# Request for proposals

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| **Project:** | **Performance Evaluation of the Millennium Challenge Corporation’s Malawi Compact** |
| **Phase:** | Endline data collection |
| **Funder:** | Millennium Challenge Corporation |
| **RFP Release Date:** | Monday April 22, 2019 |
| **Deadline for Questions:** | Friday, April 26, 2019, 17.00 ET |
| **Answers to Questions:** | To be released by Tuesday, April 30, 2019, 17.00 ET |
| **Deadline for Proposals:** | Friday, May 10, 2019, 17.00 ET |
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| **Annexes** | Annex A: Budget Template  Annex B: Draft protocols  Annex C: Draft instrument  Annex D: Report templates |

## Project Background

On 7 April 2011, the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC), a Federal Corporation created under Title VI of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2004 and acting on behalf of the United States Government, signed a Compact with the Government of Malawi worth US$350.7 million to reduce poverty in Malawi through sustainable economic growth. The Malawi Compact entered into force on September 20, 2013 and was completed on September 19, 2018.

The Millennium Challenge Corporation has contracted an independent agency, Social Impact, Inc. (SI) to evaluate the implementation of the Compact. Social Impact, intends to hire a data collection firm (Subcontractor) to manage the implementation of a formal enterprise survey. The survey is intended to provide endline data for its compact-wide indicators as well as serve as a source of data to be used to evaluate the Power Sector Reform Program (PSRP) and the Infrastructure Development Project (IDP). This is a panel survey with data collection in two phases: Phase I (baseline) and Phase II (end-of-compact). Phase I (baseline) data collection was conducted in 2015 and 2016. This data collection event will be for Phase II: end-of-compact.

The population of interest includes Malawi businesses with three phase and maximum demand ESCOM electricity connections. As such, informal business and many small and retail business with single phase electricity connections are excluded from the sample. At baseline 1,024 firms nationwide were surveyed. At endline, the data collection firm is expected to contact and survey the same firms and survey replacement firms for those that cannot be contacted, no longer exist, or refuse to participate. Data collection is expected to begin in July 2019 and last three months.

## Scope of Work

The subcontractor will prepare a technical proposal that addresses all aspects of the data collection as detailed in each section below.

### Data Collection Activities

This subcontract will consist of the following activities:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Activity | Description | Sample Size |
| **Enterprise Survey** | Survey of three-phase and maximum demand business customers in the three regions of the country: South, Center, and North | 1,024 |

The subcontractor is expected to conduct a nationally representative, stratified survey of 1,024 formal enterprises, with an oversample of maximum demand business customers and Northern business customers. Enterprises will be the same as those interviewed at baseline, with replacements for those that cannot be contacted, no longer exist, and refuse to participate. Replacements will be drawn from a list of customers provided by ESCOM. The distribution of businesses is presented in Table 1. The sectors of the different enterprises are presented in Figure 1. Given the nature of the sample, the vast majority of three-phase customers are maize mills, which fall in the category of manufacturing food products.

Table 1: Enterprise survey sample stratification

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | | Final sample | |
|  | | **Freq.** | **Percent** |
| MD | North | 10 | 1% |
| Central | 89 | 9% |
| South | 145 | 14% |
| Total | 244 | 24% |
| 3-phase | North | 204 | 20% |
| Central | 259 | 25% |
| South | 317 | 31% |
| Total | 780 | 76% |
| Total |  | 1,024 | 100% |

Figure 1: Enterprise survey sample distribution by sector (n=1,024)

The subcontractor shall undertake a field work exercise for the enterprise survey for a period of **90 calendar days,** or three months. The data collection phase shall be supervised by SI, including staff at SI headquarters in Washington DC and local staff.

