

# Request for Proposals

## Midterm Performance Evaluation for IESC's USAID-Funded YouLead Program

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| <b>Issue Date:</b>                 | <b>06 February 2020</b>   |
| <b>Closing Date For Proposals:</b> | <b>25 February 2020</b>   |
| <b>Closing Time:</b>               | <b>5:00 p.m. Eastern Daylight Time (EDT)</b>                                  |
| <b>Project Title:</b>              | <b>Midterm Performance Evaluation for IESC's USAID-Funded YouLead Program</b> |
| <b>Bid Reference Number:</b>       | <b>RFP-MEL-SRI171-FEB2020</b>   |

### 1. Disclaimer

The information contained in this Request for proposals (RFP) (hereinafter referred to as RFP) document is provided to the Offeror(s) by the International Executive Service Corps (herein after referred to as IESC). The purpose of this RFP document is to provide Offeror(s) with information to assist them in the preparation of their proposals for the services IESC seeks to source. This RFP document does not claim to contain all the information each Offeror may require. Each Offeror should conduct its own assessment and should check the accuracy, reliability and completeness of the information in this RFP document, and where necessary obtain independent advice from appropriate sources. IESC is under no obligation to make an award as a result of this RFP and at its own discretion may award any resulting contract from this RFP on a best-value basis.

IESC may, at its own discretion, but without being under any obligation to do so, update, amend or supplement the information in this RFP document. Any contract resulting from this RFP document will be a fixed-price deliverable contract.

### 2. Background

IESC is a nonprofit organization dedicated to equitable, sustainable economic growth in developing countries. We believe that a robust private sector is the cornerstone of resilient economies and stable countries. For more than 50 years, IESC has focused on market-driven private enterprise development.

## **2.1. YouLead Program Description**

IESC is currently implementing the Youth Employment and Business Start-Up Program (YouLead) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Sri Lanka, which was launched in June 2017 and is anticipated to end in May 2021. IESC is the lead implementer with six international and local sub-partners: Arizona State University (ASU); Global Communities; American Chamber of Commerce Sri Lanka (AmCham); The Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC); Skills for Life (SFL); and Verite Research. The program aims to increase employment and entrepreneurship opportunities for youth in Sri Lanka. YouLead's key objectives are to work with the public and private sectors to improve the quality and relevance of vocational and technical training; link youth to productive employment opportunities; and, support the development of youth-led start-up enterprises in Sri Lanka.

YouLead is organized under the following Components:

Component 1: Increase youth employability skills in targeted sectors;

Component 2: Improve quality, relevance, and delivery of TVET; and,

Component 3: Increase prospects for successful self-employment.

The program's core activities are designed to leave behind institutional level capacity that will align public and private sector incentives, generate greater investment, and improve competitiveness in sectors with high employment potential. YouLead works closely with public-sector stakeholders, as they provide the bulk of Sri Lanka's vocational training and have unmatched outreach and infrastructure.

YouLead activities collaborate with specific Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) authorities within the Ministry of Skills Development and Vocation Training (MSDVT). These authorities are the Tertiary and Vocational Education Commission (TVEC) as well as the three largest training institutes—the National Apprenticeship and Industrial Training Authority (NAITA), the Vocational Training Authority (VTA), and the Department of Technical Education and Training (DTET).

The YouLead program interventions prioritize 12 districts with the highest youth unemployment—Jaffna, Galle, Kandy, Mannar, Kegalle, Badulla, Kilinochchi, Hambantota, Nuwara Eliya, Monaragala, Matara, Matale. The priority industry sectors selected for the program engagement are tourism and hospitality, construction, information and communication technology (ICT) trades, and healthcare.

## **2.2. YouLead Program Theory of Change**

IESC/YouLead development hypothesis is defined as: 1) If young women and men in rural areas can access high-quality, market-driven vocational education and training, and have support that addresses structural and cultural impediments to employment,

as well as the gap in technical and life skills, they will be able to obtain suitable jobs; 2) Offering skilled youth a package of integrated entrepreneurial and business development services, including access to finance, will increase sustainable self-employment; and, 3) Improving access to job opportunities will reduce inequality and promote the social cohesion, citizen empowerment, and personal dignity necessary for sustained growth and development.

### **3. Period of Performance**

The anticipated period of performance will be March to April 2020.

### **4. Scope Statement**

IESC is seeking to engage a qualified, independent third-party individual or firm to conduct a midterm performance evaluation of the USAID-funded YouLead Program.

### **5. Statement Of Work**

#### **5.1. Schedule of Authorities**

The selected firm/consultant will report to the home office program manager. Key contacts for the field office include Charles Conconi, the project director, and Sudar Theepan, the monitoring and evaluation manager.

