

**Requests for Proposals  
Facilitation of electronic forum and management of  
TechNet21 website**

**Duration of the contract: 1 year, renewable  
Start date: 15 April, 2010**

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# 1 Introduction

The World Health Organization (WHO) is soliciting requests for proposals for the ongoing management and updating of the Technical Network for Strengthening Immunization Services (TechNet21) electronic forum and website.

## 1.1 About TechNet

The Technical Network for Logistics in Health, or TechNet, was initiated in 1989 as a professional network of experts involved in the management of immunization and other primary health care operations both at the grassroots and the global levels. In 2001, TechNet evolved to become the Technical Network for Strengthening Immunization Services, to reflect its sharper focus. The name was shortened to [TechNet21](#), 21 standing for twenty-first century, although it is still commonly referred to as 'TechNet'.

TechNet serves as a forum where issues relevant to the delivery of immunization services can be discussed, debated, and clarified. TechNet has two main components- its online component and an in-person consultation held every 18-24 months. TechNet electronic forum was started in February 1998 and currently has about 1200 subscribers.

TechNet is owned and managed by WHO in conjunction with UNICEF, through the generous support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

## 1.2 Vision

TechNet's vision is: To strengthen current immunization programmes and their management by involving immunization personnel in the development and testing of new strategies, and contribute in the implementation and development of new approaches.

## 1.3 Mission

TechNet aims to help improve immunization services and programmes through the following:

- Providing a platform linking immunization experts, partner organizations, researchers and equipment manufacturers from around the globe;
- Linking developing country EPI officers at the national, sub-national, and district levels, immunization logistics experts and consultants, and anyone interested in immunization management;
- Providing a mechanism for sharing field experience that could contribute to the improvement of immunizations service;
- Involving current TechNet members, field experts and officers in collaborating to address emerging issues in the field of immunization service delivery;
- Providing current, useful and conclusive information through the TechNet e-forum;

- Holding regular global meetings to bring together TechNet members and national EPI officers to discuss, address, and exchange information regarding emerging immunization issues;
- Establishing new mechanisms to collaborate closely with GAVI, WHO and UNICEF by providing a valuable resource pool of experts

The TechNet is aimed at the following **audiences**:

- Logisticians and vaccine managers
- National immunization program managers
- International partner organisations both in developed and developing countries;
- Vaccine and logistics researchers
- Vaccine and immunization equipment manufacturers
- Non governmental organizations and civil society
- General international audience

Since an important part of TechNet's audience is located in developing countries, TechNet must be developed taking into account very low internet **bandwidth** users while at the same time not looking outdated for partners, donors and interested parties in high bandwidth areas. Proposals should include a clear understanding of this problem, and feedback or advice on how it can be tackled further.

## 2 Scope of Work

This RFP is intended to provide potential service providers with enough information to be able to create a project proposal and provide a detailed cost projection.

This request for proposals covers the following areas of work:

- 1) Overall website management and hosting including ongoing website operations/maintenance along with site upgrading, improvement and hosting
- 2) Moderation of the web-based forums in accordance with the set WHO guidelines and directives, including moderation of photo, article, tools depots and blogs.

Each area will be described in more detail below. Applicants are encouraged to provide complete proposals addressing both areas of work; however applications covering only one area will also be accepted.

### 2.1 Website management and development

TechNet is looking for a partner who will, reporting to WHO or its designate, take on the responsibility of managing the website, including day-to-day maintenance, site improvements, troubleshooting and responding to user queries and problems. The following are the minimum requirements expected from respondents. We welcome proposals that include additional ideas for improving the website to make it a more relevant and used resource by members.

#### 2.1.1 TechNet website redesign

A key component of this area of work will be the overhaul and redesign of the existing site- both in terms of its graphical interface and logo and its navigational structure. Design of the site should be flexible and forward-looking enough to accommodate future changes in the types of information presented.

In consultation with WHO, the successful respondent will be responsible for the following:

- Thoroughly assess current website strengths and deficiencies, based on review of best practices for website design.
- Graphic overhaul of site, including the logo, as appropriate
- Redesign of information flow and navigation structure
- Implement updates and improvements to the forum and existing depots
- include a low bandwidth version (i.e. possibly a low graphic website that can be chosen by those that have low bandwidth)

#### 2.1.2 Strengthening interaction and information sharing

The development of tools and interfaces to increase information sharing and interaction amongst members should be included in the proposal. These could include the development of areas such as virtual by-invitation meeting rooms for webseminars to be held or the development of expert blog areas. Note that the above mentioned approaches are ideas only; respondents are welcome to propose

other methods of achieving the stated objective (strengthening interaction and information sharing amongst members).

### **2.1.3 Ongoing website operations**

In addition to the enhancements and changes described above, the website should include, at minimum, the following basic features:

1. General information pages
2. An events calendar on the home page, including training opportunities and upcoming meetings;
3. A "Member Portal" that contains the following:
  - a. The individual member's account information
  - b. The ability for each member to update their personal information;
  - c. Ability for members' to register for the expert database
4. Maintenance and further improvement of existing forums; weekly e-mail digest of blog and forum postings, archives.
5. Maintenance and further improvement of existing Photo, Article and Tools depots, where users can upload, share and review key information
6. Links to other key immunization and/or logistics websites and resources
7. An "Administrative Homepage" that would have the ability to pull up members with a detail page that lists; contact information, number and type of posts/documents etc
8. A powerful and flexible search mode, enabling users to search the website by keyword or event.

