IAS

Request for Proposal

Submission and review handling services

Summary

This request for proposal is open to suppliers of abstract handling services and ICT companies to develop and/or use existing platforms dedicated to several IAS activities, including mentoring and fellowship programmes (see details of the activities below).

Proposal submission deadline is 13 July 2022

- No proposals will be considered after the appointed deadline
- An electronic version of the proposal is required
- Supplier overview form is mandatory and is accessible here
- Incomplete proposals will not be considered

Submit your complete proposal to tamara.torri@iasociety.org

International AIDS Society
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1. General

1.1   Who we are

IAS – the International AIDS Society – convenes, educates and advocates for a world in which HIV no longer presents a threat to public health and individual well-being. After the emergence of HIV and AIDS, concerned scientists created the IAS to bring together experts from across the world and disciplines to promote a concerted HIV response. Today, the IAS and its members unite scientists, policy makers and activists to galvanize the scientific response, build global solidarity and enhance human dignity for all those living with and affected by HIV.

1.2   What we do
Conferences

The IAS also hosts the world's most prestigious HIV conferences: the International AIDS Conference, the IAS Conference on HIV Science and the HIV Research for Prevention Conference.

International AIDS Conference

The International AIDS Conference is the premier global platform to advance the HIV response. As the world's largest conference on HIV and AIDS, it sits uniquely at the intersection of science, advocacy and human rights, bringing together scientists, policy makers, healthcare professionals, people living with HIV, funders, media and community. Since its start in 1985, the conference continues to serve as an opportunity to strengthen policies and programmes that ensure an evidence-based response to HIV and related epidemics.

IAS Conference on HIV Science

The IAS Conference on HIV Science is the world's most influential meeting on HIV research and its applications. This biennial conference presents the critical advances in basic, clinical and operational HIV research that move science into policy and practice. Through its open and inclusive programme, the meeting sets the gold standard of HIV science, featuring highly diverse and cutting-edge research.

HIV Research for Prevention Conference

HIV Research for Prevention is the only global scientific conference focused exclusively on the challenging and fast-growing field of HIV prevention research. HIVR4P fosters interdisciplinary knowledge-exchange on HIV vaccines, microbicides, PrEP, treatment as prevention and biomedical interventions as well as their related social and behavioural implications.

IAS Educational Fund

The IAS Educational Fund provides inclusive educational opportunities for key stakeholders within the HIV response. This is achieved by hosting regular meetings and webinars, organizing scientific publishing workshops, fellowships, the IAS Mentorship Programme and conference scholarships. For more information visit the IAS Educational Fund webpage.

HIV Programmes and Advocacy

We promote the implementation of evidence-informed and human rights-based strategies for improving the lives of people living with and most vulnerable to acquiring HIV. Through our various programmes and campaigns, we harness research, shape the evidence base and amplify

the voices of vulnerable communities to influence policy across the HIV prevention to care continuum.

[Towards an HIV Cure](#)
An initiative that provides leadership in driving concerted efforts to accelerate global scientific research and engagement towards a cure for HIV.

[Collaborative Initiative for Paediatric HIV Education and Research (CIPHER)](#)
A programme aimed at optimizing clinical management and delivery of services to infants, children and adolescents affected by HIV in resource-limited settings through advocacy and research promotion.

1.3 How we do it
Science. People. Progress.

Science. The IAS pursues and supports scientific advancements that positively alter the course of the HIV epidemic and promote greater understanding of these discoveries. The IAS pushes for the full spectrum of scientific achievement – from basic science to implementation research – and use the visibility of its meetings to highlight dynamic, innovative work.

People. The IAS invests in professionalizing and promoting the HIV workforce – particularly the next generation of HIV professionals – to build the skills and resources that are needed to end the epidemic. As a membership body, the IAS understands and represents the interests of its members in all of its work, retaining a global perspective that is relevant at a local level.

Progress. The IAS uses its scientific authority to move science into policy and policy into tangible impact against the epidemic. The IAS advocates for sustained global leadership and increased investment while keeping the fight against stigma and discrimination at the heart of its work.

For more information, read the [IAS 2021 – 2025 Organizational Strategy](#).