#### **5.2. Purpose of Midterm Performance Evaluation**

Per USAID's Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Policy, the purpose of the evaluation is to critically and objectively review and take stock of the YouLead Program's implementation, assess relevance of interventions, provide early signal of effectiveness of interventions (or lack of), document lessons learned, assess sustainability efforts to date, and discuss/recommend course corrections as necessary.

#### **5.3. Evaluation Questions**

The evaluator/evaluation team will assess the following key questions:

##### **1. Are the planned activities on track?**

- a. Which components and activities of the program are on track, and which ones are not?
- b. Is the program on track to meet its indicator targets? For indicators that are not on track, why is that the case?
- c. Are program activities reaching and impacting targeted sectors and beneficiaries?

## **2. Have any contextual changes occurred?**

- a. What challenges and/or changes in the operational context has the program encountered, and why?
- b. How can identified challenges be mitigated moving forward?
- c. Do any activities and/or indicator targets need to be revised in light of the challenges identified and changes in operational context?

## **3. What are the working approaches, methods and strategies to be modified?**

- a. What changes or adaptations in program implementation should be made at this point?
- b. Which activities and/or initiatives should be maintained and/or scaled? And, why?
- c. Are program activities and/or sustainable? Why or why not?

## **5.4. Methodology Guideline**

The evaluator/evaluation team should use a mixed methods approach, including but not limited to quantitative surveys, focus group discussions with target beneficiaries, and key informant interviews with government officials and relevant public/private stakeholders including YouLead staff and USAID.

The data collection tools for collection of key data should be similar to the tools used during routine monitoring (to the extent possible) so that results may be comparable. The evaluator/evaluation team will meet with IESC and USAID to discuss proposed methodology prior to initiating evaluation activities.

## **5.5. Key Activities**

The evaluator/evaluation team will undertake the following key activities:

### **A. Desk review**

Review program-related documents, including:

- i. YouLead award agreement and any modifications
- ii. Approved MEL Plan
- iii. YouLead quarterly and annual reports from Oct 2017 to Dec 2019
- iv. Approved work plans for Program year 1, 2, and 3
- v. Market assessment report
- vi. Program Facebook page and web portals developed by program
- vii. Program sustainability partners' MoUs
- viii. Any other relevant program documents provided by IESC

### **B. Develop and finalize evaluation methodology**

In collaboration with IESC and USAID:

- i. Seek inputs from the teams to finalize evaluation methodology;
- ii. Confirm sampling frame and finalize sampling technique and sample size;
- iii. Develop and propose survey design and data collection tools for quantitative survey, follow-up focus group discussions, and key informant interviews;
- iv. Refine or create any tools necessary to answer the evaluation questions; and
- v. Based on the desk review, propose any additional topics or issues for analysis in the final evaluation at the end of the program.

### **C. Field data collection**

- i. Plan and coordinate all necessary logistics to conduct evaluation (the evaluator/evaluation team will co-locate with the YouLead program in Colombo, Sri Lanka). The evaluator/evaluation team will also receive assistance from YouLead field team in locating relevant beneficiaries. Otherwise, all resources (human resources and material) should be arranged by the evaluator/evaluation team.
- ii. Translate, pre-test, and finalize data collection tools including survey instruments and focus group questionnaire;
- iii. Train enumerators, as needed; and,
- iv. Carry out fieldwork with liaison support from YouLead staff, particularly M&E manager and associate.

### **D. Data analysis and reporting**

- i. Synthesize, analyze, and interpret data from survey, focus groups, and interviews.
- ii. Prepare and submit datasets with relevant documents to IESC/YouLead;
- iii. Prepare a draft evaluation report addressing the objectives and questions of this midterm evaluation as well as propose course correction or scale-up recommendations for review by IESC/YouLead;
- iv. Present evaluation findings in-person to IESC/YouLead and USAID;
- v. Review feedback and incorporate into findings as needed; and,
- vi. Submit final report (to be no more than 20 pages).

## **5.6. Timeframe and Proposed Level of Effort**

This evaluation activity should take approximately eight weeks starting on or about March 2020. An illustrative timeline is presented below.

