



Request for Proposal (RFP) – Nepal EGRP II-RFP-FY22-P001

Commodity/Service Required:	Research on COVID-19 Impacts on Student's Learning in Nepal for the National Early Grade Reading Program
Type of Procurement:	Subaward
Type of Contract:	Firm Fixed Price
Term of Contract:	December 6, 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:	Monday, October 11, 2021
Date Questions from Supplier Due:	Wednesday, October 20, 2021, 3:00 PM Nepal Standard Time at procurement@np-egrp.rti.org Note: Questions and Answers will be posted on RTI website.
Date for Pre-Bid Meeting RSVP:	Wednesday, October 20, 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 procurement@np-egrp.rti.org and subsequently the Zoom meeting invitation will be sent to you.
Date of Pre-Bid Meeting:	Thursday, October 21, 2021, 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM Nepal Standard Time
Date Proposal Due:	Wednesday, November 10, 2021, 11 AM Nepal Standard Time
Approximate Date Subaward Issued to Successful Bidder(s):	Monday, December 6, 2021
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	

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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-FY22-P001**" for **Proposal for Research on COVID-19 Impacts on Student's Learning in Nepal for the National Early Grade Reading Program.**

List of inner envelopes

Envelope 1:- Eligibility Requirements (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 see attachment B for selection criteria]

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

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Solicitation Number:	Nepal EGRP II-RFP-FY22-P001
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Attachments to RFP:

1. Attachment “A” – Statement of Work
2. Attachment “B” – Instructions to Bidders/Sellers
3. Attachment “C” - Steps to obtain DUNS number
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 or for commercial items:
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 RESEARCH ON COVID-19 IMPACTS ON STUDENT'S LEARNING IN NEPAL

The scope of work for this activity is to conduct research on COVID-19 impacts on learning in Nepal for the Early Grade Reading Program II (EGRP II). This research will support the objective of the Government of Nepal's National Early Grade Reading Program (NEGRP). Working closely with EGRP II and Government of Nepal's officials, the selected research firm will conduct this research through a set of steps including recruiting a qualified research team; conducting a desk review to determine further areas for investigation; developing, piloting, and refining qualitative data collection tools; collecting, organizing and analyzing data; drafting and finalizing a research report; and presenting the report in a dissemination event.

