

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI)

PREQUALIFICATION OF LOCAL BIDDERS

Commodity/Service Required:	Skills in Technical and Advanced Research Training (START) Center
Type of Procurement:	One-off Purchase Agreement
Type of Contract:	Fixed Price with Payment Milestones
Term of Contract:	Six months, targeted to start November 2020 until May 2021
Contract Funding:	USAID
This Procurement supports:	STRIDE Project – a USAID funded project
Submit Proposal to:	Mr. Dominic Barnachea, Institutionalization Manager at dbarnachea@stride.rti.org USAID’s STRIDE Project Office Address: Unit 1004,10F 139 Corporate Center, Valero Street, Salcedo Village, Makati City 1209 Philippines
Date of Issue:	Friday, September 4, 2020
Date Questions from Supplier Due (Stage I):	Wednesday, September 9, 2020, 11:00 AM Philippine time
Date for Pre-Bid Meeting RSVP:	Friday, September 11, 2020, 4:00 PM Philippine time Confirmation (RSVP) is required from all bidders interested in attending the pre-bid meeting, which will be conducted via Zoom . A maximum of two representatives from each interested company will be permitted to attend. Send your confirmation of attendance including the name(s) of your participant(s) and subsequently the Zoom meeting invitation will be sent to you.
Date for Concept Paper Submission Due:	Tuesday, September 18, 2020, 4:00 PM Philippine time

Method of Submittal:

Submit a soft copy of concept paper in PDF version, with total file size not exceeding 25MB, and with the email subject “START Center Concept Paper” to the STRIDE program thru email to Mr. Dominic Barnachea, Institutionalization Manager, at dbarnachea@stride.rti.org. Concept Papers received after the deadline will be disqualified.

Respond via e-mail with attached document in MS Word /pdf format with solicitation number.

Application Process

The application process will take place in two phases as described below:

1. Stage One – Concept Paper
 - a. Applicants must submit a concept paper using the template shown in Annex A below with maximum 4 pages, following the instructions contained in this document. STRIDE will acknowledge the submission of Concept Papers within three (3) business days.
 - b. STRIDE will review Concept Papers against the merit review criteria detailed below. Results will be sent to each applicant within ten (10) business days following the meeting of the review panel.
 - c. Applicants who do not meet the objectives, minimum eligibility requirements or receives inadequate rating will be rejected.
2. Stage Two – Full Proposal
 - a. Successful applicants from Stage One will be invited to a co-creation and ideation workshop which will be facilitated by relevant technical advisors. The ideation workshop will provide applicants with support to address weaknesses identified in their concept paper and align concepts to STRIDE's objectives. A technical advisor will support the applicant in expansion of the concept note to a program description and full proposal application.
 - b. Applicants will submit a grant application in response to a Request for Proposals (RFP). Applications will be evaluated based on the technical factors detailed in the RFP.

STRIDE reserves the right to give the award without discussion with any applicant. STRIDE may reject any or all concept papers, or cancel the competition, if submissions do not sufficiently demonstrate the ability to meet the stated initiative goals.

Solicitation Number:

STRIDE-EOI-2020-001

Attachments to EOI:

1. Attachment "A" – Statement of Work
2. Annex "A" – Concept Paper Narrative Outline

All applicants are responsible to carefully review each attachment and follow any instructions that may be relevant to this procurement.

Attachment A

Commodity Specifications or Statement of Work

Statement of Work

SKILLS IN TECHNICAL AND ADVANCED RESEARCH TRAINING (START) CENTER

I. Purpose

The USAID Science, Technology, Research and Innovation for Development (STRIDE) Program seeks concept papers from Philippine higher education institutions (HEIs) or relevant training organizations to establish and operate a professional development center for building research-related skills of Filipino researchers and faculty.

II. Background

The STRIDE Program is an initiative of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) to strengthen science, technology and innovation capacity for inclusive economic growth in the Philippines. Since 2013, STRIDE has been implementing the *Skills in Technical and Advanced Research Training (START)* series, which aims to strengthen skills that increase the quality and quantity of research output of Filipino faculty and researchers. START courses focus on competencies related to the conduct of research, such as: writing proposals for government-funded grants; writing scientific papers for publication in high-impact journals; managing research and research teams; and applying for intellectual property protection. From 2014 to 2017, STRIDE implemented a total of 18 short-term courses, several of which were in collaboration with U.S.-based faculty, leading local research HEIs, government agencies and research-related organizations. More than 800 faculty and researchers attended the said courses, coming from various HEIs throughout the Philippines.

During its run, the demand for START courses has been overwhelming despite the presence of similar initiatives. Feedback from trainees, implementing partners, and government stakeholders indicate the need to continue offering the courses mentioned above, particularly in areas outside major cities. The results of a rapid training needs survey conducted by STRIDE for its research grantees and scholars support the demand for such trainings targeting HEI faculty and researchers, and also suggest the development of other competencies such as: a) connecting research design and data analysis; b) finding collaborators and research networks; and

communicating with funding agencies and private industries; and d) research project budgeting.