### Preparations for Data Collection

Subcontractors will be required to undertake several activities in preparation for data collection. This will include:

* **Inception Report**: The Subcontractor shall present aDraft Inception Report to Social Impact. The Draft Inception Report shall outline the state of the subcontractor’s mobilization, including the deployment of both human and material resources (team composition); phases of work including submission dates for key deliverables; and detailed calendar of work (Gantt chart). The report should provide a detailed methodology, detailed work plan involving the schedule of activities and detailed tasks, deliverables including the starting time and duration of each, phasing and interrelations, and allocation of manpower and resources for the duration of the services. Edits maybe required based on SI feedback.
* **Comment on data collection protocols**: The Subcontractor will review and provide feedback on SI’s data collection protocols, to ensure that they are properly contextualized, and to ensure that SI has properly considered likely eventualities. The draft protocols that SI has developed for this activity include: (1) Sampling and Replacement Protocol, (2) Outreach and Contact Protocol, (3) Quality Assurance and Backcheck Protocol, and (4) Human Subjects Protection and Data Security Protocol. These draft protocols subject to further revisions are included in Annex B
* **Comment on instruments**: The Subcontractor will review and provide comments on the draft instrument. A draft instrument subject to further revisions is included in Annex C.
* **Translate and Back-Translate instruments**: Surveys should take place either in English or Chichewa. The Subcontractor is responsible for translating the instrument into Chichewa and conducting a back translation. Translations should be completed by a team of two concurrently, reconciling any differences afterward. Back-translations should be completed by a third party or individual, who was not involved in any way in the translations. SI will review back-translations and ask the Subcontractor to make changes to the instrument translations as needed based on the results.
* **Pretesting:** The Subcontractor will be required to conduct pretesting for the data collection instruments. Pretesting should focus on new questions and challenging questions identified from baseline. The Subcontractor shall pretest the survey on a sample that is not part of the sample frame for the data collection, prior to training. It is expected that at least six pretests will be conducted with diverse enterprises. Following the pretest, the Subcontractor will submit a report consistent with the report template in Annex D detailing the results of the pretest and any recommended changes to the instrument.
* **Develop manuals for field staff and training materials**: The Subcontractor will develop a training agenda, comprehensive manuals for field staff, and training materials. SI must have a chance to review and approve these materials at least 5 business days before the start of training. The manuals that will be developed for this activity are expected to include: (1) Field Manual for Supervisors and Quality Assurance and (2) Field Manual for Enumerators and Outreach.
* **Obtain local research clearances and permits**: The Subcontractor will identify and work with SI to submit applications for any needed local research clearances (e.g. local IRB or research clearance body), as well as obtain any relevant permissions needed in order to enter specific sites in order to collect data (e.g. local government letters of introduction).
* **Clean sampling frame**: SI will provide the Subcontractor with the sample and contact information from the baseline, including limited address information, points of contact, contact phone numbers, and GIS coordinates. While this information is available, given some data errors, changed locations, and changed cellphone numbers, it is expected that the Subcontractor will be required to undertake additional outreach efforts to locate many sampled firms. We recommend that the Subcontractor conduct a review of the sample prior to initiating data collection.

### Training and Piloting

* **Training**: Training will take place prior to data collection. The Subcontractor shall be expected to conduct a four (4) working day Outreach and Interviewer Training for survey enumerators. Interviewers must be adequately trained prior to data collection. Subcontractors shall describe in their technical proposal their approach to assessing interviewers’ readiness to conduct data collection during and after the training, i.e. specifically how they will determine non-performing trainees. It is recommended that more interviewers be trained than will be required for this data collection activity, so that top-performers are selected, as well as to maintain a pool of back-up interviewers. Non-performing trainees will not be selected as part of the main or back-up teams. The Subcontractor is responsible for screening and re-training any recruits who do not demonstrate adequate understanding of or adherence to proper data collection protocol by the end of training. No enumerator is to be sent to the field until he/she has demonstrated sufficient understanding of the protocols and instrument. Representatives of SI will assist with the training and may test enumerators as needed and may require, at their discretion, replacement of enumerators deemed to be performing inadequately in training or in the field.
* **Piloting**: Piloting will be done as part of training. It is focused on the entire process of data collection and is meant to be a “real-life” practice of the data collection. In this way, it is different from the pretest which is specifically focus on the tool itself. Following piloting, it is not expected that major changes to the tool will be needed. All approved survey enumerators should participate in the pilot and conduct at least two surveys each. Piloting should require two (2) to four (4) working days.
* **Training & Pilot Report**: The Subcontractor shall be expected to submit an Interviewer Training and Piloting Report within two (2) working days of the conclusion of the pilot. The report shall cover materials used during training of field supervisors and enumerators. The pilot report should include a summary of edits or suggested edits to instruments or protocols. Final instruments and protocols must be approved by SI before the main survey begins.