### **2.1.4 Hosting and Maintenance**

The respondent will be expected to host the website, databases, mailing ListServer. Contractor would be responsible for getting the appropriate licenses for the softwares used.

The TechNet site must be accessible 24 hours per day x 7 days per week x 365 days per year to all users. As such, contractors will submit as part of their proposal a detailed maintenance, accessibility and contingency plan. At a minimum, it is anticipated that the contractor will respond within 24 hours on any service call of a routine nature, and 4 hours for emergency service.

## **2.2 Moderation**

TechNet is currently operating an online discussion-based web forum, as well as three resource depots: photos, tools (software) and articles.

The moderation services are required to provide the following:

### **2.2.1 Web forum and blog areas**

- Work closely with the TechNet Secretariat to continue expanding the pool of subscribers in all regions of the world.
- Work closely with the TechNet Secretariat to ensure that the forum is productive and useful for its members.
- Review and approve all postings within a 24 hour period
- Classify posts according to subject matter

- Seek clarification from WHO on any questionable content prior to posting
- On an annual basis, review postings to-date and suggest a realignment of categories as needed to better reflect topic areas
- Produce a weekly digest, highlight the discussions taking place on the forum and blogs over the past 7 days, including the posting of any new articles or tools
- Guide discussion in such a fashion that message threads are productive and informative
- On request from site users, assist with posting comments in the discussion forum
- Following international meetings, ensure key presentations and content is online and available through the forum or appropriate depot

### **2.2.2 Moderation of Photo, Article and Tools depot**

- Review, verify and approve postings in the three depots within a 24 hour period, ensuring information entered is accurate and complete
- Follow-up with authors/content providers if any key information is incomplete, or there are any problems with the files
- Add keywords and other file information as necessary to ensure depots are searchable and up-to-date
- Add any additional resources sent via email to the appropriate depot
- Review, verify and approve postings on any new features added to the website in future e.g. meeting room.

## 3 Criteria for selection

### 3.1 Experience

It is vitally important that the successful bidder demonstrate their website design expertise, their understanding of the role of TechNet as well as a sense of its future potential. Previous experience in creating and moderating web forums and/or other social networking sites would be an asset.

The successful bidder should also demonstrate an understanding of working with not-for-profit organizations in an international setting, ideally with an understanding of the unique needs of public health/ immunization community.

For the **website management** component, respondents should include in their submission:

- A cover letter demonstrating your understanding of the site and its purpose
- Overview of your planned approach for the site redesign and for any site improvements
- Overview of your company's experience and history, including client lists and awards, if any
- Sample web design design work (highlighting web site redesign and navigation structure development)
- Biographies of the principals, project team and possible subcontractors, including the experience and past employment for proposed team. (Information should be provided only on individuals who would be assigned to the TechNet project). These should include, at minimum, biographies for those filling the following roles: Project Manager, Programmer, Graphic Designer, Writer and Moderator
- Description of project approach to include timeline and ways of working along with key milestones
- A detailed explanation and description and history of the company engaged to host the site, including details on the capabilities, capacity and back-up plans for the server where our site would be hosted
- Please provide at least three client references, including both email and telephone contact details for each

For the **moderation** component, respondents should:

- Submit a document outlining how the moderator will ensure productive participation from members especially developing country members.
- Samples of previous writing work, especially in summarizing issues.
- Description of the moderator's work schedule, including assurances of timely response to all queries, and back-up plan in case of illness or vacation
- Evidence that the moderator has a general understanding of immunization logistics or the proven ability to acquire such knowledge in a timely fashion.

## 3.2 Site Ownership

Ownership of the site and all its content are to remain with the World Health Organization. Successful respondents will be expected to send a back-up copy of the site and all relevant files to WHO every 6 months.

## 3.3 Cost

The successful bidder will provide a favorable and complete pricing package based on the criteria outlined in this proposal.

Bidders responding to this RFP should provide a cost breakdown covering the minimum requirements outlined in this document (TechNet website redesign, Strengthening interaction and information sharing, Ongoing website operations, Hosting and Maintenance, Moderation), as well as cost estimates for any additional services that can be provided upon agreement between both parties.

The amount of previous contracts for this scope of work has been in the \$60,000 range. Respondents proposing budgets above this level must supply a detailed justification, and should note that their proposals may be subject to additional review.

## 3.4 Further information

Any requests for further information or clarification regarding this RFP should be addressed to: Dr. Rudi Eggers, [eggersr@who.int](mailto:eggersr@who.int)

Please allow up to 72 hours for response to any queries.

## 3.5 Submission

Respondents to this request should submit their proposals via email, to Dr. Rudi Eggers, [eggersr@who.int](mailto:eggersr@who.int) by March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010. All proposals will be reviewed by March 25<sup>th</sup>, and any requests for further information or clarifications sent out at that point. Applicants should ensure they are available to address any questions between March 25<sup>th</sup> and April 31<sup>st</sup>, 2010. Contract is expected to be awarded by April 6<sup>th</sup>. The contractor is expected to be ready to begin work between April 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010.