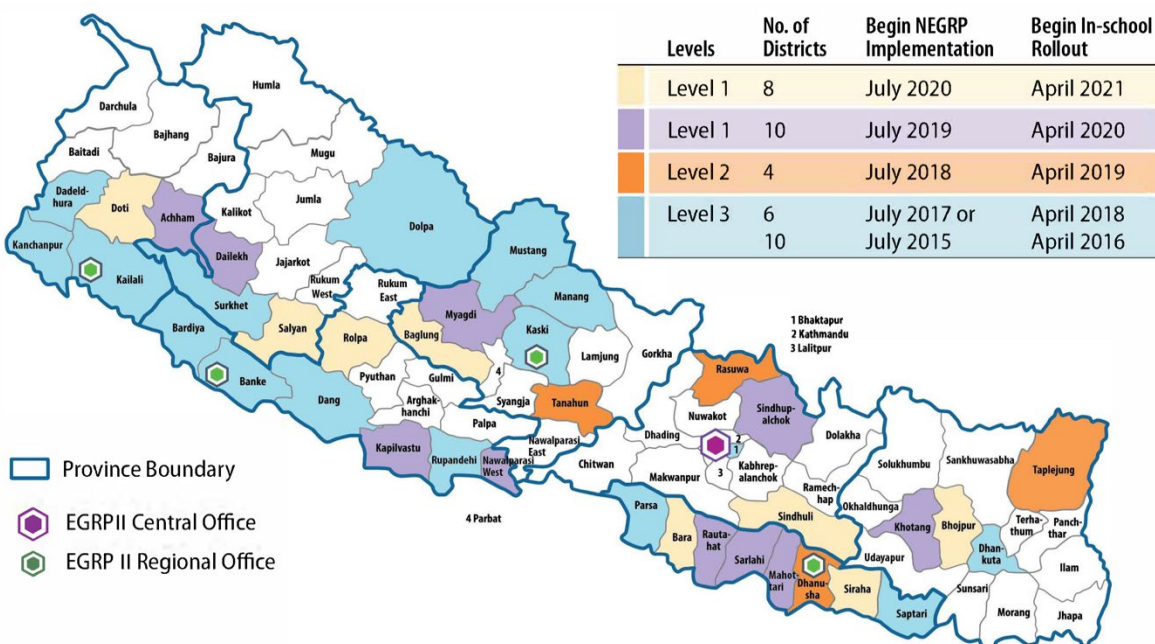
Background

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



Study Background

The social and economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are exacerbating the global education crisis. At the peak of the pandemic in 2020, 94 percent of children were out of school and, as of January 2021, about 700 million children were still studying from home.¹ The World Bank estimates an increase of learning poverty from 53% to 63% as well as high dropout rates globally due to the pandemic.² A survey conducted by UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Bank, and OECD shows that, worldwide, about 41% of countries extended their school years to account for disrupted time and 42% prioritized specific areas of the curriculum to ensure that core skills were covered. Despite these adjustments, COVID-19 is likely to widen inequalities between and within the countries.³

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a severe effect on Nepal's education sector. Schools were closed in response to government-mandated lockdowns from 19th March 2020 and disruptions continued in 2021. For Nepal, the Learning Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS) that the average child can expect to complete was 6.9 years before the COVID-19 pandemic.⁴ Even conservative estimates, developed during the first wave of the pandemic to hit Nepal in 2020, suggest that the LAYS figure was likely to

¹ World Bank. (2021, January 22). "Urgent, Effective Action Required to Quell the Impact of COVID-19 on Education Worldwide." <https://bit.ly/2XiV9kU>

² Saavedra, J., & Clarke, M. (2020). "What PISA for Development Results Tell us about Education Access and Learning Levels in Developing Countries." World Bank. <https://bit.ly/2Xh3LZk>

³ UNESCO, UNICEF, World Bank & OECD. (2021). "What's Next? Lessons on Education Recovery: Findings from a Survey of Ministries of Education Amid the COVID-19 Pandemic." <https://bit.ly/3yF6kSP>

⁴ World Bank (2018). "Learning Adjusted Years of Schooling (LAYS), 2018." <https://bit.ly/3j0sT2a>

drop .5 years to 6.4 years.⁵ With the return of widespread school closures and other disruptions to education in response to the second pandemic wave in 2021, the LAYS figure may decrease even further and children are more likely to experience long-term impacts on their well-being and learning and earning potential. These effects are anticipated to hit disadvantaged children the hardest, as they fall even further behind their peers.

In response to this challenge, the GON has rolled out multimodal learning programs during school closures and other periods of disruption, including 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.⁶ At the same time, the GON recognizes that high-technology approaches are likely to deepen educational inequities in a country where many households do not have access to radio, television, and internet.⁷ A range of development partners have supported the GON's efforts to stabilize education across the country, through alternative, catch-up learning approaches that utilize low- or no-tech solutions for some of the most educationally disadvantaged children.

The alternative learning methods promulgated by the GON appeared to have had limited uptake and impact. For instance, a phone survey conducted by the World Bank in early 2021 among 1,872 households across Nepal found that, on average, 46% of rural households had no access to a source of learning technology, only roughly 25% of students reported interacting with their teacher during the school closure period, and 25% of parents did not spend time helping their children learn. The same study found that rates of parental support to children at home are significantly different between disadvantaged⁸ and advantaged castes. In addition, the survey found that 25 percent of children belonging to advantaged castes did not have access to remote learning compared to 33 percent of children from disadvantaged groups. 57 percent of parents reported that their children are falling behind in education.⁹

EGRP II baseline data from early 2021 suggests that there has been substantial learning loss. For example, grade 2 students scored an average of roughly 65% on a classroom-based early grade reading assessment (CB-EGRA) administered in early 2020, before the pandemic, while that average had dropped to 28.5% in the baseline's March 2021 CB-EGRA¹⁰. The loss was even more striking when examining outcomes by language/ethnicity, with an average score of 18.4% for second

⁵ Sharma, U., Sherpa, M. & Radhakrishnan, K. (2020). "COVID-19-Related Learning Losses in Nepal." Unpublished Manuscript. World Bank.

