



## Request for Proposal (RFP) – Nepal EGRP II-RFP-FY21-P008

Commodity/Service Required:	Operational Research for the National Early Grade Reading Program
Type of Procurement:	Subaward
Type of Contract:	Firm Fixed Price
Term of Contract:	October 22, 2021, to March 31, 2022
Contract Funding:	72036720CA00001
This Procurement supports:	USAID’s Early Grade Reading Program II (EGRP II)
Submit Proposal to:	The Selection Committee RTI- USAID Early Grade Reading Program II House no. 46/64, Uttar Dhoka, Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal
Date of Issue of RFP:	Friday, September 03, 2021
Date Questions from Supplier Due:	Tuesday, September 07, 2021, 11:00 AM Nepal Standard Time at <a href="mailto:procurement@np-egrp.rti.org">procurement@np-egrp.rti.org</a> Note: Questions and Answers will be posted on RTI website.
Date for Pre-Bid Meeting RSVP:	Tuesday, September 07, 2021, by 3.00 PM Nepal Standard Time  Confirmation (RSVP) is required from all interested research firms in attending the pre-bid meeting, which will be conducted via Zoom. A maximum of two representatives from each interested research firm will be permitted to attend. Send your confirmation of attendance including the name(s) of your participant(s) at <a href="mailto:procurement@np-egrp.rti.org">procurement@np-egrp.rti.org</a> and subsequently the Zoom meeting invitation will be sent to you.
Date of Pre-Bid Meeting:	Wednesday, September 08, 2021, 10:00 AM to 11:00 AM Nepal Standard Time
Date Proposal Due:	Friday, September 24, 2021, 11:00 AM Nepal Standard Time
Approximate Date Purchase Order Issued to Successful Bidder(s):	Friday, October 22, 2021

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**Method of Submittal:**

Hard Copy of proposal along with the soft copy in a pen drive.

Proposal documents should be submitted in a closed envelope with wax seal (laah chhap) and clearly marked with the solicitation number to the following address:

The Selection Committee  
RTI-USAID Early Grade Reading Program II  
House no. 46/64, Uttar Dhoka, Lazimpat,  
Kathmandu, Nepal.

**This RFP applies to bidders legally registered in Nepal only.**

Bidder's Quote must be printed on the research firm's letterhead, signed, stamped, dated and must include all items and/or services. In addition, each and every page of the proposal documents needs to be signed and stamped by the authorized person in order to be considered for evaluation.

The bidder must submit three (3) different envelopes containing i) minimum eligibility requirements, ii) technical proposal, and iii) financial proposal in response to this RFP.

Each envelope should be clearly marked with 'minimum eligibility criteria', 'technical proposal' and 'financial proposal' as per its content and then put together in a larger envelope clearly marked with "**Nepal EGRP II-RFP-FY21-P008**" for **Proposal Operational Research for the National Early Grade Reading Program**.

*List of inner envelopes*

Envelope 1:- Eligibility Requirements (legal documents, audit report, tax clearance and experiences, as specified in attachment "B")

Envelope 2:- Technical Proposal (as specified criteria in attachment "B" and soft copy)

Envelope 3:- Cost proposal (detail budget and budget narratives)

Only research firms that meet the minimum eligibility criteria will be considered for further evaluation. Financial proposals will only be opened for the research firms that score a minimum of 48 points out of 80 (60%) in the technical proposal evaluation.

The technical proposal should contain the detailed breakdown of activities. The bidders are requested to submit all the information in prescribed order and documentary evidence so that the evaluation committee can fairly evaluate all the proposals without any missing information. [please

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see attachment B for selection criteria]

The Bidder agrees to hold the prices in its offer firm/organization for 120 days from the date specified for the receipt of offers unless another time is specified in the addendum of the RFP.

Solicitation Number:

Nepal EGRP II-RFP-FY21-P008

**Attachments to RFP:**

1. Attachment “A” – Statement of Work
2. Attachment “B” – Instructions to Bidders/Sellers
3. Attachment “C” - Steps to obtain DUNS number (exceeding \$25,000)
4. Annex -1 - Budget Template (will be provided upon request via email)
5. All PO Terms and Conditions are listed on our website at:  
<https://www.rti.org/sites/default/files/rti-purchase-order-terms-and-conditions-v1.16.pdf>,  
[http://www.rti.org/files/PO\\_FAR\\_Clauses.pdf](http://www.rti.org/files/PO_FAR_Clauses.pdf) or for commercial items:  
[http://www.rti.org/files/PO\\_FAR\\_Clauses\\_Commercial\\_Items.pdf](http://www.rti.org/files/PO_FAR_Clauses_Commercial_Items.pdf) (hereinafter the “Terms”).  
Supplier’s delivery of products, performance of services, or issuance of invoices in connection with this purchase order establishes Supplier’s agreement to the Terms. The Terms may only be modified in writing signed by both parties.

All bidders/sellers are responsible to carefully review each attachment and follow any instructions that may be relevant to this procurement.

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## Attachment A

### Statement of Work

#### EGRP II OPERATIONAL RESEARCH

The scope of work for this activity includes conducting qualitative operational research on the Integrated Curriculum (IC) and on Teacher Professional Support (TPS) for the Early Grade Reading Program II (EGRP II). This research will support the objectives of the Government of Nepal's National Early Grade Reading Program (NEGRP). Working closely with the EGRP II team and Government of Nepal officials, the winning bidder will conduct this research through a set of steps, including recruitment of research team members; developing, pilot testing, and refining of the research tools; collecting, organizing and analyzing data; drafting and finalizing research reports; and presenting the reports in dissemination events.