1.4 Project scope
The supplier is responsible for providing, setting up and maintaining several submission-based or application-based platforms:

- [Abstract Mentor Programme](#) - an abstract mentoring platform, including a mentor sign-up form, a feedback form, a draft abstract submission form, notification templates and automated notifications, a mentoring management system (back-office), and a reporting tool for each conference cycle.
- [CIPHER Grant Programme](#) - an application-based platform allowing two steps (letter of intent and full proposal), including a reviewing platform (two separate phases), a back-office to manage reviewers, notification templates and automated notifications, and a reporting tool. This platform should support two languages (French and English).
- [IPHASA grants](#) - an application-based platform managing two different grants (Peer Leaning Visit Grant and Implementation Science Research Grant), including a reviewing platform, a back-office to manage reviewers, notification templates and automated notifications, and a reporting tool. This platform should support two languages (French and English) and runs every other year.

- [Mark Wainberg Fellowship Programme](#) - an application-based platform, including a reviewing platform, a back-office to manage reviewers, notification templates and automated notifications, and a reporting tool. This platform should support three languages (Portuguese, French and English).
- [IAS Mentorship Programme](#) – an application-based platform for both mentors and mentees, including a reviewing platform, a back-office to manage reviewers, notification templates and automated notifications, and a reporting tool.
- [Academies](#) - an application-based platform, including a reviewing platform, a back-office to manage reviewers, notification templates and automated notifications, and a reporting tool. Currently two Academies are run every year with the potential of expanding to include an additional HIV Vaccines focused one.

These platforms shall be integrated with the IAS Azure B2C SSO and offer an API to synchronize data.

The supplier will not be responsible for administering the system.

2. Format of the proposal

2.1   Pricing model

All costs for systems, services, system adjustments, system integrations and other activities mentioned in this document, shall be included in a "per abstract" fee. For purposes of this RFP, an "abstract" is defined as any submission or application that goes through the process (i.e. assigned to a mentor and receiving feedback).

Only abstracts going through the mentoring or reviewing process should count towards the total number of "chargeable" abstracts. Duplicate abstracts, test abstracts, abstracts in draft form, withdrawn abstracts and other abstracts that have not been mentored and/or reviewed shall not count towards the total.

Alternatively, all costs for systems, services, system adjustments, system integrations and other activities mentioned in this document, shall be included in a "per platform" or "per flow" fee.

All estimated cost should be given in USD.

2.2   RFP – proposal – final agreement

The proposal should be based on the RFP (this document) and clearly refer to it. The proposal only needs to contain prices, based on the pricing model described above, and deviations from/additions to this RFP. This means that parts of this RFP that cannot be fulfilled or will be performed differently or additional services that are included in the proposal but not mentioned in the RFP, should be clearly specified. Parts of the RFP that will be fulfilled as described in this document do not need to be mentioned.

Service providers answering to this RFP are encouraged to come forward with suggestions on the process and innovative technical solutions for the systems.

Should the supplier be selected, the RFP and the proposal will constitute part of the final agreement. The final agreement will, apart from standard contractual arrangements, only contain deviations/additions/clarification from the proposal and the RFP. In case of conflicting information between these documents the final agreement shall prevail, then the proposal shall apply and lastly the RFP shall apply.

The final agreement will be based on the IAS' standard agreement with suppliers.

2.3   Reports and data

The supplier shall render available all data from the programmes to IAS – i.e. statistics and raw data for up to one year after the closing of each programme. A specific part of the back-office should be available to this effect.

All reports should be made available as web pages displaying live data. The supplier is encouraged to suggest ways to render the data available.

2.4   Timeline, planning and monitoring of the process

The supplier shall actively assist IAS during the planning and development of a timeline for each IAS programme and monitor the process in close cooperation with IAS.

2.5   Technical issues

The supplier is responsible for staffing and maintaining an email inbox (or an email inbox per activity) for technical issues. The inbox(-es) will be set up by the IAS and will either be forwarded to the supplier or the supplier will get web mail access.