⁶ Government of Nepal (2020). "Student Learning Facilitation Directive through Alternative System, 2077" and "Curriculum Content Adjustment Framework, 2077."

⁷ For example, a 2020 baseline survey showed that over 40% of households did not have a single member with access to the internet and 70% did not have a radio. Radhakrishnan, K., Angrist, N., Bergman, P., Cullen, C., Moitshepi Matsheng, M., Ramakrishnan, A., Sabarwal, S. and Sharma, U. (2021). "Learning in the Time of COVID-19: Insights from Nepal." Kathmandu, Nepal: World Bank.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/35384>

⁸ Disadvantaged castes in the study included Janajati, Tharu, Madhesi, and Dalit.

⁹ Radhakrishnan, K., Anhttps://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1w2J6ep-nTovUPMMh5Y3gVPN2y-ts5n-Egrist, N., Bergman, P., Cullen, C., Matsheng, M., Ramakrishnan, A., Sabarwal, S., and Sharma, U. (2021). "Learning in the Time of COVID-19: Insights from Nepal." World Bank.

¹⁰ RTI International. (2021). "USAID's Early Grade Reading Program II (EGRP II) in Nepal: Student Reading Performance in the Early Grades: Baseline Report" [Unpublished report].

language learners contrasted with 33.3% for native Nepali speakers. This aligns with global analysis by the World Bank, which reveals that higher learning loss of students from lower socio-economic backgrounds is due to limited access to learning devices and books and less educated caregivers in families.¹¹

Nepal's Education Review Office (ERO) intends to conduct a study to assess the impacts of COVID-19 on students' learning and the education system more broadly due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This study will be conducted in coordination with the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology and its constituent agencies the Curriculum Development Center (CDC) and the Center for Education and Human Resource Development (CEHRD), with support from EGRP II. EGRP II will hire a research firm to conduct this study. The government agencies, with EGRP II support, will monitor progress and ensure the study is going as expected. This study will be conducted in grade 3 in EGRP II implemented districts. This study will assess COVID-19 impacts on student's learning, problems, and challenges that students are facing to access alternative education provision and draw recommendations for remediating missed learning.

Study Objectives and Design

Overall Objectives of Qualitative Research

Considering the context and background laid out above, the overall objectives of the research are:

1. To assess the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on student learning in the early grades of community schools.
2. To explore the barriers and challenges that student face in accessing teaching-learning activities during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. To assess education system resilience and draw recommendations for policy, resource allocation, and practice to address future effects of COVID-19 on the education sector.

Research Questions

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. What is the impact of COVID 19 on students' learning in the early grades of community school? Are there differences in impacts on students' learning based on demographic and social characteristics ?
2. What are the barriers in accessing learning activities during the COVID-19 pandemic?
3. How did the education system provide learning opportunities and other supports to children during the COVID 19 pandemic?

Research Methodology

EGRP II intends to utilize mixed research methods to gauge the status of learning (using quantitative approaches) as well as the perspectives of key education stakeholders on the education sector response to COVID-19 (using qualitative approaches). The EGRP II team aims to perform the

¹¹ World Bank. (2020). "The COVID-19 Pandemic: Shocks to Education and Policy Responses." World Bank.

quantitative analysis using data on learning outcomes, while the research firm will only be responsible for conducting the qualitative elements of the study to complement EGRP II's quantitative findings.