| <b>Activity</b>                 | <b>Estimated Level of Effort (LoE)</b> | <b>Due Date</b> | <b>Notes</b>                         |
|---------------------------------|--|-----------------|--------------------------------------|
| Desk Review                     | 3 days                                 | NA              | Does not have to be consecutive days |
| Kick-off meeting with USAID and | 1 day                                  | TBD             | IESC/ YouLead staff will coordinate  |

| <b>Activity</b>  | <b>Estimated Level of Effort (LoE)</b> | <b>Due Date</b>                    | <b>Notes</b>                        |
|--|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| IESC/YouLead staff to discuss expectations, protocol, methodology, and timeline                                    |  |                                    |                                     |
| Develop draft evaluation work plan (including methodology and draft data collection tools, and delivery timelines) | 5 days                                 | TBD                                |                                     |
| Present draft evaluation work plan to IESC/ YouLead and USAID. Refine the plan based on comments received.         | 2 days                                 | TBD                                | IESC/ YouLead staff will coordinate |
| Field work/data collection   | 15 days                                | TBD                                |                                     |
| Data entry   | 3 days                                 |                                    |                                     |
| Data analysis and report writing   | 8 days                                 |                                    |                                     |
| Submit draft report to IESC/YouLead for comments and clarifications  | NA                                     | Within 7 weeks of contract signing |                                     |
| Prepare presentation of findings and present to USAID, IESC/YouLead  | 2 days                                 |                                    | IESC/ YouLead staff will coordinate |
| Finalize report and submit to IESC/ YouLead  | 3 days                                 | Within 8 weeks of contract signing |                                     |

**6. Deliverables**

1. Evaluation work plan that describes the following:
  - i. Understanding of the program based on desk review and kick-off meeting;

- ii. Final evaluation methodology, including detailed sampling plan, field work plan, and any limitations of the proposed approach;
  - iii. Description of planned quality control measures;
  - iv. Description of communication protocol; and,
  - v. Final timeline for the entire evaluation;
2. Electronic copies of all clean and final versions of data collection tools, in English, Sinhala/Tamil languages;
3. Clean and final versions of quantitative datasets and qualitative transcripts in agreed upon format in all three languages;
4. Electronic draft midterm evaluation report in English, addressing all evaluation objectives and questions;
5. Presentation materials of midterm evaluation findings in agreed upon format;
6. Electronic English version of the final midterm evaluation report in PDF and MS. Word, as well as two printed copies in color (one for USAID and one for the IESC/YouLead office). The final report should include, but is not limited to:
  - i. List of acronyms/abbreviations
  - ii. Table of contents
  - iii. Executive summary
  - iv. Background
  - v. Detailed evaluation methodology
  - vi. Findings
  - vii. Recommendations for the remainder of the program
  - viii. Annexed scope of work
  - ix. Annexed data collection instruments

## **7. Qualifications**

All interested parties will be assessed based on the following:

1. Demonstrated experience conducting similar evaluations of USAID-funded workforce development and economic growth programs;
2. Demonstrated experience using various quantitative and qualitative methodologies;
3. Clarity of thought process and writing style, as evidenced in technical proposal;
4. Previous experience conducting similar evaluations in the Sri Lanka highly preferred; and,
5. Fluency in English required.

## **8. Submission Requirements**

All interested parties should submit the following:

1. Technical proposal (not to exceed 8 pages on typed single-space 8 ½ by 11 paper) that includes:
  - i. Proposed methodology and approach to the evaluation including proposed data collection and analysis method(s) that will generate the highest quality and most credible evidence on each evaluation question;
  - ii. Composition of evaluation team and specific roles/responsibilities of each team member;
  - iii. CV(s) of proposed evaluation team members;
  - iv. At least 2 references of other clients for which similar evaluation assignments were undertaken with contact information for each one;
  - v. Proposed timeline for the entire evaluation; and,
  - vi. Individual/organizational capacity statement.
  
2. Itemized budget with narrative explanation of line items. The budget must be submitted in MS Excel and in USD currency. Budget must consider all costs associated with completing the evaluation i.e. labor, travel, materials, etc.

## **9. Contract Type and Proposal Requirements**

IESC is seeking proposals from both individual consultants and marketing firms. The proposal must address all deliverables and responsibilities and provide estimated budgets for each of the above-mentioned deliverables that can be used for developing a fixed price deliverable contract.

## **10. Criteria for Selection**

The evaluation of each response to this RFP will be based on the requirements set out in this solicitation. At the sole discretion of IESC, the top proposals may be selected for follow-up questions. IESC anticipates that award will be based on best-value principles. Accordingly, award will be made to the technically acceptable Offerors whose proposals provide the greatest overall value to IESC and the USAID-funded YouLead Program, price, and other factors considered. The winning proposal must conform to all solicitation requirements.

## **11. Clarification and Amendments**

Offerors may request clarifications via email to [ksainato@iesc.org](mailto:ksainato@iesc.org) not later than **5:00 P.M., Washington DC Eastern Daylight Time (EST) time, on Tuesday, February 11, 2020**. IESC will provide answers to these questions and requests for clarification asked by all Offerors simultaneously via email and posted on the IESC website with the RFP before the close of business on/or before **Wednesday, February 12, 2020**. IESC may not answer questions before the proposal submission deadline outside of the allotted response period for clarifications. No questions will be answered over the phone or in person.