



# **Product Data Acquisition, Validation, Analytics, and Development of the USDA Global Branded Food Products Database Request for Proposal**

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Deadline for Proposal Submission: May 17, 2024

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# RFP Introduction

## Company Background

In 1974, a ten-pack of gum in an Ohio store became the first scanned and barcoded product. That moment launched a revolution in product identification to transform the way the world does business.

The organization that sparked this transformation we know today as GS1.

GS1 US® is a not-for-profit information standards organization. GS1 US has 300,000-plus members, and GS1 Standards are the most widely used supply chain standards in the world. Founded in 1973 and based in Ewing, New Jersey, GS1 US administers the Universal Product Code (U.P.C.) barcode, as well as other information standards and data carriers.

GS1 US collaborates with business and industry to encourage the adoption and use of GS1 Standards-based solutions that can help improve business processes. The standards also help support many regulatory compliance requirements for several industries including healthcare and the food industry.

Through our industry initiatives program, GS1 US collaboratively works with industries and stakeholders to address challenges and meet goals through standards-based solutions.

GS1 US has approximately 225 employees. All GS1 US employees are located in the United States, across two main offices, and numerous virtual locations.

## Confidentiality Statement

The information contained in this document is proprietary to GS1 US. It is distributed to you for the sole purpose of providing information for your response to GS1 US's Request for Proposal ("RFP"). As such, this document or any part thereof may not be reproduced or redistributed without written consent from GS1 US, Inc. In order to obtain the RFP and participate in the response process, all potential offerors ("Proposer(s)") must have executed a Non-Disclosure Agreement ("NDA") with GS1 US. The NDA will specify additional provisions concerning the protection of confidential information for the Proposer upon execution of the NDA.

## Work For Hire

Proposer understands that all works prepared pursuant to a contract with GS1 US that results from successful response to this RFP will be considered works made for hire and shall be the exclusive property of GS1 US, which shall be considered the author or inventor of such works, except as expressly provided in accordance with any agreement issued in accordance with the RFP. Proposer further understands and agrees that in the event any works created by Proposer within the scope of, or in connection with, performing the services, or at the request of the Proposer, fails to meet the legal requirements of a work made for hire owned by GS1 US, then this agreement shall operate to assign to GS1 US all of Proposer's rights, title and interest in such works. When requested, Proposer shall assist GS1 US or its designee in efforts to protect and/or register such works, but GS1 US shall have sole and absolute discretion to register, enforce, and/or assign such works. Upon termination of this agreement, Proposer shall deliver to GS1 US all copies of such copyrighted works in Proposer's possession. In performing the services, Proposer shall refrain from unauthorized copying of copyrighted

works owned by third parties or infringing upon the intellectual property of third parties in the performance of agreed upon terms and conditions with GS1 US in response to this RFP.

## Request for Proposals

GS1 US was selected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Agricultural Research Service Division as the Awardee of a Non-Assistance Cooperative Agreement for the project titled USDA Global Branded Food Products Database & Public-Private Partnership (the “USDA Project”). GS1 US now seeks a data partner to serve as Subawardee on the USDA Project. Any award issued because of this RFP process shall therefore be subject to the rules set forth in 2 CFR Part 200.

The objectives of this RFP are as follows:

- To offer your company the opportunity to become a viable and strategic data partner to GS1 US as Subawardee on the USDA Project.
- To inform your company of the scope of services required of the Subawardee for the USDA Project.
- To inform your company of the RFP procedures and evaluative criteria used by GS1 US in analyzing proposals submitted in response to this RFP.
- To encourage the participation of small and minority businesses, veteran owned businesses and Women’s Business Enterprises.

You are being asked to provide a proposal for the requirements described in this RFP. GS1 US shall select the best data partner based on an assessment of the skill, experience, relative cost, and proposed performance methods of competing proposers.

GS1 US reserves the right to modify these requirements at its sole discretion. GS1 US also reserves the right to reject any and all proposals, or to accept the proposal it considers most favorable to GS1 US’s interest in its sole discretion. GS1 US further reserves the right to seek new proposals when such procedure is considered by it to be in the best interest of GS1 US.

## Conflicts

The Proposer must warrant and represent that there is nothing in its response to the RFP that presently conflicts or will conflict with any other duty or agreement of the Proposer. In particular, the Proposer must warrant that nothing in the RFP response violates any other agreement or duty of non-disclosure that the Proposer does not have the authority to reprint in the response.