For the quantitative elements, EGRP II will use 2020 National Assessment of Reading and Numeracy (NARN)¹² and EGRP II baseline data to student's reading achievement before and after the COVID-19 pandemic. The NARN data was collected in early 2020 before the pandemic while the EGRP II baseline was conducted in early 2021 after the first wave of the pandemic. Using these two datasets, EGRP II will analyze the past and current learning status of student learning in grade 3 and the interaction with socio-demographic factors to identify how COVID-19 has affected the learning of different groups of students. The study will be conducted in grade 3 because adequate current and historical data on learning outcomes in grade 3 exists to support the quantitative analysis, and because grade 3 learning achievement is one of the GON's core education sector indicators.

The research firm will conduct a desk review of journal articles, reports, and other relevant international and national literature and publications to inform the qualitative study design. In addition, the research firm may also be able to review the quantitative data findings to identify areas that can be further investigated through qualitative study, including the specific schools to be sampled for the qualitative inquiry.

The researchers will conduct interviews and/or focus group discussions (as appropriate) with key education stakeholders including students, parents, early grade teachers, headteachers, Local Education Unit (LEU) officials, and federal and provincial government officials. The qualitative information will also include four to six in-depth case studies of specific schools/students. When selecting informants to include in the case studies, the research firm should consider including a range of socio-demographic factors such as sex, home language (Nepali as L1 and L2), disability, and geographic factors such as rural and urban, provinces and ecological belts.

Research Instruments

1. Desk review: The research firm will review and prepare a write-up on the literature related to COVID-19 effects and response in Nepal's education sector.
2. Quantitative analysis: The EGRP II team will extract learning outcomes data from Bara district from the NARN and EGRP II baseline to analyze the quantitative impacts of COVID-19 on children's learning between 2020 and 2021. The EGRP II team will conduct the quantitative data analysis and provide that analysis to the research firm. The research firm will then utilize the quantitative analysis, combined with the desk review, to surface themes for further exploration during the qualitative phase. In addition to the data from Bara, data from other districts (including Achham, Bhojpur, Surkhet, and Tanahun) may also be utilized to help identify suitable target locations for the subsequent qualitative inquiry. Specific details of the quantitative approach will be communicated to the selected research firm as relevant.
3. Qualitative tools: The selected research firm will conduct in-depth interviews, focus group discussions, and case studies.

¹³ Not in Taplejung, because NARN and EGRP II data were not collected in that district.

Sampling Approach

EGRP II is being implemented in the 38 NEGRP target districts of Nepal, with groups of districts labeled as “Level 1-3” depending on their stage of NEGRP rollout (**Figure 1**). Considering the availability of suitable data for the quantitative analysis, the EGRP II team will use the grade 3 data from NARN and EGRP II baseline studies. EGRP II anticipates that this quantitative approach will include data from 24 schools from NARN and 14 schools from the EGRP II baseline of Bara district. The EGRP II team will use a complex sampling data analysis approach for the quantitative part of the study.

The research firm will collect qualitative information from six districts: Achham, Bara, Bhojpur, Surkhet, Tanahun, and Taplejung. These districts have been selected to represent the range of locations (**Figure 1**) and geographic areas covered by EGRP II. Within the target districts, the EGRP II team will support the research firm to identify the research sites and participants for qualitative data collection. From each district, the research firm will select 1 local level in coordination with the EGRP II team, considering ecological belt, rural-urban settings, as well as types of EGRP II interventions being conducted. Likewise, the research participants will be selected by taking language (Nepali as L1 and L2), sex, and rural-urban setting, and regions into account. The selection of local level and participants such as head teacher, students, parents will take into account the level of COVID-19 impacts (low, medium and high) in Bara districts. As noted above, the quantitative data from the NARN and the EGRP II baseline may also be used to refine the targeting for the qualitative research in Achham, Bhojpur, Surkhet, and Tanahun.¹³ The researcher will also interview relevant EGRP II program staff and federal and provincial level agencies to understand their perspectives on the effects of COVID-19 pandemic and resilience in education sector. The possible sample size is presented in Table 1. The research firm will consider including an adequate number of research participants to meet the research objectives.