STRIDE aims to sustain the START initiative by supporting the establishment of a “START Center” – in partnership with a local host HEI or research/training organization. This jointly-developed START Center will continue the delivery of START courses, create new professional development programs and grow operations beyond the funding support of the STRIDE project.

III. **START Center: Initial Concept**

1. *Mission:* The START Center is envisioned to be a locally-managed professional development institute focused on building research-related competencies of Filipino faculty and researchers.
2. *Programs:* The Center will develop and offer short-term training courses. Building on the programs initially developed and delivered by STRIDE, the following are suggested course titles and topics:

START Writing Papers for Scientific Publication – designed to equip research staff, faculty and students with skills which are essential in publishing scientific studies. This course aims to help increase the rate of high-quality scientific publication in the country.

START Managing Research and Research Teams – intended for research groups who seek support in managing current (early-stage) and upcoming research. Learning sessions will enable participants to practice skills relevant to the project management life cycle. Towards the end of the workshop, participants will be required to complete a project management plan for their current/upcoming research project.

START Moving University Research Forward – designed to help mid- and high-level research managers create a strategic vision for increasing research output in their organizations. Participants will undergo exercises to assess their organization’s internal strengths and weaknesses in terms of research capability. Also, they will be guided in identifying opportunities and threats in engaging different stakeholders (e.g. industry, government, HEIs) for doing scientific research.

START Crafting Winning Research Proposals – designed for researchers seeking funding from private or public agencies, both local and international. Participants will attend as teams, and should bring a “capsule research outline” to the workshop. The final output of the course will be a completed a research proposal that will be submitted to a funding agency, with the research teams to be mentored by the workshop trainers even after the course.

START Growing Intellectual Property - complements existing efforts of the Philippine government to increase the IP base in HEIs and highlight their strategic role as potent sources of commercially-viable technologies. Target participants are faculty and staff of member-HEIs of the Innovation and Technology Support Office (ITSO) network of the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines.

New programs – To be developed based on the demand from HEIs and other stakeholders on relevant topics which are not indicated above.

A list of suggested topics covered by each theme is shown below:

<p><u>CRAFTING WINNING RESEARCH PROPOSALS</u> <i>Build relations with potential funding sources</i> <i>What is a typical review process</i> <i>How to communicate essential concepts</i> <i>Determine and allocate resource requirements</i> <i>The need to stick to the proposed work schedule</i></p>	<p><u>WRITING PAPERS FOR SCIENTIFIC PUBLICATION</u> <i>Publishing and the peer-review process</i> <i>Identifying the right journal to publish in</i> <i>Proper language and content formatting</i> <i>Strategizing to increase citation rates</i> <i>Promoting the published article</i></p>	<p><u>MANAGING RESEARCH AND RESEARCH TEAMS</u> <i>Creating a work breakdown structure</i> <i>Estimating resource requirements</i> <i>Planning procurement</i> <i>Forming and managing the research team</i> <i>Identifying and addressing risks</i> <i>Communicating progress to stakeholders</i> <i>Preparing to close the project</i></p>
<p><u>GROWING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ASSETS</u> <i>IP identification and searching</i> <i>Drafting patent claims</i> <i>Preparing specifications and drawings</i> <i>Valuation and negotiation</i> <i>Licensing and other commercialization strategies</i></p>	<p><u>MOVING UNIVERSITY RESEARCH FORWARD</u> <i>Forming multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary research networks</i> <i>Marketing existing research capabilities to potential industry partners and government agencies</i></p>	<p><u>SPECIAL TOPICS</u> <i>Organizing research conferences</i> <i>Effectively presenting research outputs</i> <i>Research governance</i></p>

3. *Instruction and Assessment:* START Courses will be designed to be outcomes-based, i.e. instruction and assessment methods are geared towards enabling the participant to perform specified tasks and/or produce specific outputs relevant to his/her actual work. Courses will be delivered through various modalities including through classroom learning, online modules, webinars and mentoring arrangements.

It would be useful to note that based on the results of a STRIDE training needs survey, researchers prefer courses that run for two to three days as compared to shorter (i.e. half- to whole-day) or longer (i.e. more than one week) durations, primarily to maximize the limited time they have away from their institutions. Mentoring, case discussions and writing workshops are considered highly effective compared with lecture-seminar modalities.

START courses will be delivered by experts and practitioners that may be sourced within the host institution or externally. The Center will endeavor to tap experts from outside agencies to deliver specific components of START courses, as needed, who may include: faculty and research managers from other local HEIs; officers from relevant government agencies; practitioners from private industries; and Balik Scientists or other non-local researchers.

4. *Marketing:* The START Center will create a web-based platform to post and update a training catalog, create surveys or deliver online course content as appropriate.
5. *Organization.* The START Center will be set-up within an existing organization and its operations will be integrated within the organizations' broader operations. It is desirable that the Center is organizationally attached to the institution's senior research official (e.g. Vice President for Research). It is also desirable to assign an existing position or create a new position in the host institution to be the Director for the START Center. Monitoring, evaluation and learning (or MEL) of training outcomes are a main function of the Center, and as such, some dedicated MEL personnel is recommended. Technical and administrative positions should also be identified to ensure full operational capacity, beyond STRIDE funding.
6. *Location and facilities.* The START Center will be located within the premises of the host's organization. There should be sufficient space for administrative operations and access to a 30-seat training room to be used for activities which will be held in-campus. The Center should also have capacity to implement online trainings, both through synchronous and asynchronous methods, whichever is ideal for a particular training course.