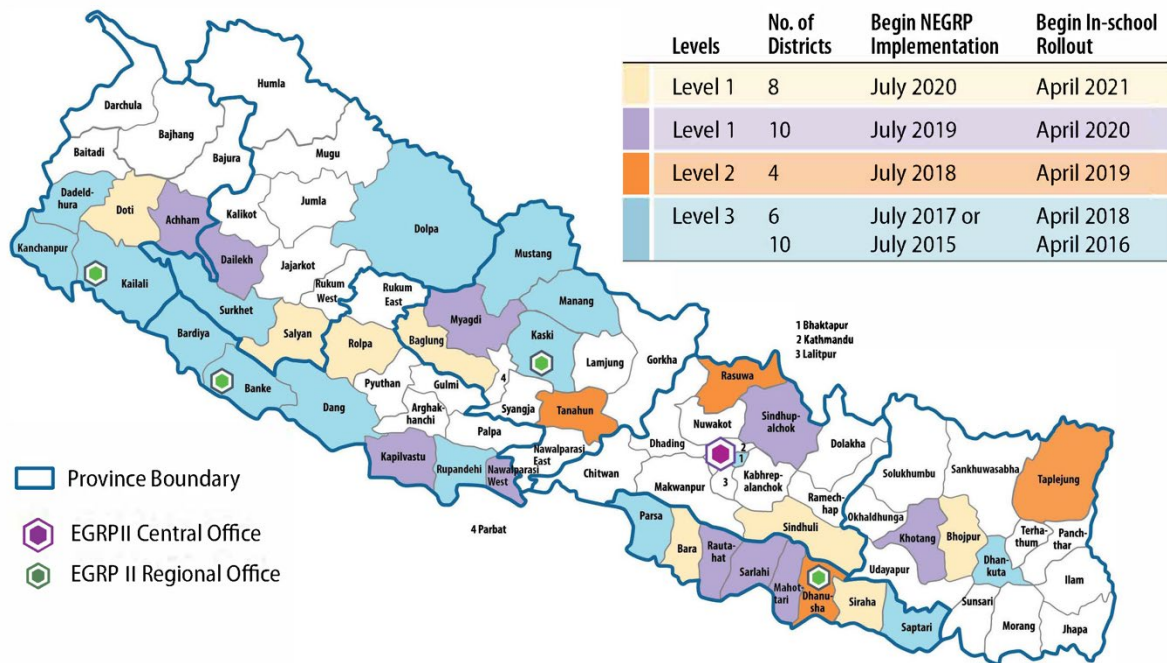
#### Background

EGRP II is a 2-year, United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded program of technical assistance to the Government of Nepal (GON) that is being implemented from June 1, 2020, through May 31, 2022. EGRP II's support to the GON is provided in the context of the shift toward the recently developed Integrated Curriculum (IC), ongoing decentralization in Nepal's governance system, and prolonged disruptions to teaching and learning due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Building on the foundation of the first Early Grade Reading Program (EGRP) that was implemented from 2015 to 2020, EGRP II aims to improve early grade literacy for students in grades 1–3 in Nepal's public schools. The program is achieving this by supporting IC development and rollout (Objective 1), strengthening local capacity for early grade reading (EGR) service delivery (Objective 2), improving TPS (Objective 3), and assisting with COVID-19 response in the education sector (Objective 4).

Like EGRP, EGRP II is continuing to support the GON to scale up the NEGRP in the 38 current target districts (**Figure 1**) in coordination and collaboration with relevant stakeholders. NEGRP promotes a "minimum package" of evidence-based interventions designed to improve early grade reading, including curriculum development, teaching and learning materials, teacher training and support, community and parent engagement, and monitoring and learning assessment.

Figure 1: EGRP II Target Districts



EGRP II has already started quantitative operational research on the IC in partnership with the RISE Programme, a global program that seeks to use research to understand how education systems in developing countries can overcome the learning crisis.<sup>1</sup> Through this quantitative research, EGRP II will use the Surveys of Enacted Curriculum (SEC) methodology to assess the implementation of the grade 1 Nepali subject in Nepal’s Integrated Curriculum and identify areas of support. The SEC tool will be contextualized in consultation with a Nepali expert panel. The tool will be used to capture quantitative data on use of the IC from 166 Nepali teachers at different schools in 7 districts (Taplejung: 16, Parsa: 38, Rasuwa: 16, Baglung: 19, Rupandehi: 36, Salyan: 16 and Accham: 25).

Complementing this SEC quantitative research, the winning bidder will conduct a related qualitative research for EGRP II to examine how the IC and TPS have functioned in grades 1-3. The qualitative research will collect data from a sub-set of 4 out of the 7 districts: Rasuwa, Parsa, Salyan and Accham. The qualitative research will utilize classroom observation and interviews/focus group discussions (FGDs) with relevant education stakeholders such as teachers, Head Teachers (HT), Basic Level Coordinators (BLC), School Management Committee (SMC) members, local level expert groups, and Local Education Unit (LEU) officials. In addition, central and provincial-level stakeholders from the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD), the Curriculum Development Center (CDC), Education Training Center (ETC) and the EGRP II will be consulted. These interviews/FGDs will explore factors supporting or hindering teachers’ effective delivery of the curriculum – particularly in the areas of TPD and TPS – and assess the additional capacity development and support needed for better implementation of the intended content.

1 World Bank. (2019, January 22). *The education crisis: Being in school is not the same as learning* [News item]. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/news/immersive-story/2019/01/22/pass-or-fail-how-can-the-world-do-its-homework>

## Study Background

### Background on the Integrated Curriculum

The Government of Nepal’s *National Curriculum Framework, 2076*<sup>2</sup> (NCF) aims to support children’s holistic development, promote social justice, and develop competent and competitive citizens for nation-building, in line with the latest educational changes in the world and the current context and local needs in Nepal. Adoption of the new NCF initiated key reforms in the country’s education sector, including revisions to schooling levels, subjects, and subject hours; and the introduction of an Integrated Curriculum approach in primary grades 1-3. The revised curriculum structure is shown in **Table 1**.

**Table 1: New Curriculum Structure as Stipulated in the NCF**

Schooling level	Grade	Age group	Learning competency grouping
Basic	ECD	4 years	Level 1
	Grades 1-3	5-7 years	
	Grades 4-5	8- 9 years	Level 2
	Grades 6-8	10-12 years	Level 3
Secondary	Grades 9-10	13-14 years	Level 4
	Grades 11-12	15-16 years	Level 5

In response, the GON’s Curriculum Development Center (CDC) began designing the IC for grades 1-3, covering the Nepali, English, Mathematics, and Our Surroundings subjects. The IC also provides an allocation of subject hours for additional mother tongue or other local subjects that can be developed by local governments in line with the decentralized roles and responsibilities promulgated by Nepal’s 2015 constitution. CDC prepared *Local Curriculum Development and Implementation Guidelines, 2076* to support this localization process. **Table 2** provides the breakdown of subject hours allocated in the IC for grades 1-3.

<sup>2</sup> Gregorian year 2019-2020.