Table 1: Research Site and Participants

Research site/participants	Numbers
Districts	6 (Achham, Bara, Bhojpur, Surkhet, Tanahun, Taplejung)
Local Levels	6 Local Levels (1 from each district)
LEU officials	6 LEU officials (1 from each district)
Head teachers	18 Teachers (3 head teachers from each Local Level)
Students	18 students (3 students from each local level)
Parents	18 parents (3 parents from each local level including who are SMC/PTA members)
EGRP II staff	9 people (6 district coordinators, 3 regional technical coordinators, and 2 staff from central level)
Provincial and federal level	7 (2 government officials from federal level and 5 from

¹³ Not in Taplejung, because NARN and EGRP II data were not collected in that district.

government agencies	provincial levels)
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Scope of the Work

The selected research firm will first conduct a desk review to explore education system resilience in Nepal and determine areas of focus for the qualitative study. The firm will then use the findings of EGRP II’s quantitative analysis and the desk review to further explore barriers and challenges to continuity of learning during the COVID-19 pandemic. The research firm will develop study instruments, hire a competent and qualified research team, orient the research team on study tools, and conduct a dry run of the tools in Bhaktapur District. The research firm then will revise the tools based on the experience from the pilot study and use those finalized tools to collect the data from sample districts. The firm will also transcribe the data and submit a copy of transcriptions to EGRP II.

In close coordination with EGRP II, the research firm will develop the themes and prepare a draft report. EGRP II will support the research firm to circulate the draft report to GON, USAID, and EGRP II stakeholders for feedbacks. The research firm will then finalize the research report based on feedback from those stakeholders. In addition, the research firm will prepare a PowerPoint presentation on the study methodology, findings, and recommendations, and present the research findings in one national level dissemination event.

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, 1 research supervisor, and adequate field researchers. The team leader will be responsible to deliver high-quality work 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 on previous EGRP studies/assessments or similar research activities focused on early grade reading in Nepal.

Research Team's Qualifications

EGRP II intends to contract a local research firm from within Nepal to conduct this study. The bidders will be responsible for proposing a qualified and adequate team composition to cover the necessary geographic locations and data collection activities in the allotted time. Desired qualifications include:

- In-depth knowledge of the Nepal education sector, including curriculum, teaching and learning, assessment, and community/parent engagement practices, as evidenced by previous similar research studies in the Nepal education sector.
- Previous experience of conducting studies using qualitative methods in the Nepal education sector with similar aims and approaches
- Familiarity with the range of education stakeholders at national, provincial, district, local, and school/community levels in Nepal as evidenced by previous research conducted at similar scale at those levels.
- Demonstrated experience with applying principles of gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) in research

- Ability to provide 2-3 previous samples of research that demonstrates appropriate methodological rigor and clarity in written English

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 field researchers should have a bachelor's degree in education and experience in qualitative information collection from the field and transcribing preferably working with younger children and schools.

Tools Orientation Workshop

The research firm will conduct a tool orientation workshop to orient the study team on research's objectives and data collection tools. EGRP II along with ERO staff will observe the workshop and provide feedback as necessary. The research firm will be responsible to manage the venue, catering and other logistics supports for the orientation program. EGRP II will manage logistical arrangements for its staff members and government officials.

Dry Run and Tools Revision

After completing the tools orientation workshop, the study team should visit schools in to assess the appropriateness, reliability, and validity of the tools. EGRP II and ERO staff will observe the process. The research firm will be responsible to manage all the logistics requirements for the research team. The 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 Information Collection & Transcribing

The team leader, supervisor and field researcher should visit the fields to collect qualitative information. At least two members should visit the field at a time. The research firm 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 research firm should plan for alternative means of data collection. In this case, the research firm will adopt a mixed approach including both distance and face-to-face data collection to complete the research on time. The research firm 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 a qualitative research report based on the themes generated from the data. If EGRP II conducts the quantitative analysis on the status of students' learning, EGRP II will share those details with the research firm for incorporation in the report. The draft report should be

shared with the EGRP II team, ERO, and USAID for feedback. The mode of report dissemination will be virtual, and the research firm 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 EGRP II. In addition, the research firm will be responsible to present the study findings in a dissemination event to wider stakeholders through a virtual platform.