### Field work

* **Outreach**: Given that the sample is predetermined and nationwide, it is expected that the Subcontractor will need to dedicate considerable time and energy to contacting sampled enterprises, arranging interview times, and following-up with them. Strategies will need to be developed and employed to reduce attrition. More than one visit might be required to an enterprise to conduct the survey. Surveys should be conducted with the CEO, Managing Director, or CFO, or when no such formal titles are used, with the individuals that carry out these functions. To avoid attrition, when the right official is not available, the survey firm should be willing to make numerous call backs and attempt to set up appointments with the relevant official.
* **Interviews**: Interviews will be face-to-face using tablets and electronic data capture. SI has a preference for Open Data Kit (ODK) and Survey CTO although we are open to alternatives. In the case of difficult interviews (e.g., extremely remote interviews or interviewees failure to make themselves available during agreed to times) some interviews may be conducted over the phone. The survey can be expected to last approximately 60 minutes and will include a small number of open-ended questions that will require transcription and coding. Questions that include an “other” option, will also require some recoding. The survey includes collection of financial information that will require respondents to consult accounting files. No incentives are planned.

### Quality Assurance

Subcontractors will be required to conduct quality control, at minimum following the requirements listed below. SI will be conducting independent quality assurance for the duration of this activity. Subcontractors will be required to respond in a timely manner to SI questions regarding data quality control and other measures of data quality assurance.

*Led by Subcontractor:*

* Daily team debriefs: Check-ins with the interviewers and field staff to review any challenges faced, allow for questions and clarifications, and provide feedback to the wider group. These are especially important early in the data collection activity to ensure that proper interviewing habits are formed.
* Supervisor checks: Supervisors will check their teams’ forms before they are submitted to the server to ensure completeness and spot-check for errors.
* Accompaniment: The Subcontractor will ensure that at least 10% of interviews are directly observed by a supervisor or other senior member of the team. All interviewers should be directly observed at least once during the first week of data collection. Observations from these accompaniments should be tracked and made available to SI upon request.
* Co-enumeration: The Subcontractor will co-enumerate at least one interview per interviewer during the first two weeks of field work (fill in a duplicate version of the interview form concurrently during direct observation). SI also reserves the right to request co-enumeration for specific interviewers if questions are raised during SI’s regular data quality checks.
* Back-checks: The Subcontractor will conduct back-checks on 10% of the total sample, using a back-check tool developed by Social Impact. Back-check surveys should not be made available to enumerators. Back-checks should be conducted by separate teams from the enumerators, and the subcontractor is expected to work collaboratively with SI to determine the allocation of back-checks throughout data collection (e.g. all enumerators should have 10% of their surveys back-checked within the first two weeks, and thereafter back-checks may be specifically targeted to certain interviews or enumerators).

*Led by Social Impact:*

* Survey programming quality control: If ODK and Survey CTO are used, SI will program various quality control measures into the electronic survey. These may include: speed limits, logic checks, or audio audits. The final set of quality control measures will be agreed upon by SI and the subcontractor during preparations for data collection and finalization of the instrument. If the Subcontractor has a preference for an alternative software package, then the subcontractor will be responsible for coding.
* Social Impact will conduct independent weekly quality checks of the data downloaded directly from the server, summarizing any questions or feedback for the subcontractor from each check. The subcontractor will be required to respond to these questions within 2-3 business days of receiving them.
* SI will also analyze back-check data and will summarize any questions or feedback for the subcontractor from each check. Subcontractors will be required to respond to these questions within 3-5 business days of receiving them.