The email inbox should be staffed and maintained by the supplier at no extra cost. All staff should be trained on the specific procedures for this programme and also get all basic information needed to be able to answer general questions about the programme. Emails should be replied to within 48 hours, excluding weekends.

All staff manning the email inbox shall write English fluently. Other languages, such as French and Portuguese, are an asset.

2.6   Confidentiality

The supplier or any subcontractors shall not give out any information received during the bidding process to a third party without prior written consent of IAS.

3. General system requirements

The below indicated functions are not the complete technical specification but should at this stage be seen as minimum requirements which will be further specified by IAS. The supplier must be able to and agree to fulfil all these requirements in order for the proposal to be considered.

3.1   General

The supplier shall have an online management system where all submissions are saved. No extra costs for the system itself shall be put on IAS.

The supplier shall describe their technical solution to support the systems.

The supplier shall provide a staging environment as well as a production environment.

3.2 System customization and changes

The design of all web pages and online forms shall in detail comply with the conference graphical profile or the IAS graphical profile (depending on the activity).

IAS will specify in detail how they should be built, designed and laid out; what functionality the online pages should have, and what integrations should be made.

IAS will also specify what data should be gathered and how it should be stored.

IAS will test and approve all systems before they may be launched. Even after the initial launch, the supplier shall make smaller changes to the systems, web pages and online forms at any time without any additional cost.

The supplier is entitled to charge IAS based upon an hourly or daily fee for new technical developments including programming and new logic.

3.3 Integration with the IAS Conference Account or IAS Account System

The systems above shall be integrated with either the IAS Conference Account or the IAS Account, depending on the activity. The Web Services are used to acquire user data from the user account as well as to update the user account of the status in the submission or application system.

The integration will use "Web services" integration technology and the setup should be based on the interface specified by IAS. The actual setup and the testing of this will be done together with IAS' ICT team.

The supplier is responsible for setting up their side of the integration and making all necessary adjustments to the submission systems.

3.4 System performance

The system must be able to handle a minimum of 100 requests per seconds without a noticeable performance reduction. Over 60% of the submissions and applications are likely to be submitted a few days before the deadline.

3.5 Bandwidth

The internet bandwidth for the submission web pages should be dimensioned in such a way that no obvious delays appear for the users even around deadlines when peaks arise. The display time of all webpages must be inferior to 300 milliseconds.

As many submitters or applicants may be located in lower- and middle-income countries, particular consideration should be given towards having pages that are light and for which the latest version of browsers and/or the fastest connection is required.

3.6 Backups

All submissions received shall be stored and kept safe. Daily backup of all submission data (including uploads and attachments) is required, and the backup data should be stored in a different physical location than the live data.

Daily back-ups have a duration of 7 days. Every 7 days, a weekly back-up is done with a duration of 1 month. Every month, a monthly back-up is done with a duration of 12 months.

3.7   Hosting and maintenance

The supplier shall host and maintain the submission and application platforms. The supplier may outsource the hosting and maintenance to a third party after approval by IAS.

3.8   System availability

The supplier shall guarantee system accessibility (system uptime) on an annual average of 99.7%. Excluded from this guarantee are planned interruptions that have been approved by IAS in advance.

In any case, service interruption that has not been planned with IAS and lasts more than two hours entails hourly financial penalties.

3.9   Response to failures

The response time to system failures should be less than one hour in the standard case for the entire submission period, during working days from 09:00 to 18:00 (Central European Time).

The response time to in-house failures should be less than four hours in the standard case for the entire submission period outside of office hours.

Close to deadlines (not standard case) the response time to in-house failures should be less than one hour outside of office hours.

3.10   Usability

The online submission systems shall be easy to use and understand.

Clear technical instructions as well as submission guidelines should be available to guide the user through the system.

3.11   Redundancy

Redundancy solutions should be in place for all systems (hardware and software) involved in the handling process.

This redundancy must be transparent and the user should not notice a case of system failure.

3.12   Security

To ensure maximum security of the data, the supplier shall put all possible technical means to secure the entire submission process, the database and the backups.

This applies to possible hack attempts, as well as hardware failures.

All communications and passwords must be encrypted. Databases cannot be directly accessible via Internet.