The Center will also endeavor to hold training activities throughout the country, particularly in second-tier cities as identified by the USAID Centers for Development Initiative (CDI) and the DTI-DOST Regional Inclusive Innovation Centers (RIIC). The Center will also explore opportunities to collaborate with other HEIs and agencies in said locations as hosts and/or training partners.

7. *Sustainability:* STRIDE will provide a seed grant for set-up of operations. The START Center will develop a business plan that will include a course fee structure, in order to sustain the Center’s operations. The START Center should also explore possible funding collaborations with government agencies, such as CHED and DOST, and other non-government organizations.

8. *Mandatory Target:* Within six to eight months of its operation, the Center must pilot at least two (2) START Courses or train a total of 40 researchers or faculty from different HEIs in the Philippines.

IV. Merit review criteria

Concept papers will be reviewed by a panel organized by STRIDE. The panel may include outside evaluators from relevant government agencies and other organizations. If necessary, STRIDE may discuss a concept paper with an applicant HEI.

All concept papers will be reviewed based on the criteria below. Note that the criteria are for the concept paper only. Additional criteria will be circulated as part of a full Request for Proposals for Phase 2 applicants.

Technical Element	Definition
Advancing STRIDE objectives	The extent to which the Concept Paper demonstrates responsiveness to the mission of the START Center and the overall goal of STRIDE.
Technical Approach	The degree to which the proposed approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • defines courses to be offered, describes learning delivery modalities and potential partners; and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> includes performance measurement using appropriate monitoring and evaluation metrics and tools.
Sustainability	The extent to which the Concept Paper’s proposed approach identifies strategies to sustain the START Center beyond STRIDE support.
Institutional Capacity	The degree to which the applicant demonstrates expertise and experience the development, conduct, and evaluation of training courses, in collaboration with other agencies or external trainers, if possible. Also, this refers to the degree to which the concept paper demonstrates a clear organizational development plan with structure, roles, responsibilities and reporting lines that will sufficiently support operations.

STRIDE will assess its level of confidence that the applicant will successfully perform based on the technical evaluation criteria listed above. In doing so, STRIDE will utilize the following rating system to select successful applicants from Stage 1:

Rating	Definition
3 points	STRIDE has high confidence that the applicant understands the requirement, proposes a sound approach, and will be successful in performing with little or no intervention.
2 points	STRIDE has some confidence that the applicant understands the requirement, proposes a sound approach, and will be successful in performing with some intervention.
1 point	STRIDE has low confidence that the applicant understands the requirement, proposes a sound approach, or will be successful in performing even with intervention.

V. Award value and inclusions

The award is up to USD48,000.00 or roughly Php2,400,000.00. The award is intended to co-fund the establishment and operations of the START Center over six months. Additional STRIDE support will be provided to the START Center in the form of access to- and use of- course modules materials previously developed by STRIDE and technical and administrative assistance for

organizational development, development and delivery of courses; and building a pool of trainers.

VI. Eligibility

Philippine HEIs or research/training organizations that have research as part of its core organizational mandate are eligible to submit a concept paper. The proponent must have a track record in providing training on technical and/or management skills for faculty and researchers. Partnering with various institutions, i.e. government agencies, research organizations, and local research HEIs, in the conduct of training or other research capacity-building activities is an advantage.

ANNEX A (this annex must not exceed 4 pages upon submission)

Concept paper narrative outline

Name of institution	
Date of submission	
Proposed budget (Php)	
Proposed period of performance (in months)	
Name of project proponent	
Position of project proponent	
Email address	
Contract number	
Correspondence address	
DUNS number (if available)	
Background of institution: <i>(highlight existing institutional capacity, access to instructors, past performance in training in general and STEM research training in particular, and if possible, relevant experience in partnerships with other institutions in the conduct of similar capacity-building activities)</i>	
Description of proposed START Center operations A. Mission B. Organizational structure	

- C. Courses offered (*highlight experience in the conduct of similar courses, if any, and recommendations for other potential START topics*)
- D. Instruction and assessment
- E. Location and facilities
- F. Funding mechanisms (*highlight existing and/or planned strategies for collecting tuition and sustaining operations; may include a brief discussion of how the STRIDE award budget may be used for the first 12 months of operation*)

Proposed timeline of START Center operations and activities within 12 months

(expected output: at least two START Courses implemented with 40 researchers/faculty trained)

(highlight milestones in setting up operational/administrative capacity; identify which course/s will be implemented with additional STRIDE support, and which course/s will be completely implemented by the START Center host; identify other initiatives to be led by the START Center host that will contribute to continuity of operations post-STRIDE)