**Table 2: Basic Education (Grade 1 – 3) Curriculum Structure**

S.N.	Subject-specific activities	Credit hours <sup>3</sup>	Annual teaching hours
1	Language skill development activities (Nepali)	5	160
2	Language skill development activities (English)	4	128
3	Mathematical skill development activities (Nepali)	4	128
4	Science, health, and physical education activities, social studies, moral development, creative arts ( <i>Serofero</i> )	8	256
5	Mother tongue language skills / local subjects	5	160
<b>Total</b>		<b>26</b>	<b>832</b>

The IC preserves the distinct subject areas outlined above but is integrated in nature through the promotion of common themes across those subjects. The Nepali subject area in grades 1-3 incorporates the skills of listening and speaking; reading; writing; vocabulary; basic communication and grammar, covering the following 11 themes:

1. Me and my family
2. My daily life
3. Our community
4. My school
5. Our environment
6. Our creations
7. Our culture
8. Communication technology and the market
9. The world around us
10. Hobbies and interests
11. Our activities

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3 1 credit hour = 32 teaching hours



The Nepali language skill areas roughly align with the core reading skills promoted through NEGRP, such as phonological awareness, grapho-phonemic awareness, listening comprehension, reading fluency, reading comprehension, and writing. The early grades curriculum also emphasizes “soft skills,” including:

- Thinking skills
- Intrapersonal skills
- Interpersonal skills
- Information communication and multiliteracy skills
- Citizenship skills

In general, the curriculum stipulates that the languages of instruction in grades 1-3 is Nepali, although guidelines indicate that mother tongues can also be used and multilingual teaching and learning approaches should be employed where needed and feasible (e.g., the teacher speaks the same languages as the students).

The mathematical skills focus on developing concepts of numbers and digits and the use of practical mathematical knowledge and skills. The science, health and physical education activities include the use of scientific thinking and skills, science, environment, local ecology, health and physical education, and technology. The scope of social studies, moral development and creative arts cover social norms and values, character development, creativity, art and culture, life skills, and information and communication technology. The local subjects incorporate mother tongue; local history and culture; Sanskrit language; and local knowledge, skills, art and technology to be developed in assistance and coordination with local experts, parents and local level.<sup>4</sup>

CDC piloted the grade 1 curriculum in 103 schools across 18 districts during 2019-2020 school year. After revising the curriculum and related materials based on the findings from the pilot, CDC subsequently began rolling it out across the country from the 2020-2021 school year. CDC organized 2-day curriculum dissemination (orientation) throughout the country to roll out the newly developed curriculum.

This nationwide orientation included:

1. 2-day master training of trainers in Kathmandu was conducted by CDC to develop master trainers at the province level.
2. The subsequent rollout of 3-day provincial training of trainers was delivered to roster trainers such as local education officers, secondary school teachers, and headteachers; and
3. 3-day, district-level curriculum dissemination workshops for the teachers teaching in grades 1-3.

EGRP II has also supported CEHRD to develop a 10-day Teacher Professional Development (TPD) module in IC. In addition to these efforts in grade 1, CDC and CEHRD began piloting the grade 2 and 3 curricula during the 2020-2021 year, to roll them out nationally through a similar process during the 2021-2022 school year.

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4 Curriculum Development Center. (2020). *Adharbhoot Taha (Kaksha 1-3) ko Pathyakram 2076*. Author



Recognizing ongoing coaching is required to help teachers adopt improved practices to implement IC, Government of Nepal has adopted a teacher professional support (TPS) system in which the school is the main locus of activity, and headteachers (HTs) / basic level coordinators (BLCs) are intended to provide classroom observation and feedback and convene teacher learning groups with early grade teachers. The Government of Nepal has developed TPS Guide 2077 to provide technical support to teachers and human resources for playing effective roles and help TPS options implementation as provisioned in TPS procedures 2077. Research supported by EGRP in 2020 indicated that many TPS actors have difficulties in implementing the system due to the factors such as heavy workloads and lack of personnel, as well as confidence with early grade reading instructional approaches.<sup>5</sup>

The disruption in the education sector due to COVID-19 has impacted the implementation of IC and several program activities such as rolling out of the grade-1 curriculum, piloting the grade 2-3 curriculum, regular teacher training, implementation of TPS and regular teaching-learning in the schools. In response, the GON has extended the school year to mid-June and rolled out multimodal learning programs during school closures and other periods of disruption, including the provision of online and offline learning materials to students and promotion of flexible learning approaches to help teachers cover core curriculum content in a shorter time.<sup>6</sup> The studies conducted by the World Bank and EGRP II show the drop in learning achievements due to limited access to alternative education indicating less effective IC implementation during the COVID-19 pandemic due to school closure.

## **Background on Teacher Professional Support**

Experience globally and in Nepal highlights the difficulties that teachers face when adopting the new instructional methodologies learned during professional development events. In the absence of classroom observation and support, teachers tend to revert to previous habits, reducing training impact and diminishing the prospects for improved student learning. This can be counteracted by effective TPS systems that provide ongoing coaching and mentoring. In fact, there is growing evidence from lower and middle-income countries that “ongoing individualized feedback [has] been shown to have large positive effects on teachers’ instruction, and, subsequently, on student learning outcomes.”<sup>7</sup>

In light of this situation, GON tested a series of TPS reforms over the past five years with technical assistance from EGRP. From 2016-2017, a system of “Reading Motivators” (RMs) was piloted to provide tailored support to EGR teachers within a group of schools. This model was well received by schools but was discontinued due to concerns about cost and sustainability, the competing demands on time for the RMs, as well as the infrequency of RM visits. The GON then used the lessons learned from this experience to develop a new Teacher Professional Support Implementation Procedure

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5 Foundation for Educational Change. (2020). *Study on the effectiveness of the teacher professional support-system in the early grades*. RTI International

6 Government of Nepal (2020). “Student Learning Facilitation Directive through Alternative System, 2077” and “Curriculum Content Adjustment Framework, 2077.” Kathmandu, Nepal: GON.

7 Wilichowski, T.M and Popova, A.. (2021). “Technical Guidance Note: Structuring Effective 1-1 Support.” Washington, DC: World Bank.