## Relationship of Parties

Neither Party is an agent for the other and has no authority to represent or bind the other Party as to any matters, except as expressly authorized. Nothing contained in this RFP will be deemed or construed by the parties, nor by any third party, as creating any partnership or joint venture relationship between the Parties. Nothing in this RFP will constitute or permit either party to execute on behalf of the other any contract or other document, or to bind or otherwise obligate the other party. GS1 US has the sole right and obligation to supervise, manage, contract, subcontract, direct, procure, perform or cause to be performed, all work to be performed in response to the RFP.

## Due Authority

Proposer represents and warrants that it has full power and authority to respond to this RFP and to perform its respective obligations in connection with this RFP and Proposer's proposal.

# Proposal Instructions

## General Considerations

A GS1 US RFP evaluation team will review all proposals and collectively select the Proposer(s) of choice. The RFP evaluation team will conduct technical evaluations of the proposals based on whether the Proposer possesses the ability to perform successfully under the terms and conditions of this RFP.

To be considered for award, all Proposers must timely submit an Acknowledgement of Receipt of RFP (**Appendix 1**) and a complete proposal that is responsive to the requirements of this RFP.

By submitting a proposal under this RFP, Proposer acknowledges that any resulting award issued in connection with this RFP process is subject to the rules set forth in 2 CFR Part 200.

## Acceptance of Proposal

GS1 US reserves the right to accept or reject any or all RFP bids, modify the RFP specifications, enter into negotiations, or to waive any formalities described herein. GS1 US, at its sole discretion, may decide to take no procurement action. GS1 US reserves the right to award the RFP to other than the lowest priced Proposer based upon the "Evaluation and Selection Criteria" set forth herein. GS1 US further reserves the right to seek new proposals when such procedure is considered by it to be in the best interest of GS1 US.

In the event of questions/answers, modifications, clarifications, or additions to the RFP become necessary as determined by GS1 US, all Proposers will receive, in writing, the revised addenda to the RFP.

## Proposal Preparation Costs

GS1 US shall not be held liable for any activity or costs incurred by the Proposer(s) in the preparation of the proposal and participating in the proposal evaluation process, including costs for studies or designs. Likewise, GS1 US shall not be held liable for costs incurred during any negotiations on proposals or proposed contracts or for any work performed in connection therewith.

## No Bid or Withdrawal

Proposers who receive the RFP and do not wish to bid may withdraw their proposals from consideration at any time prior to award. Proposers who decide to withdraw their proposals should reply to GS1 US immediately with an email of "No Bid", in order to avoid unnecessary expenditure of resources in reviewing such proposals. Additionally, if any Proposer withdraws during any state of the RFP process, a similar email should be sent. All documentation should be returned to GS1 US or properly disposed of in the event of a "No Bid" response. GS1 US shall have the right to destroy or retain for its records all copies of proposals withdrawn from consideration.

## Award Pricing

The Proposer is responsible for clearly identifying and submitting, in their response, all costs required of GS1 US.

As GS1 US may award based on the initial offer, a Proposer should make its initial offer on the most favorable terms available. GS1 US reserves the right, however, to have discussions with those Proposers falling within a competitive range, to request revised pricing offers from them, and to make an award or conduct negotiations thereafter. Proposer is expected to offer the best terms, prices, and discounts that offered to any of the Proposer's customers for similar goods and services as specified in this RFP.

## Proposal Submission Due Date

Proposals should be received by the contact named on the cover page no later than 5:00 PM EST on May 17, 2024. Proposals should be sent electronically via pdf, if possible. Each Proposer assumes full responsibility for delivery and deposit of their complete proposals by the proposal due date. GS1 US is not responsible for any loss or delay with respect to delivery of the proposal. Any proposal received after the date and time specified may not be considered. Once submitted, the proposals become the property of GS1 US and cannot be returned.

## Formal Proposer Proposal Presentations

Selected Proposers should be prepared to formally present and discuss their individual proposal packages to the GS1 US RFP evaluation team members according to the RFP Schedule. This will provide the evaluation team an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification on any of the Proposer responses to the RFP. If selected to make a formal presentation, Proposers will receive additional instructions from GS1 US concerning the scheduling of such presentations and all procedures applicable to such presentations.

## Proposal Life

The prices and other terms offered by Proposer must be firm for an acceptance period of 180 days from the proposal submission date.

## Late Proposals

GS1 US reserves the right to accept or reject without consideration any proposal that does not fully address the requirements of the RFP or arrives at the designated address and contact after the proposal due date and time identified.

If portions of the response do not comply with any specifications, items or scope of the RFP, the Proposer should clearly highlight any such non-compliance for easy identification.

