

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

**Implementation of a learning and employment digital
platform for Forward MENA, a talent management company
based in Lebanon**

RFI release date: [August-1, 2022]

RFI response due date: [August-16, 2022]

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1. Background and objective

We are pleased to invite you to answer this Request for Information ("RFI") document issued in connection with the prospective implementation of an online learning and employment platform for Forward Mena, a leading talent management company based in Lebanon (the "Client" or the "Company").

The management team of the Forward Mena have authorized an investigation into the development of a new digital platform to support their business going forward.

The purpose of this RFI is to collect written information about the capabilities of a number of specialized vendors in this sector, in order to shortlist four to six vendors to be invited to provide a full proposal at a later stage.

RFI responses, questions and communications related to this Project should be addressed to the below contact details:

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This Request for Information (RFI) is issued solely for information and planning purposes only, and does not constitute a solicitation. Written responses to the RFI will not be returned. These do not qualify as an offer and cannot be accepted as a binding contract. The Client is not liable for any cost incurred by the vendor in response to this RFI.

2. Brief overview on the Client

Forward Mena (previously Beirut Digital District Academy) is a non for profit organization aiming to develop the skillset of people from all backgrounds to fulfill the digital jobs of today and tomorrow. It has partnered with the World Bank and UNICEF to design and implement skilling up initiatives across Lebanon and the wider MENA region. It supports the new generation of educational programs in testing and developing their curriculum, sourcing participants and scaling. Forward MENA is an incubator of educational programs at the intersection of design, technology and leadership targeting kids, university students and continuous learners

3. Statement of need

This document is intended to provide our selection team with a high-level view of your service/product overall fit to our company's functional needs, technology requirements, and budget constraints.

The ultimate goal of this RFI is to reduce our long list of suppliers down to a more manageable list of solutions for further review.

At a high level, the product will bring together the private sector, key digital technology players, educational institutions, and young talent. It aims to develop a more equitable, systematic and empowering bridge from skills training to employment opportunities in the digital economy, while enhancing the labor intermediation between supply, demand, educational providers and policy-makers.

The selected solution is intended to be used in upskilling 100,000 thousand individuals in the MENA region over the next 5 years by removing barriers to accessibility and affordability of digital skills training.

The primary objective is to provide learners with customized learning pathways from the world’s biggest technology players, creating new routes towards employment and earning opportunities. The platform will help individuals match their interests against employment opportunities and understand the steps and skills needed to achieve their goals. It will thus:

- Deliver enhanced access to a wide range of courses from the world’s leading tech providers
- Create pathways to the most in-demand employment opportunities
- Improve the ability of learners to gain job-ready skills at all levels
- Provide support to learners in identifying, preparing, and applying for employment opportunities
- Validate prior learning through a skills self-assessment leading to certification recognized by employers
- Provide incentives for individuals who complete and/or achieve certain milestones

4. Preliminary requirements

4.1 Requirements - Criteria listing

The platform the Client is looking to develop will expose the following features that are grouped by user profile. Can you please specify if you would be willing to provide this feature and add any additional comments?

Profile	Feature	Vendor Comments (including references when applicable)
Public Guest	View skill and job trend reports	
	Browse “featured” learning activities	
	Browse “featured” skill assessments provided through the platform	
	Browse and/or search a catalog of learning activities sourced from third party learning content providers	
	Sign up as a Learner natively or using thirdparty account on platforms like LinkedIn, Google, etc.	
	Sign up as an Employer	
Learner	Manage profile. It is worth noting that the profile will contain a dedicated section for the certifications of the learner as well as other key artifacts demonstrating their achievement (i.e. sample projects).	