(TPSIP) in 2018<sup>8</sup> and begin to roll it out in 2019. This procedure gave the responsibility to the Head Teacher (HT) in each basic school (or Primary In-Charge (PIC) teacher in the case of secondary schools) to provide ongoing TPS in the classroom. The procedure also established resource centers with resource persons (RPs) to provide support to HTs/PICs and teachers within a cluster of schools, although the RP position was dissolved in 2019 within the GON's new federal structure. Additionally, the procedure called for HTs/PICs to observe each early grade class at least once a month and to form Teacher Learning Groups (TLGs) and convene monthly in-school review meetings. LEU officials were assigned to play a key role in overseeing effective TPS implementation in their palika in coordination with the RPs.

Through a qualitative research study conducted in 2020,<sup>9</sup> EGRP identified several challenges with implementing the TPS approach as defined in the TPSIP:

- Up to 80% of HTs/PICs had insufficient time to consistently provide classroom observation and mentoring support to all grade 1-3 teachers, either because of their own teaching workload or their other administrative responsibilities. Nevertheless, after the RP position was discontinued, the bulk of responsibility for TPS provision continued to fall to them.
- Classroom observations were infrequent and tended to focus more on content more than instructional methodology.
- Small schools had insufficient teachers to form teacher learning groups and some schools were too remote to form clusters.
- The majority of the palika/LEU officials surveyed were unaware of the TPS procedures and guidelines. They also faced human resource constraints (unfilled or insufficient staffing positions or high turnover in staffing) and limited budgets to cover logistical costs to provide frequent on-site post-training support for TPS.
- Geographical remoteness limited teacher support in some regions; while in populous areas, the number of schools led to untenable school-to-staff ratios for TPS provision.

These challenges contributed to the inconsistent implementation of the TPS model in its originally envisioned form. For example, although EGRP contributed to increased rates of supportive supervision in the target schools, a sizeable portion of teachers (between 18-37% depending on the location) in the program's endline evaluation sample reported never having received a classroom observation by their HT/PIC.<sup>10</sup> What is more, a 2020 survey of 396 LEUs conducted by EGRP II identified that roughly 18% of the LEUs rarely or never conducted school visits to provide coaching and support, with only around 7% making such visits a weekly occurrence.<sup>11</sup>

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8 2074 in the Nepali calendar.

9 Foundation for Educational Change (2020). "Study on the Effectiveness of the Teacher Professional Support System in the Early Grades." Research Triangle Park, USA: RTI International.

10 NORC at the University of Chicago (2021). "Impact Evaluation of the National Early Grade Reading Program (NEGRP) in Nepal." Unpublished report. Kathmandu, Nepal: USAID.

11 RTI International (2020). "Local Level Capacity Assessment Survey." Unpublished report. Research Triangle Park, USA: RTI International.

Based on experience and research from EGRP, from 2020-2021, EGRP II supported CEHRD to revise the TPSIP. The revised document includes a core set of recommended TPS approaches as well as a number of options that palikas can adopt based on their local context. The recommended approaches in the Teacher Professional Support Procedure as revised in 2021<sup>12</sup> build on the 2018 procedures and include:

- Head teacher /basic level coordinator training and mobilization
- Mobilization of Teacher Learning Groups (TLGs) within schools and clusters
- Mobilization of expert groups at local levels
- Inter-school study visits
- Classroom observation and supervision from TPS trainer
- Periodic visits to schools from local education officials
- Use of ICT and virtual means for teacher professional support

The 2021 Procedure also lays out the TPS roles and responsibilities of officials at different levels within the decentralized system of governance as laid out through Nepal's 2015 constitution. Notably, the guidelines clearly spell out the responsibilities of the local levels to develop their own solutions and allocate resources accordingly for coordinating and overseeing the quality of TPS provision within their municipalities.

As of August 2021, EGRP II was supporting the GON to roll out capacity development training for district and local officials to assist them in forming groups of experts at local levels. In addition, EGRP II was supporting CEHRD to develop and plan for master trainings of trainers for provincial-level TPS trainers, who will then roll out training for TPS actors in their areas. EGRP II monitoring data as of August 2021 also identified positive signs of progress, with 36% of the 396 target municipalities having formed their local expert group and 22% having selected TPS implementation options relevant to their local context.

## **Study Objectives and Design**

### **Overall Objectives of Qualitative Research**

Considering the context and background laid out above, the overall objective of the research is to examine how IC teacher training and teacher professional support have functioned in grades 1-3 and to recommend areas for further improvement.

### **Research Questions**

The research will be guided by the following research questions. The first set of questions is related to the IC, while the second set is related to TPS.

#### *Integrated Curriculum*

- What factors are supporting or hindering teachers' effective delivery of the IC?

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12 2077 in the Nepali calendar.

- To what extent have IC orientations and TPD trainings on the IC supported teachers to roll out curriculum?
- What additional capacity development and support might teachers need to better implement the intended contents and pedagogical approaches?

#### *Teacher Professional Support*

- What are the understanding and practices of TPS in place at different levels of implementation?
- To what extent do TPS stakeholders at the federal, provincial, district, local, and school-level understand their role in TPS?
- To what extent and how effectively are those stakeholders implementing their TPS roles and how far are teachers satisfied from the support they receive?
- What are the common challenges faced and solutions/innovative practices implemented by TPS actors at the local level to ensure effective professional support mechanisms?

These research questions will cover diverse areas of education service provision, including school infrastructure; teacher training and professional support; availability and relevance of teaching and learning materials; and IC and TPS implementation capacity among school managers, local governments<sup>13</sup>, and other relevant stakeholders. Inquiry about the impacts of COVID-19 on curriculum rollout, teacher practices, teacher professional support, and assessment opportunities will be embedded throughout these research questions.

### **Research Methodology**

EGRP II will adopt qualitative research methods such as classroom observations, interviews, focus group discussions, and case studies to conduct the IC operational research. This research will capture a broader qualitative analysis of stakeholders' experiences and perceptions on IC rollout and TPS implementation as well as areas for strengthening, focused on teacher training and professional support. As such, the main steps in the methodology will include:

- Classroom observations of grades 1-3 classrooms to observe teacher application of the IC's pedagogical approaches and use of IC teaching and learning materials.
- Interviews/focus group discussion with related education stakeholders, such as EGR teachers, HTs/BLCs, SMC members, TPS roster experts, LEU, EDCU officials, teacher trainers and CLAs officials
- Development of case studies on IC and TPS implementation that directly highlight information relevant to answering the research questions.