If the proposal response is at variance with the requirements of any item in the RFP, then the Proposer shall describe in detail, with full support data, the reasons why the proposal response still meets the requirements and not be considered an exception to the RFP or be treated as a partial response. Each proposal response classified as a variance statement should be clearly identified.

## Rejection of Proposals

GS1 US reserves the right in its sole discretion to reject any or all proposals in whole or in part without incurring any cost or liability whatsoever. All proposals will be reviewed for completeness of the submission requirements. A proposal may be rejected if it fails to meet a material requirement of the RFP, if it is incomplete, or if it contains irregularities. A deviation is material to the extent that a proposal is not in substantial accord with RFP requirements.

## RFP Schedule (All Dates are 2024)

RFP Distributed	April 25, 2024
Proposer Deadline to Acknowledge RFP and Intent to Participate	May 17, 2024
Due Date for Participant Written Questions	May 17, 2024
GS1 US Response to Participant Written Questions	May 24, 2024
Proposer Proposal Due Date	May 17, 2024
Proposer Finalists Notified	May 31, 2024
Proposer Conferences (if GS1 US requests)	June 10-19, 2024
Proposers Notified of Decision	June 26, 2024
Agreement Finalized	June 28, 2024
Begin Performance	July 1, 2024

## Evaluation and Selection Criteria

Each proposal submitted must adhere to the instructions, format/content, and specifications described in this RFP. This will ensure that evaluation criteria can be systematically applied to all Proposers. The major criteria categories for selection and evaluation are listed in priority order:

1. Approach to solutioning GS1 US's requirements
2. Support model and value of support relative to cost
3. Knowledge level of data analytics, data validation, and management of large data sets
4. Experience and proven track record of success in delivering an API
5. Experience with same or similar federal or state projects
6. Project management methodology and how you will communicate with stakeholders throughout the project
7. Proven track record of successfully deploying marketing/communications and targeted outreach strategies to engage with food and beverage manufacturers

## Final Selection and Award

GS1 US will notify each participating Proposer of the selection/approval or rejection of all or a portion of their proposal. The decision to award will be a final decision. GS1 US reserves the right to reject any, portions of, or all proposals without giving reason for the rejection, and to award a contract or contracts to the proposer of their choice.

No selection/approval will be deemed final until the Proposer(s) executes an agreement with GS1 US. The selection and contract negotiations will not be separate processes. No contract or agreement, expressed or implied, shall exist or be binding on GS1 US before the execution of a written contract by both parties. If agreement on the terms of such a contract cannot be reached after a period deemed reasonable by GS1 US in its sole discretion, GS1 US may enter



negotiations and sign an agreement with any other Proposer who submitted a timely and responsive proposal to this RFP.

GS1 US reserves the right to execute any of the following options:

- Reevaluate project requirements and scope.
- Issue no award for any of the services described in this RFP.
- Initiate negotiations with one or more Proposers.
- Repost the RFP to seek additional Proposers and modify the timeframe.

GS1 US is not obligated to accept the lowest price. Further, GS1 US reserves the right to not proceed with the project and to not choose a Proposer, if GS1 US so elects.

Questions regarding GS1 US's award of any business on the basis of proposals submitted in response to the RFP or on any other matter in connection with the selection process should be addressed to Jacquie Dougherty no later than May 17, 2024 at 5:00 PM EST. To ensure the competitive position of each Proposer, Proposer inquiries will be kept confidential. However, GS1 US will issue responses to inquiries and any other corrections and amendments, and will provide such responses by May 24, 2024.

# Overview of the USDA Project and Data Partner Requirements

## Background and Approach for the USDA Project

Public policy concerning food and nutrition is dependent on the availability of reliable and current information regarding the nutritional content of commonly consumed foods. The USDA and USDA-ARS have maintained such data for more than 100 years, but the complexity of the current food system in the United States makes it impossible to continue the work without partnerships with the private sector. The USDA-ARS and GS1 US entered into an agreement for the purpose of enhancing the nutritional information in the ARS National Nutrient Database.

As explained above, GS1 US is a not-for-profit member organization established over 50 years ago by the grocery industry to administer and manage Universal Product Codes, also known as U.P.C.'s. The U.P.C. remains one of the most successful standards in history - with billions of barcodes scanned daily worldwide. This method of identifying products and capturing product data has evolved into what is now known as the GS1 System of Standards, the world's most widely used supply chain standards. GS1 Standards continue to be widely implemented across the food supply chain, as is the GS1 Global Data Synchronization Network (GDSN<sup>®</sup>) which is used to share GS1 standards-based product information among trading partners.