### Respondent Protection & Data Security

Subcontractors are required to abide by Social Impact’s respondent protection and data security protocols. (A draft protocol is in Annex B). Subcontractors will be given an opportunity to comment on the protocol and provide feedback that allows SI to better contextualize the protocol (without modifying SI’s “required minimums”).

All field staff will be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement signifying their understanding of ethical behavior in the field and proper handling of respondents’ confidential and private information, including personally identifiable information (PII).

Subcontractors will ensure proper measures are taken in the field to monitor enumerators’ behavior with respect to respondent protection and data security (including interviewing, handling of devices, etc.).

### Personnel and Staffing Plan

Bidders should provide CVs for required team members (key personnel) positions as listed below, which meet the minimum qualifications. In this section, bidders should also describe their recruitment strategy for other field staff and should specify the total number of enumerators and supervisors that will conduct the activity along with the proposed supervisor to enumerator ratio (SI recommends, as best practice, a ratio of no more than 5 interviewers to 1 supervisor).

The Subcontractor is expected to provide appropriate experts who will bring inputs as per the work program. The proposed team shall consist of at least the key experts listed in the table below. (These must be experts from which a significant time input in the project is expected, or whose contributions are crucial for the consultancy). Additional staff and staffing requirements should be proposed by the Subcontractor as necessary and based on the Subcontractor’s proposed methodology and approach to the assignment. All Experts employed are expected to be fluent in English during contract performance and all reports are expected to be written in English.

The proposed team shall consist of at least the following key personnel with the specializations and experience listed below (these must be experts from which a significant time input in the project is expected, or whose contributions are crucial for the project implementation). Key personnel must have experience conducting surveys of enterprises in Malawi.

**KEY PERSONNEL:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key Personnel | Qualifications |
| Team Leader (1) | * A minimum qualification of a master’s degree in Economics, Statistics, or a related field in Social Sciences. * At least seven (7) years of general experience in survey and focus group design, managing and conducting surveys/studies in Malawi. * At least four (4) years of demonstrated ability to lead and manage a multi-disciplinary team and experience in survey implementation. * Experience in survey planning, fielding, and reporting. * Extensive experience in using MS Office, statistical applications, electronic data capture software, and statistical software (STATA and SPSS) including developing data entry applications. * Excellent communication skills and experience in working with a wide range of individuals in government, the private sector, and civil society. * Experience in implementation of at least two (2) similar projects involving surveying enterprises in Malawi. * Fluency in written and spoken English. |
| Senior Survey Expert (1) | * Aminimum of a master’s degree in Statistics or related field. * At least five (5) years of experience in implementing large survey/research design and implementation. * Strong sampling, data processing, quantitative data collection and analytical skills. * At least five (5) years of general experience in analyzing survey data. Experience with indicators relating to energy and electricity will be an added advantage. * At least five (5) years’ experience in designing and managing data entry/processing systems with a specific focus on ensuring high data quality data being produced. * Excellent computing skills – e.g., MS Office. Expertise with electronic data capture software and statistical software such as SPSS and STATA. * Experience in implementation of at least two (2) similar projects involving surveying enterprises in Malawi. * Fluency in written and spoken English. |
| Field Coordinator (1) | * Aminimum of a bachelor’s degree in a related field. * At least five (5) years of experience in implementing large survey/research design and implementation. * Expertise in the logistics of conducting national surveys, including ensuring transportation for enumerators. * Expertise in ensuring data quality and protocol compliance in the field * Excellent electronic data capture software and hardware skills. * Experience in implementation of at least two (2) similar projects involving surveying enterprises in Malawi. * Fluency in written and spoken English. |