	Take a third party provided skill assessment. The integration with the assessment provider will need to be developed to retrieve the assessment result. (This feature may be replaced with a built-in skill assessment if available in your solution.)	
	Enroll in one of the learning activities listed on the platform. This is expected to be through a redirection to the learning activity provider	
	View learning activities I am enrolled in along with their status. If allowed by the provider of the learning activity provider the status will be fetched directly from their system along with the link to the completion certificate (via a developed API based integration)	
	View learning programs (created by platform content managers) and apply to them through a redirection to the program's website	
	Consume learning pathways (created by platform content managers) and track their progress in achieving them (manually or automatically if learning activity provider integration allows it)	
	Generate encouragement messages and notifications to learners in order to complete learning activity.	
	Maintain a central repository of learning records (accomplished and ongoing learning activities)	
	Apply to platform-native job opportunities (created by Employer below on the platform) and to upload/link any documentation that proves that the candidate meets the required learning activities	
	Apply to a third party provided job outside the platform.	
Employer	Create job opportunities while linking required learning activities for applying to the job. Receive instant recommendations of candidates based on specified skills and learning activities	

	Browse and/or search both platform-native and third party provided job opportunities	
	Shortlist and provide feedback to the candidates that applied to a job opportunity created on the platform. For each applicant the platform will provide a score based on the level of requirements matched by the candidate	
	Provide proactive alerts to hiring company managers on new candidates close to completing so that they are aware of new candidates quickly	
	Create “applied projects” (a special kind of learning activity) and to specify if they provide coaching guidance for applicants to this type of project	
	Shortlist and provide feedback to the candidates that applied to an “applied project”	
Content Managers	Manage competency model used to map learner and job related skills	
	Create announcements about learning programs. These are blended (online and on-prem) cohort-based programs launched in a specific timeframe and containing learning activities and applied projects	
	Create “Learning pathways” as a series of steps; each step is associated with a learning activity	
	CMS for configuring static pages for website visitors	
	Analytics dashboard regarding for job and learning activity related indicators	

4.2 Additional Questions

A. Product

- Requirements:
 - Does your system have additional features that are not covered in our list and that you judge as important to add? If yes, can you provide more details on those features?
 - If your solution cannot cover the full extent of our requirements, would you be willing to work on the implementation with other partners to cover the missing parts? Have you worked in a setup involving other implementation partners and can you name them?

- Is your solution mobile ready for ios and android?
 - Does your solution support multiple languages and most notably Arabic and English
- Implementation:
 - What are the typical phases involved in an implementation effort you undertake for your clients?
 - Are you willing to engage with the Client in an agile delivery model? If yes, what type of Agile Methodologies do you use in a similar context?
 - What is the average duration of implementation for your clients?
 - Does your company or implementation partner have machine learning experience?
- Customization:
 - What level of customization do you usually provide on top of your existing solution (if any)?
 - Is your team ready to customize part of the user interface of the platform based on the recommendation of a third-party UX/UI consultant?

- **Technical Stack**
 - What is/are the programming languages used by your technical team?
 - What are the database technologies used by your system and do these require additional costs (ie. separately from the implementation fees)?
 - Where do you typically deploy your solution (eg. Cloud, On Prem, either)?
 - Is your company ready now or later to provide the full source code? If yes, are there additional costs associated with the code acquisition?
- **Maintenance/Support:**
 - What levels of support does your company provide?
 - What type of maintenance requests do you handle?
 - Where is your support team located, and what is their typical response time?
 - How often are maintenance upgrades to the software planned to be released?
- **Documentation/Training:**
 - Would your company be ready to train our team and users on the administration and usage of your implementation?
 - What training delivery methods do you use? (Videos, webinars, classroom, etc.)

B. Vendor

- How long has your company been in business?
- How many clients are you currently supporting?
- What experience do you have working on learning and employment online services?
- Can you provide a list of top clients/projects related to online learning and employment?
- Is your company involved in any upcoming / anticipated mergers or acquisitions?

C. Commercial

- What are the commercial elements that drive the fees associated with your implementation?
- Is maintenance accounted for as part of the end-to-end service or charged separately? In the latter case, what are the commercial elements that drive maintenance fees?

4.3 Additional notes and instructions

If possible, please include budgetary pricing for the software that appears to be needed to meet our requirements, sufficient to that end. All estimated costs should be presented including software licenses, annual maintenance, implementation, program modifications, software upgrades, hardware, and training.

It is anticipated that responses can be processed from the material in this document, but if you would like the opportunity to discuss the RFI or your response, a telephone conversation can be requested by emailing [rawad@rams.services]. Questions may also be submitted by email to clarify any points that may not have been sufficiently clear.

Any use of subcontractors must be identified in the response. By responding to this RFI, you acknowledge that it will be done completely at your company's expense, and no information other than that which is already in the public domain will be made available to any third parties without express prior consent from the Client.