



# RFQ: SMARTER BALANCED POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS TECHNOLOGY FOCUSED

March 17, 2021

## REQUIRED SUPPLIER INFORMATION

### 1. PURPOSE AND INTENT

The Smarter Balanced (“Smarter Balanced”) Assessment Consortium is soliciting information from organizations that are interested in collaborating to leverage technology as a way to help improve teaching and learning.

From time to time, Smarter Balanced members request products and services from organizations that provide them (“Suppliers”) and would desire that Smarter Balanced endorse the Supplier’s proprietary products and services or that Smarter Balanced provide access to intellectual property or information that are not otherwise publicly available in support of developing, enhancing or delivering products and services.

- 1.1. The purpose of this RFQ is to conduct market research and pre-qualify Suppliers who have capacity to leverage technology to help enhance products and services listed in Section 3 below, including their development processes.
- 1.2. Of those who are deemed qualified by Smarter Balanced, Suppliers (“Supplier Pool”) will be invited to enter into regular discussions regarding Smarter Balanced and be eligible to propose new collaborations.
- 1.3. The hope is that Smarter Balanced will make additional opportunities available on an annual basis for suppliers to provide qualifications, however, that plan is subject to change.

### 2. BACKGROUND

Based at the University of California, Santa Cruz College Extension, the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is a multi-state collaboration to develop common interim and summative assessments and comprehensive supports for the formative assessment process (<https://smarterbalanced.org/>).

While Smarter Balanced hosts an optional reporting system application and a formative assessment resources application, the Consortium relies on member department of education staff and their service providers to administer and implement the system. To support a better understanding of the

University's role, a non-exhaustive list of contrasting responsibilities is as follows for greater context regarding how the Smarter Balanced functions within UCSC College Extension:

2.1. General division of roles and responsibilities.

Smarter Balanced staff:

- Design tests, items, and accessibility resources based on Universal Design principles
- Create and ensure high quality of summative assessments, interim items, and formative resources
- Conduct technical studies and generate reports regarding Smarter Balanced items and tests
- Host communication and public affairs websites, an item authoring and archive system, an optional reporting and formative assessment resource application
- Access to interim assessment content outside of a service provider test delivery system, including individual items
- Produce policy and guidance documents that Members may use
- Host technical and policy meetings with members and technical experts
- Produce test packages that contain all the test and item information necessary to administer Smarter Balanced summative and interim assessments

University Staff currently do not:

- Act as the primary contractor when bidding on state contracts
- Provide help desk or training services to educators
- Host or implement a test delivery system, a student registration system or an adult authentication system for roles associated with access to service provider applications or Smarter Balanced applications

2.2. By submitting a response to this RFQ, qualifying suppliers will be eligible to:

- Propose and collaborate on new products and services to Smarter Balanced that Smarter Balanced does not already make available. New products or services may be exclusively available to the individual supplier who proposes or collaborates on their development.
- Receive information about new opportunities as well as updates about products and services that Smarter Balanced plans to make available.

2.3 If a Supplier does not submit a response to this RFQ or submits a response that Smarter Balanced deems to not qualify, then the Supplier will still be eligible to:

- Access publicly available information about Smarter Balanced products and services
- Negotiate a license based on the pre-existing terms for existing products and services (available upon request).
- Contract with a state or district as applicable to the established terms of an agreement with Smarter Balanced.
- Submit to a subsequent RFQ round.

### 3. TYPES OF PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

3.1 Smarter Balanced seeks to continually improve its products and services to better help teachers support students' learning. Toward that goal, potential partners should propose technology that addresses:

- user facing innovation
- systems and processes

and that do not pose a material risk to the value that existing products and services have for current Smarter Balanced members when such proposed products and/or services require access to:

- Smarter Balanced intellectual property;
- Smarter Balanced processes not publicly available; or
- a Smarter Balanced endorsement is beneficial.

3.2 Examples of added value are technology-based:

- research and enhancements related to user experiences
- user acceptance reviews
- system and content quality control
- efficiency and cost savings measures

3.3 Examples of possible collaboration are technology-based:

- detecting significant differences in final item rendering between migrations of different sorts (e.g., banks, frameworks, browsers)
- detecting and identifying content of interest in student responses (e.g., PII, plagiarism, domestic risks)
- detecting significant differences in embedded item stimuli components (e.g., slight variation across illustrations)
- data mining to improve data quality (e.g., identify unusual patterns)
- ability for students to draw responses in-line with text on math items

## 4. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Suppliers that are interested in discussing and developing opportunities to collaborate should submit a description of their organization and the added value that their organization can offer Smarter Balanced. Interested Suppliers should complete and submit information as described in Section 7: Response Criteria, via this [form](#) by 5pm PT on Friday, April 16, 2021.

## 5. EVALUATION PROCESS

Smarter Balanced will collaborate with the Smarter Balanced Executive Committee to establish a review committee. The Committee will apply a rubric that incorporates the following elements:

- A completed [form](#) received by Smarter Balanced by 5pm PT on Friday, April 16, 2021
- A description of the Supplier's resources and how they may benefit Smarter Balanced

Smarter Balanced intends only to make available proposed collaboration to reviewers and members of the Smarter Balanced Executive Committee.

Due to limited internal resources, non-successful submissions may not be notified. However, Suppliers may be contacted and encouraged to re-submit if their proposal is not initially successful, but shows merit.

## 6. POST-EVALUATION PROCESS

- Smarter Balanced will use the contact information provided during the qualification process to communicate to qualified Suppliers on a regular basis in the form of emails and web-conferences. Qualified Suppliers may be invited to attend Smarter Balanced events.
- Smarter Balanced will prioritize the negotiations with qualified Suppliers based on the value proposition included in the submission and the timelines associated with the opportunities.
- Smarter Balanced and qualified Supplier will agree to a non-binding term sheet that will serve as the method by which the Smarter Balanced Executive Committee understands the proposal.
- Based on the term sheet, the Smarter Balanced Executive Committee will use the term sheet as the basis for an informed decision regarding whether to endorse the development and execution of a binding mutually agreeable agreement.
- Upon receiving an endorsement from the Executive Committee, Smarter Balanced will collaborate with the qualified Supplier to develop an agreement based on mutually agreeable terms and conditions consistent with University of Regents policies and California law.

## 7. RESPONSE CRITERIA

Suppliers that are interested in collaborating with Smarter Balanced must submit the following information by the **Due Date**.

- I. Supplier Information
  - a. Name
  - b. Mailing Address
    - i. Street
    - ii. City
    - iii. State
    - iv. Zip
  - c. Parent Organization (if applicable)
  - d. Type: For-profit, non-profit, public agency
  - e. Have an existing contract with any current Smarter Balanced member state(s), LEA, or school? Yes/No

II. Supplier Representative Contact Information

- a. First Name
- b. Last Name
- c. Title
- d. Phone Number
- e. Email address
- f. Time Zone of Residency (for scheduling purposes)

III. Supplier vision and mission statements

IV. Areas of Interest for collaboration

- a. User Facing Innovation                      Yes/No
  - i. For each proposed project on which you want to collaborate please add: (a) a description of collaboration you are proposing; (b) how the proposed collaboration would add value for Smarter Balanced as described in Section 3; (c) timeframe that you think the development would require; (d) timeframe when your organization might be able to engage in the collaboration
- b. System and Process Innovation                      Yes/No
  - i. For each proposed project on which you want to collaborate please add: (a) a description of collaboration you are proposing; (b) how the proposed collaboration would add value for Smarter Balanced as described in Section 3; (c) timeframe that you think the development would require; (d) timeframe when your organization might be able to engage in the collaboration