Contractor(s) will be required to accept the terms and conditions in Annex G titled "UNHCR Special Data Protection Conditions."

5.1.a General Conditions

Please indicate your acknowledgement of the UNHCR General Conditions of Contract for the Provision of Services and UNHCR Special Data Protection Conditions (Annexes E and G) and include the signed copies with your submitted Technical Proposal.

5.2 *UNHCR Vendor Registration Form*

If your company is not already registered with UNHCR, please complete, sign, and submit the Vendor Registration Form in Annex C with your Technical Offer.

5.3 *UNHCR Supplier Code of Conduct*

UNHCR refers to the UN Supplier Code of Conduct in Annex D. By signing Annex D, you indicate your acknowledgement of the UN Supplier Code of Conduct.

5.4 *Contract Duration*

UNHCR would like to establish a Frame Agreement(s) with the selected company(s) for three (3) years extendable for a maximum of two periods of up to one (1) year each subject to satisfactory performance. The successful bidder(s) will be requested to maintain its quoted pricing model for the duration of the Frame Agreement.

6 RFP Commercial Response

As part of this RFP, you have received a Financial offer form (Annex B – Financial Response) that should be used to submit the details of your price quotation. No other format will be accepted. Please state any assumption(s) made when providing the quotation.

6.1 *Technical Evaluation*

The Technical offer will be evaluated using inter alia the following criteria and percentage distribution: 70% from the total score (on a 100 points scale, i.e. max 70 points obtainable for the technical offer). Please find hereunder the detailed scoring breakdown.

PART A - Company Evaluation (Max. 2%)

Company Profile and Background	2.0%

PART B - Understanding of Requirements (Max. 63%)

User Interface	12.0%
Back End Interface	4.0%
Design Function	7.0%
Technical	7.0%
Functional	6.0%
Non-Functional	4.0%
Portal Services	2.0%
Applications Integration	5.0%
Business Requirements	11.0%
Security & Data Protection	5.0%

PART C - Governance & Contractual (Max. 5%)

Managed Services Governance	5.0%

Bidders might be asked to deliver a presentation via Webex on their proposal demonstrating the tool functionality and to introduce the team members who would work with UNHCR in case the agency is awarded.

The minimum passing score of the evaluation is 45 out of 70; if a bid does not meet these minimums it will be deemed technically non-compliant and will not proceed to the financial evaluation.

6.2 *Financial Evaluation*

The maximum score allocated to the financial components is 30% (of the total scores), i.e. max 30 points. The financial proposal is to be submitted ONLY by filling in Annex B. No other format will be accepted.

The maximum number of points will be allotted to the lowest price offer that is opened and

compared among those invited firms. All other price offers will receive points in inverse proportion to the lowest price.

If in the Statement of Work (SoW) and purchase order (PO) resulting from the RFP travel is requested, UNHCR shall reimburse travel expenses. Travel and terminal expenses incurred by the Contractor's personnel shall be reimbursed by UNHCR in the amount of the actual expenses incurred by the Contractor's personnel as evidenced by original supporting document, provided however that UNHCR shall not be liable to reimburse travel expenses incurred in excess of the amount indicated in the relevant purchase order. The maximum amount permitted for travel in any purchase order shall be based on the cheapest economic airfare available as determined by the UNHCR Travel Unit.