Place of Performance

The research firm for the research shall perform all work within Nepal. The research firm will work in Kathmandu developing tools and orienting the research team and conduct a dry run in Bhaktapur District. The research team will collect qualitative information from 6 districts-Achham, Bara, Bhojpur, Surkhet, Tanahun and Taplegunj (**Table 1**). The municipalities (*Palikas*) and schools should be selected based on characteristics such as gender, rural-urban settlement, language (Nepali as L1 and L2) in close coordination with EGRP II.

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.

If field movements and data collection activities become restricted due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the research firm should develop and use distance data collection tools in coordination with EGRP II and ERO.

Research Logistics and Support

The research firm 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 research firm. 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 research firm. 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 research firm 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

The research firms are expected to start the work from December 6, 2021 and accomplish all tasks by March 31, 2022 (**Table 2**). All work must be completed within this timeframe. Any modifications or extensions will be requested through EGRP II and the research firm for review and discussion.

Table 2: Timeline for the Research

Task	2021	2022		
	December	January	February	March
Sub-Award signed	6			
Hire research personnel	7-16			
Desk review and writeup (and review of EGRP II's quantitative analysis)	17-31			
Develop study tools		1-6		
Conduct dry run and finalize study tools based on the pilot		7-15		
Conduct data collection		16-11		
Transcribe the collected information and submit to EGRP II		16-11		
Conduct data analysis and interpretation			12-19	
Draft report preparation and submission to EGRP II			20-5	
Feedback collection and revision				6-15
Presentation in research dissemination events				16-25
Final report preparation and submission to EGRP II				26-31

Deliverables

Table 3 provides a list of the anticipated deliverables for the research and **Table 4** provides the payment schedule for the deliverables. The research firm should deliver the work with quality for releases of the payments from the EGRP II. Any delays in delivering the agreed work should be notified, discussed with EGRP II and approved in advance.

Table 3: List of Key Deliverables

SN	Deliverable description	Dates
1.	Approved list of research team	December 16, 2021
2.	Desk review report	December 31, 2021
3.	Draft qualitative data collection tools	January 6, 2022
4.	Dry-run and team member orientation report with attendance	January 15, 2022
5.	Approved qualitative data collection tools	January 15, 2022
6.	Transcribed data of qualitative research	February 11, 2022
7.	Draft qualitative report	March 5, 2022
8.	Presentation of the findings in a dissemination event	March 25, 2022
9.	Final report	March 31, 2022

Payment Schedule
Table 4: Payment Schedule

SN	Deliverables	Payment terms
1.	Approved list of research team members	30% upon submission and acceptance of an activity completion report as stated in No. 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5.
2.	Desk review report	
3.	Draft qualitative data collection tools	
4.	Dry-run and team member orientation report with attendance	
5.	Approved qualitative data collection tools	
6.	Transcribed data of qualitative research	30% upon submission and acceptance of transcribed data as stated in No. 6.
7.	Draft qualitative report	40% upon submission and acceptance of final report and as stated in No. 7-9
8.	Presentation of the findings in a dissemination event	

9.	Final report	following the acceptance criteria described immediately below.
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Acceptance Criteria

Acceptance of all deliverables will reside with EGRP II. EGRP II will ensure the completeness of each stage or deliverable of the research and that the scope of work has been met. Once a milestone is completed and the research firm 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 research firm 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 research firm 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						
Total Value						

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 s/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-FY22-P001
 - (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:

Wednesday, October 20, 2021, 3:00 PM 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, or 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 2077/78 B.S.

Note: if the tax clearance for B.S. 2077/78 is in process, then kindly submit a letter from tax office stating the same and submit a copy of the tax clearance for the year B.S. 2076/77.

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 (2075/2076, 2076/77 and 2077/78 B.S.), including Profit & Loss and Balance Sheet.

Note: if the audit is in process for B.S 2077/78 then kindly submit a letter from the audit firm stating the same and submit audited financial statements for 2074/75, 2075/76 and 2076/77.

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) research 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 match 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. 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

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

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
- 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.