The research will be explicitly focused on the practices that are ongoing at the local and school levels. All research activities should incorporate gender equality and social inclusion lens, including tool development, selection of study locations and informants, data analysis and reporting elements.

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<sup>13</sup> In Nepal's new federal structure, "local government" or "local level" refers to *Palika* (municipalities) and wards.

### Sampling Approach

The research will cover some schools where the grades 1-3 IC was initially piloted as well as schools where the curriculum has begun rolling out beyond the initial pilot stage. The sample for the research will cover 4 districts where the IC has rolled out through a full cycle of piloting and broader scale-up. In coordination with EGRP II, the winning bidder will choose two local levels from each district as stated in **Table 3**. From each local level, at least two schools will be selected considering the prevalence of Nepali as first language (L1) and second language (L2) speakers as well as remote and urban settings. In addition, selection will take into account the status of TPS implementation in the local level, identifying some areas where TPS rollout has been effective and innovative as well as some areas where implementation has faced challenges. The winning bidder will also interview stakeholders at the federal, provincial, and district level who have been closely involved in design and rollout of the IC and the revised TPS guidelines. This includes CDC and CEHRD technical staff; ETC trainers; and EGRP II technical staff at central, regional, and district level.

The possible sample size of schools per district is presented in **Table 3**. This table also indicates which research sites will be relevant to questions on the IC and/or TPS. Bidders requested to include an adequate number of research participants from the selected sites, commensurate with the study design and research questions.

**Table 3: Research Site and Participants**

Research Site/ Participants	Theme		Numbers
	IC	TPS	
Districts	X	X	4 districts (Rasuwa, Parsa, Salyan and Accham)
Local Levels	X	X	8 Local Levels (2 from each district)
EGR Teachers	X	X	16 EGR teachers (2 from each local level)
Head Teachers or BLCs	X	X	16 HT/BLC (2 from each local level)
SMC Members	X	-	8 people (1 from each local level)
Classroom Observation	X	-	16 classrooms (2 schools per local level)
Local Level Expert Group Members	-	X	8 people (1 Nepali subject expert from each local level)
LEU Officials	X	X	8 people (2 from each district)
EDCU Officials	X	X	4 districts (1 from each district)
ETC Technical Staff	-	X	4 people (1 from each province)
CEHRD Officials	-	X	2 people
CDC Officials	X	-	2 people
EGRP II Staffs	X	X	8 people (2 from the central office, 3 Regional Technical Coordinators and 3 District Coordinators)

The sample for the classroom observations will cover locations where grades 1-3 have been piloted and where grade 1 has rolled out, including but not limited to the schools of 4 sample districts as

stated in **Table 3**. The researchers will conduct at least two classroom observations per local level. The sampling approach will also ensure coverage of a diverse set of contextual characteristics such as gender, language, geography, and stage of NEGRP rollout.

### **Scope of the Work**

EGRP II will contract a qualified local research firm from within the Nepal to conduct two qualitative research on IC and TPS studies. The scope of work for this activity for the winning bidder includes conducting research by hiring a qualified and adequate research team. The winning bidder, in coordination with EGRP II,<sup>14</sup> CDC, and CEHRD, will develop study tools, orient the research team, conduct a dry run and modify the tools based on the findings from the dry run. The winning bidder will then collect, transcribe, and analyze the data and prepare the reports in close coordination with EGRP II. The bidder will collect feedback from EGRP II, CDC and CEHRD, and will revise the report and disseminate the report to stakeholders on agreed timeline.

### **Hiring the Research Team**

The bidders will propose a qualified and adequate team composition to cover the necessary geographic locations and data collection activities in the allotted time. The research team should include 1 team leader and 1 research supervisor. The team leader will be responsible to deliver the high-quality works as per the agreed timeline. The bidders should ensure diversity and balance in terms of gender and social inclusion in the research team. While selecting the team, the bidders should give priority to the researchers, if available, who worked for EGRP's study and assessments.

### **Research Team's Qualifications**

The winning bidder should have a qualified and experienced research team. The minimum qualification of a team leader should be the completion of a master's degree in education with at least eight years of experience in leading and conducting qualitative education research. The supervisor qualification should have at least master's degree in education with five years of experience in conducting and supervising qualitative education research. Preference will be given to team members having experience in educational assessments and demonstrated experience with applying principles of gender and social inclusion in research. Fluency in written and spoken English is highly desired to be a leader and supervisor. The enumerators should have a bachelor's degree in education and experience in qualitative data collection and transcribing preferably in schools and working with younger children.

### **Tools Orientation Workshop**

The winning bidder will conduct a workshop to orient the research team members on data collection tools. EGRP II along with CDC and CEHRD staff will observe the workshop. The winning bidder will be responsible to manage the venue, catering and other logistics supports for the orientation program.

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<sup>14</sup> "EGRP II" is taken to include USAID. The EGRP II team will be responsible for obtaining necessary inputs from USAID at relevant stages.



## **Dry Run and Tools Revision**

After completing the tools orientation workshop, the research team should visit four schools in Sindhupalchok District (one of the Level 1 districts) to understand the functioning of the tools. EGRP II staff and CEHRD staff along with EDCU will observe the process. All the logistics requirements for the research team should be managed by the winning bidder. Final adjustments in the tools should be made based on the experiences of dry run in coordination with EGRP II.

## **Research Team Field Mobility and Data Collection & Transcribing**

The team leader, supervisor and enumerators should visit the fields to collect data. At least two members should visit the field at a time. The winning bidder will be responsible to provide logistical arrangements for the research team during data collection. As part of their technical proposals, bidders are required to provide a Gantt chart describing their plans for field mobility, data collection, and data transcription.

In case of disruption of field visits due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the winning bidder should plan for alternative means of data collection. In this case, the winning bidder will adopt a mixed approach including both distance and face-to-face data collection to complete the research on time in case of travel restrictions in some districts. The winning bidder is responsible to follow research ethics such as obtaining informed consent, not forcing informants to participate, and valuing local culture. The collected data should be recorded and transcribed in electronic form. The research team should develop the themes in close coordination with EGRP II.

