SUMMARY

RTI International is seeking a research consultant to help design and implement a study titled *Strengthening the Role of Mid-Level Education Officials*. This study is part of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation’s Science of Teaching activity and aims to build new evidence about how mid-level officials within education systems align with and support improvements in foundational learning. This research is intended to serve as a public good, contributing to the emerging body of evidence on how education systems can support large-scale, substantive improvements in foundational learning. It builds on other BMGF-funded research under the Learning at Scale and Science of Teaching activities. The provisional set of research questions to be addressed by the study include:

- What role can and should mid-level officials play to improve the quality of teaching and learning?
- What mechanisms are needed to shift expectations and official processes/procedures so that they align with and support these roles and priorities?
- What elements of the existing system allowed for, or worked against, this alignment and shifting of roles and expectations?
- What supports/interventions led to shifts in behavior/action of middle-level actors leading to improved school leadership and improved instruction and learning outcomes?

The study will include a literature review and primary research using a case study approach in one or two countries. The study team will be led by a lead consultant who will serve as the Principal Investigator and study lead. The study team will be comprised of a Research Consultant, a Data Analyst, and country-based data collectors/firms.

The study will be guided by an Advisory Committee of experts in education and systems research.

In collaboration with the study lead, responsibilities will include:

1. **Design:** Co-development and documentation of the study design, including sampling and selection.
2. **Quantitative:** Co-development of the overall measurement strategy and associated quantitative instruments and protocols. Contribute to the development of a data analysis plan and summary of quantitative findings.
3. **Qualitative:** Co-development of qualitative data collection strategy, protocols, and coding structures. Contribute to the identification of themes, data analysis, and documentation of findings.
4. **Data Collection:** Co-design of data collection plan and RFP(s). Management of data collection firm during field planning and data collection. Two to three weeks of field work are expected per country.
5. **Project Management:** In collaboration with the study lead, oversee the development and management of study implementation plans and communicate study updates to the Science of Teaching team, Study Advisory Group, and the funder.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS

The following are the required qualifications for the research consultant:

1. Strong expertise and experience in international education research, with a focus on foundational learning in sub-Saharan Africa.
2. Deep understanding of education policy, structures, political economy, workforce, teacher professional development and support, and instructional quality associated with foundational learning.
3. Experience designing and implementing studies that include both quantitative and qualitative data.
4. Experience designing surveys, observations, and key informant interview and focus group discussion guides.
5. Familiarity with case study methods that include positive deviance and appreciative inquiry approaches.
6. Experience designing and directly managing data collection efforts in developing countries, including RFP development, field planning, training, and supporting tablet-based data collection.
7. Proven experience developing complex technical reports, policy briefs, user-friendly guides, and effective presentations.
8. Minimum of six years of relevant experience in international education research.
9. Master’s Degree in a related field.

DESIRED QUALIFICATIONS

1. Experience coding instruments in Survey CTO or other platforms.
2. Quantitative data analysis.
3. Fluency in French.

EXPECTED TIMELINE

The following is an outline of the expected timeline for the project, subject to adjustments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Task</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Research Design</td>
<td>Dec 2023 - Feb 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Literature Review</td>
<td>Nov 2023- Mar 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Detailed design and study implementation</td>
<td>Mar-July 2024</td>
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<tr>
<td>Report, Brief and How-to-Guide</td>
<td>Sept-Oct 2024</td>
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ANTICIPATED LEVEL OF EFFORT AND PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE

It is expected that the level of effort for the research consultant will be between sixty and eighty days between December 2023 and October 2024.

SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION PROCESS

Please submit all questions to FLN@rti.org no later than December 4th, 2023.

Please submit a current CV, proposed daily rate, and cover letter which clearly describes your experience relevant to the requirements, and the general period of availability for this work via email to FLN@rti.org no later than December 4th, 2023.

The Science of Teaching evaluation committee will review submissions on an ongoing basis. The Science of Teaching team will reach out to candidates with relevant expertise for further interviews and discussions to move forward with consultant engagement.

All qualified applicants will receive consideration for contracting without regard to race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability status, protected veteran status, or any other characteristic protected by law.