With many across industry looking to leverage the GDSN to populate the ARS National Nutrient Database, USDA-ARS will provide funding to GS1 US for services to:

- 1) Leverage commercial private sector global standards use in their operations and the industry practice of the GDSN as well as other data collection mechanisms to continue to facilitate the automatic movement of nutritional data from food manufacturers to the USDA Global Branded Food Products Database (GBFPD), which is publicly available;
- 2) Continue to automate the movement of nutritional data from food manufacturers to the GBFDB using that system as well as another alternative for those who currently do not have data in the GDSN;
- 3) Continue to maintain best process to engage the food industry and encouraging them to submit nutritional data to the USDA GBFPD using that system; and
- 4) Facilitate and enhance ARS and USDA technology transfer using these data transfer channels with ARS.

## Data Partner Requirements

GS1 US seeks to partner with a Proposer that can provide food and beverage product data along with consistent data validation, data analytics, and other services in support of the USDA Project. Below are types of support we anticipate will require assistance.

- Work with manufacturers to upload product data contained on the label.
- Develop consistent product data validations on information received on food and beverage products, including any new requirements added to the database data set.

- Deploy marketing/communications to encourage food and beverage manufacturers to submit their product data to the USDA GBFPD. Execute outreach campaigns to food and beverage companies as identified.
- Support/participate in all partner meetings.
- Provide analytics/adjustments to increase U.S. branded and private label food and beverage products. Includes a minimum of providing quarterly marketplace analysis.
- Deliver an API for validated food and beverage product data.
- Establish validations for new product data fields defined and agreed upon, such as those regulated locally and unaccounted for in the US data collection/feed Environment setup and configurations.

# Proposal Questionnaire

## Company Overview

1. Identify your company name and headquarters, along with the name and headquarters of your parent corporation, if applicable. Provide address, main phone number, and website URL.
2. Provide a brief overview of your company and history of your organization. Please include information about your organization's culture.
3. Please provide years of experience providing similar services.
4. What form of ownership (e.g. corporation, employee owned, private) exists for your company?
5. Provide disclosure of the largest shareholders (in excess of 15%) in the company.
6. Please identify the approach you are proposing for migration and implementation.
7. Is your firm presently or ever been in bankruptcy?
8. Is your Company currently involved in any mergers or acquisitions?
9. Has your company contracted or subcontracted in connection with a federal government contract or grant agreement? If so, please identify the agencies, nature of the contracting relationship, and periods of performance. Should we require a conference call regarding your RFP Response please provide time slots you would be available between June 10-19, 2024.

## Implementation

1. Provide a high-level project timeline that describes how you see the implementation of your solution proceeding. Identify major milestones and key deliverables that will be generated during the project as well as your recommendation for a governance structure including risk management and status reporting that will help ensure appropriate leadership engagement.
2. Describe the type of resources that would be assigned to this project from the Proposer, along with the time allocation, duration, and cost for each. Clearly identify key resources who will be assigned for the duration of the project.
3. Describe the type of GS1 US resources that you would expect to be assigned to the implementation project, along with the time allocation and duration for each.
4. Are your implementation resources employees of your company or contract resources? Does your firm perform its own implementation services, or do you subcontract implementation to another firm?

## Pricing and Terms

1. Please provide your cost structure for the initial implementation support and first three years of ongoing support and detail of all costs GS1 US would likely incur. These costs may include:
  - Development/pilot expenses
  - Resource allocation
  - Service fees

## References/Other

1. Please provide a list of three (3) references within the last three (3) years where similar services were provided that include: name, address, phone number, and length of time associated with your organization. The Proposer is encouraged to include clients having similar business, geographies, industry, and scale as GS1 US. The Proposer will also ensure that GS1 US is able to have appropriate access to the references listed. It is acceptable to wait until being named a finalist to provide references.
2. Describe any other facets of your approach that are relevant to this proposal that have not been previously described and that you feel warrant consideration.

**APPENDIX 1:  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT OF RFP**

***Please return this receipt immediately!***

This form represents your desire to participate in this Request for Proposal (RFP) process. Failure to return acknowledgement may jeopardize your opportunity to participate.

Company Name:

Due Date for Acknowledgement of Receipt: May 17, 2024

We will submit our proposal according to the date and conditions established by GS1 US

We will not participate and will not respond to the RFP.

Company Name:

Contact Person:

Title:

Signature

Date:

Phone:

E-mail:

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