## **Report Preparation and Presentation**

The research team will develop two qualitative research reports based on the themes generated from the data. The first report will focus on the findings related to the IC and the second report will focus on the findings related to TPS. The draft reports should be shared with the EGRP II team and government staff. The winning bidder should present the initial reports to the wider group including EGRP II, other experts, and GON for feedback collection. The mode of report dissemination will be virtual, and the winning bidder will be responsible to manage the logistics on the presentation day. The research team is responsible to incorporate the valid comments made by the audience during the presentation before finalizing the reports. The final reports should be submitted to the EGRP II. In addition, the winning bidder will be responsible to present the studies' findings in a dissemination event to wider stakeholders through a virtual platform.

## **Place of Performance**

The winning bidder for the research shall perform all work within Nepal. The winning bidder will work in Kathmandu developing tools and orienting the research team and conduct dry run in Sindhupalchok District. The research team will collect qualitative information from 4 districts- Rasuwa, Parsa, Salyan and Achham (**Table 3**).

The EGRP II central team in Kathmandu will provide overall technical and operational guidance for the research. The EGRP II regional and district offices will support research activities at subnational level, help to coordinate with relevant subnational stakeholders, and assist in the identification of suitable target locations for the research.



## Research Logistics and Support

The winning bidder will provide all required managerial and logistics support to the research team during tool orientation workshop. This includes booking and management of appropriate halls, lodging, food and travel expenses. The tool printing or any forms of logistic support needed during the dry run and data collection will be the responsibilities of the winning bidder. In addition, all the logistics associated with research team during the data collection, report writing, feedback collection and disseminations will be the responsibilities of the winning bidder. EGRP II will cover the logistical arrangements and costs for their staff and government officials during dry runs, monitoring data collection in the field, and report dissemination.

## Use and Storage of Electronic Devices

EGRP II will not provide any electronic devices. The winning bidder will be responsible for arranging the required computers/laptops/tablets and internet connectivity during the tool development, data collection, data management, transcribing, data analysis, report writing and report dissemination.

## Timeline for Research

In Nepal, the school year typically runs from April of one year to March of the subsequent year. However, due to COVID-19, the 2020-2021 school year was disrupted, with many children learning remotely through late 2020. The school years extended till June 2021. As noted above, schools across large swathes of Nepal have shut down again since April 2021 due to a resurgence of COVID-19 cases. The teaching-learning in many public schools for the 2021/2022 school year is therefore not likely to begin until October 2021 or may be further affected by the new return to lockdowns. Considering these constraints, the winning bidder will start research in last week of October 2021 and are expected to complete the work by March 2022 (**Table 4**). All work must be scheduled to be completed within this timeframe. Any modifications or extensions will be requested through EGRP II and the winning bidder for review and discussion.

**Table 4: Timeline for the Research (both IC and TPS)**

Tasks	2021			2022		
	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Sub-Award signed	22					
Hire personnel	22-31					
Develop study tools		1-15				
Conduct dry run and finalize study tools based on the pilot		16-30				
Conduct data collection			1-31			
Transcribe the collected information and submit to EGRP II			1-31	1-15		
Conduct data analysis and interpretation				1-31		
Draft report preparation and submission to EGRP II					1-18	
Feedback collection and revision					19-15	
Presentation in research dissemination events						1 - 31
Final report preparation and submission to EGRP II						31

**Deliverables**

**Table 5** provides a list of the anticipated deliverables for the research and **Table 6** provides the payment schedule for the deliverables. The firm should deliver the work with quality for releases of the payment from the EGRP II. Any delays in delivering the agreed work should be notified, discussed with EGRP II and approved in advance.

**Table 5 : List of Key Deliverables**

SN	Deliverable description	Dates
1.	Approved list of research team	October 31, 2021
2.	Draft qualitative data collection tools (for both IC and TPS research)	November 15, 2021
3.	Dry-run and team member orientation report with attendance (for both IC and TPS)	November 30, 2021
4.	Approved qualitative data collection tools (for both IC and TPS)	November 30, 2021
5.	Transcribed data of qualitative research (IC and TPS)	January 16, 2022
6.	Draft qualitative reports (IC and TPS)	February 18, 2022
7.	Presentation of the findings in a dissemination event (IC and TPS)	March 15, 2022
8.	Final reports (IC and TPS)	March 31, 2022

## Payment Schedule

**Table 64: Payment Schedule**

SN	Deliverables	Payment terms
1.	Approved list of research team	30% upon submission and acceptance of an activity completion report as stated in No. 1, 2, 3 and 4.
2.	Draft qualitative methodologies tools (for both IC and TPS research)	
3.	Dry-run and team member orientation report with attendance	
4.	Approved qualitative research tools (for both IC and TPS)	
5.	Transcribed data of qualitative research (IC and TPS)	30% upon submission and acceptance of transcribed data as stated in No. 5.
6.	Draft qualitative reports (IC and TPS)	40% upon submission and acceptance of IC and TPS final reports and as stated in No. 6, 7, and 8, following the acceptance criteria described immediately below.
7.	Presentation of the findings in a dissemination event	
8.	Final reports (IC and TPS)	

**Acceptance Criteria**

Acceptance of all deliverables will reside with EGRP II. EGRP II will ensure the completeness of each stage or deliverable of the operational research and that the scope of work has been met. Once a milestone is completed and the winning bidder provides their report/deliverable for review and approval, EGRP II will either sign off on the approval for the work to continue to the next phase or reply to the winning bidder in writing advising what tasks must still be accomplished.

Once all tasks have been completed, the research project will enter the closure stage.

Any discrepancies involving the completion of project tasks or disagreement between RTI/ EGRP II, and the winning bidder will be referred to both organizations’ contracting offices for review and discussion.

**Pricing**

The financial proposal should include the detailed breakdown of each activity. All bidders are required to submit the budget narrative using template Annex- 1 along with the financial proposal that justify proposed quantity and rate for this research as specified in Attachment A, Scope of Work. Please indicate VAT amount separately.

Item #	Activity	Quantity	Unit of Measure	Unit Fixed Price (Each)	Total Fixed Price (Each)	Lead Time Availability (Number of Days)
1						
2						
3						
<b>Total Value</b>						

**NOTE:** Please do not write the price in the above illustrative table. Bidders are required to use the budget template Annex -1 which will be provided via email upon request from interested bidder.

By signing this attachment, the bidder confirms he has a complete understanding of the scope of work and fully intends to deliver items that comply with the above scope of work.

Signature:

Title:

Date:


## Attachment “B” Instructions to Bidders/Sellers

1. **Procurement Narrative Description:** The Buyer (RTI) intends to purchase commodities and/or services identified in Attachment A. The Buyer intends to purchase the quantities (for commodities) and/or services (based on deliverables identified in a Statement of Work). The term of the Ordering Agreement shall be from Award Date to the Delivery date of the Offeror unless extended by mutual agreement of the parties. The Buyer intends to award to a single “approved” supplier based on conformance to the listed specifications, the ability to service this contract, and selling price. We reserve the right to award to more than one bidder. If an Ordering Agreement is established as a result of this RFQ/RFP, supplier understands that quantities indicated in the specifications (Attachment A) are an estimate only and RTI does not guarantee the purchase quantity of any item listed.
2. **Procuring Activity:** This procurement will be made by Research Triangle Institute (RTI International), located at

**RTI- USAID Early Grade Reading Program II**  
**House no. 46/64, Uttar Dhoka, Lazimpat, Kathmandu, Nepal**

who has a purchase requirement in support of a project funded by:

**USAID**

RTI shall award the initial quantities and/or services and any option quantities (if exercised by RTI) to Seller by a properly executed Purchase Order as set forth within the terms of this properly executed agreement.

3. **Proposal Requirements.** All Sellers will submit a quote/proposal which contains offers for all items and options included in this RFQ/RFP. All information presented in the Sellers quote/proposal will be considered during RTI’s evaluation. Failure to submit the information required in this RFQ/RFP may result in Seller’s offer being deemed non-responsive. Sellers are responsible for submitting offers, and any modifications, revisions, or withdrawals, so as to reach RTI’s office designated in the RFQ/RFP by the time and date specified in the RFQ/RFP. Any offer, modification, revision, or withdrawal of an offer received at the RTI office designated in the RFQ/RFP after the exact time specified for receipt of offers is “late” and may not be considered at the discretion of the RTI Procurement Officer. The Seller’s proposal shall include the following:
  - (a) The solicitation number: Nepal EGRP II-RFP-FY21-P008
  - (b) The date and time submitted:

- (c) The name, address, and telephone number of the seller (bidder) and authorized signature of same:
  - (d) Validity period of Quote: 120 days
  - (e) A technical description of the items being offered in sufficient detail to evaluate compliance with the requirements in the solicitation. This may include product literature, or other documents, if necessary.
  - (f) If RTI informs Seller that the Commodity is intended for export and the Commodity is not classified for export under Export Classification Control Number (ECCN) “EAR99” of the U.S. Department of Commerce Export Administration Regulations (EAR), then Seller must provide RTI the correct ECCN and the name of Seller’s representative responsible for Trade Compliance who can confirm the export classification.
  - (g) Lead Time Availability of the Commodity/Service.
  - (h) Terms of warranty describing what and how the warranties will be serviced.
  - (i) Special pricing instructions: Price and any discount terms or special requirements or terms (special note: pricing must include guaranteed firm fixed prices for items requested.)
  - (j) Payment address or instructions (if different from mailing address)
  - (k) Acknowledgment of solicitation amendments (if any)
  - (l) Past performance information, when included as an evaluation factor, to include recent and relevant contracts for the same or similar items and other references (including points of contact with telephone numbers, and other relevant information)
  - (m) **Special Note:** *The Seller, by his response to this RFQ/RFP and accompanying signatures, confirms that the terms and conditions associated with this RFQ/RFP document have been agreed to and all of its attachments have been carefully read and understood and all related questions answered.*
4. **Forms:** Sellers (potential bidders or suppliers) must record their pricing utilizing the format found on Attachment “A”. Sellers must sign the single hardcopy submitted and send to address listed on the cover page of this RFQ/RFP.
5. **Questions Concerning the Procurement.** All questions in regard to this RFQ/RFP to be

directed to:

The Selection Committee  
RTI-USAID EGRP II

at this email address:

procurement@np-egrp.rti.org

The cut-off date for questions is:

Tuesday, September 07, 2021, 11:00 AM Nepal Standard Time

6. **Notifications and Deliveries:** Time is of the essence for this procurement. Seller shall deliver the items or services no later than the dates set forth in the contract that will be agreed by both parties as a result of this RFQ/RFP. The Seller shall immediately contact the Buyer's Procurement Officer if the specifications, availability, or the delivery schedule(s) changes. Exceptional delays will result in financial penalties being imposed of Seller.
7. **Documentation:** The following documents will be required for payment for each item:
  - (a) A detailed invoice listing Purchase Order Number, Bank information with wiring instructions (when applicable)
  - (b) Packing List
  - (c) All relevant product/service documentation (manuals, warranty doc, certificate of analysis, etc.)
8. **Payment Terms:** Refer to RTI purchase order terms and conditions found in <https://www.rti.org/sites/default/files/rti-purchase-order-terms-and-conditions-v1.16.pdf>, [http://www.rti.org/files/PO\\_FAR\\_Clauses.pdf](http://www.rti.org/files/PO_FAR_Clauses.pdf), or [http://www.rti.org/files/PO\\_FAR\\_Clauses\\_Commercial\\_Items.pdf](http://www.rti.org/files/PO_FAR_Clauses_Commercial_Items.pdf). Payment can be made via wire transfer or other acceptable form. Sellers may propose alternative payment terms and they will be considered in the evaluation process.
9. **Alternative Proposals:** Sellers are permitted to offer "alternatives" should they not be able to meet the listed requirements. Any alternative proposals shall still satisfy the minimum requirements set forth in Attachment A Specifications.
10. **Inspection Process:** Each item shall be inspected prior to final acceptance of the item. All significant discrepancies, shortages, and/or faults must be satisfactorily corrected and satisfactorily documented prior to delivery and release of payment.
11. **Evaluation and Award Process:** The RTI Procurement Officer will award an agreement contract resulting from this solicitation to the responsible Seller (bidder) whose offer conforms to the RFQ/RFP will be most advantageous to RTI, price and other factors considered. The award will be made to the Seller representing the **best value** to the project and to RTI. For the purpose of this RFQ/RFP, price, delivery, technical and past performance are of equal importance for the purposes of evaluating and selecting the "best value" awardee. RTI intends to evaluate offers and award an Agreement without discussions with Sellers. Therefore, the Seller's initial offer should contain the Seller's best terms from a price and technical standpoint. However, RTI reserves the right to conduct discussions if later determined by the RTI Procurement Officer to be necessary.



## **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

Interested research firm should provide all the required information indicated below:

### **Eligibility Requirements:**

The bidders must submit the following documents for minimum eligibility. Only bidders meeting the minimum eligibility will be considered for technical evaluation.

#### **A. Legal Registration Documents**

- Research firm registration certificate
- A copy of PAN/VAT registration certificate
- Tax clearance of the year 2076/77 B.S.

#### **B. Experience**

- Two (2) reference letters from previous or current clients for similar nature of research (including phone number, location, name of contact persons and email address) within the last five years.

#### **C. Financial Capacity**

- Audited financial accounts – last 3 years (2074/2075, 2075/76 and 2076/77 B.S.), including Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet.

#### **D. Other Document: Signed copy of this RFP document**

- E. DUNS & Bradstreet Number** (a nine character unique number). The federal government has adopted the use of DUNS numbers to track how federal money is allocated. DUNS number identifies your organization, which is mandatory for proposal submission.

Note: - This process can take much longer than two business days. It is advised to apply immediately if bidders are interested in submitting proposals. The detail instructions and steps to obtain DUNS number is given in Attachment C.

### **Technical Proposal:**

Bidder are required to prepare technical proposal considering the following points (as specified in Attachment A, Scope of Work):

1. **Summary of relevant work experience** in qualitative research related to education.
2. **Company profile:** a brief description of your company, including its date and location of incorporation, number of years of work experience relevant to this RFP.
3. **Technical Approach:** please describe how your organization plans to hire and mobilize high quality research team, train the researchers, develop tools, make field visits, collect the data and use technologies for data management, transcribing, analysis and report writing. Also include the implementation plan and contingency plan.
4. **Key Personnel:** please attach CVs of one (1) team leader and one (1) supervisor who will lead and supervise the research activities.

The evaluation factors will be comprised of the following criteria:

(a) **PRICE - Maximum Weight – 20 Points**

Cost proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the most effective rates for research and completeness of their price schedules in line with the technical proposal covering all activities outlined in the Scope of Work.

(b) **PAST PERFORMANCE OF BIDDER - Maximum Weight – 15 Points**

Proposals will be evaluated on their response to the information requested including how closely past experiences matches the proposed work to be performed as defined in the Scope of Work.

(c) **TECHNICAL CONTENTS – Maximum Weight – 40 Points**

Proposals will be evaluated on how well the organization demonstrates technical strength and its ability/availability to conduct the activities and to communicate results.

(d) **QUALIFICATION AND EXPERIENCE OF PROPOSED PERSONNEL – Maximum Weight- 25 Points**

Proposals will be evaluated on suitability and level of expertise of the personnel selected to conduct the activities.

**Total weightage – 100 Points**

12. **Award Notice.** A written notice of award or acceptance of an offer, mailed or otherwise furnished to the successful supplier within the time acceptance specified in the offer, shall result in a binding contract without further action by either party.

13. **Validity of Offer.** This RFP in no way obligates RTI to make an award, nor does it commit RTI to pay any costs incurred by the Seller in the preparation and submission of a proposal or amendments to a proposal. Your proposal shall be considered valid for 120 days after submission.
14. **Representations and Certifications.** Winning suppliers under a US Federal Contract are required to complete and sign as part of your offer RTI Representations and Certifications for values over \$10,000.
15. **Anti- Kick Back Act of 1986.** Anti-Kickback Act of 1986 as referenced in FAR 52.203-7 is hereby incorporated into this Request for Proposal as a condition of acceptance. If you have reasonable grounds to believe that a violation, as described in Paragraph (b) of FAR 52.203-7 may have occurred, you should report this suspected violation to the RTI's Ethics Hotline at 1-877-212-7220 or by sending an e-mail to [ethics@rti.org](mailto:ethics@rti.org). You may report a suspected violation anonymously.
16. **The John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019 - section 889.** RTI cannot use any equipment or services from specific companies, or their subsidiaries and affiliates, including Huawei Technologies Company, ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, and Dahua Technology Company ("Covered Technology"). In response to this request for proposal, please do not provide a quote which includes any Covered Technology. Any quote which includes Covered Technology will be deemed non-responsive. Additionally, if the United States Government is the source of funds for this RFP, the resulting Supplier shall not provide any equipment, system, or service that uses Covered Technology as a substantial or essential component

**Acceptance:**

Seller agrees, as evidenced by signature below, that the seller's completed and signed solicitation, seller's proposal including all required submissions and the negotiated terms contained herein, constitute the entire agreement for the services described herein.

By: *(Seller Research Firm Name)*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Title:

Date:

**ATTACHMENT C: - STEPS TO OBTAIN DUNS NUMBER (exceeding \$25,000)****ORGANIZATION INSTRUCTIONS****PURPOSE OF THIS STEP:**

The federal government has adopted the use of DUNS numbers to track how federal money is allocated. DUNS number identifies your organization.

This process should take no more than 2 business days.

**WHAT IS A DUNS NUMBER & WHY DO I NEED OBTAIN ONE?**

The **Data Universal Number System (DUNS)** number is a unique nine-character number that identifies your organization. It is a tool of the federal government to track how federal money is distributed. **Most large organizations, libraries, colleges and research universities already have DUNS numbers.**

Ask your administrator or chief financial officer to provide your organization's DUNS number. If your organization is **based in the U.S.**, a DUNS number can be requested by phone or online.

Webpage for phone number: [http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/reqDuns\\_phone.jsp](http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/reqDuns_phone.jsp)

If your organization is located **outside the United States**, you can request and register for a DUNS number through the following web site.

Webpage for registration: <http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/displayHomePage.do>

**This is the information you will need to have available in order to obtain the DUNS number. (If your organization does not already have one):**

- Legal Name of organization
- Name of the organization CEO
- The primary type of business your company engages in (NCIA/SIC CODE)  
*To obtain this code please go to [www.naics.com/search.htm](http://www.naics.com/search.htm)*
- Any other name your business might be recognized by, i.e. doing business as (DBA)
- Physical organization address (city, state and zip code)
- Mailing address if separate from headquarters
- Telephone number
- Name of the primary contact person and his or her title
- Number of employees at your location
- Is this a home-based business?

If your organization does not have a DUNS number, use this Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) online registration process to receive one free of charge.

**NOTE:** Obtaining a DUNS number places your organization on D&B's marketing list that is sold to other companies. You can request not to be added to this list during your application.