CVs for professional staff other than the key personnel (e.g., field supervisors, administrative and/or support staff, enumerators) are not examined during the evaluation process. However, the name of the proposed experts, their input and position, shall be indicated both in the technical and in the financial proposals, especially Field Supervisors (please note that the financial proposal shall indicate the fee rate of these experts as well). Survey enumerators should have previous experience conducting survey research in Malawi. A university-level qualification for enumerators will be desirable, particularly for interviews with maximum demand businesses. Data collection teams should also include recruitment specialists who could assist survey teams in setting up interviews with difficult to reach survey respondents. Recruitment and staffing procedures should be outlined in the technical proposal, along with contingencies for staff replacement, should the need arise, during data collection.

Note that if civil servants working in Malawi are proposed as professionals, a proof from their employer that she/he will be on leave of absence for the duration of his/her assignment under this contract shall be included in the technical proposal as well.

### Reporting

Subcontractors will be required to submit the following reports. Report templates are provided in Annex D and include:

* Inception Report
* Pretest Report
* Training & Pilot Report
* Bi-weekly Reports: During data collection, the subcontractor should submit reports every two weeks for the duration of field work following the report guidance.
* Final Report: The subcontractor shall submit a final data quality report. To include detailed information about challenges in data collection, any modifications to the data collection protocols, data quality process, identification of any data quality issues, as well as metadata about the final dataset (sample replacement, response rate, attrition, average duration of survey, etc.). This should be a natural extension of the bi-weekly reports.

### Data

SI will have access to data through the Survey CTO. If, however, some cleaning and recoding is required then the subcontractors should submit the dataset submitted in SPSS (\*.sav) or STATA (\*.dta) files, with a strong preference for STATA. The subcontractor will format datasets including variable names and labels in English and store and transfer data according to standards agreed upon with SI. The subcontractor’s data cleaning and management methods should be transparent and replicable. All interim and preliminary datasets should be verified and ready for an initial analysis to look for any obvious errors or need for improvement in data entry processes.

### Past Performance

Bidders should submit a summary of three past performance reports, including contact information for references. SI reserves the right to contact references provided in these past performance reports. At least two of these reports should include enterprise surveys of businesses in Malawi. This experience should reflect institutional capacity to conduct a national survey of businesses.

## Deliverables & Payment Schedule

The Subcontractor will submit invoices according to the payments listed below. Weeks are estimated, and relative to contract signing. Submission dates for each deliverable invoiced and SI approval dates should be specified on the invoice. Invoices cannot be submitted prior to SI accepting deliverables/milestones in writing.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Phase | Payment | Deliverables / Milestones | Week  (est.) | % |
| 1: Prep |  | Kickoff call | 1 |  |
|  | 1 | Inception report with work plan | 2 | 25% |
|  |  | Comment on instrument and protocols. | 3 |  |
|  |  | Translation of instrument and backtranslation | 3 |  |
|  |  | Pretesting and pretesting report | 4 |  |
|  |  | Submission of manuals/training materials/agenda | 5 |  |
|  |  | Training | 6 |  |
|  | 2 | Piloting and revisions. Training and piloting report | 7 | 25% |
| 2: Fieldwork | 3 | 60% of surveys completed  Bi-weekly reports | 14 | 25% |
| 3: Reporting |  | Bi-weekly reports  Draft datasets | 22 |  |
|  | 4 | Final Report | 23 | 25% |
| Total | -- | -- | -- | 100% |

The Subcontractor shall be expected to be available during the entire duration of the services and shall be responsible for management of the services. This includes supervision and management of the data collection, liaising with the SI and other parties, office management, and ensuring quality control of services. As part of project management, a number of meetings between SI and the subcontractor may be scheduled at any point in time. The Subcontractor shall produce minutes of all proceedings. The Subcontractor shall submit all the deliverables to the SI Technical Director for approval.

All final reports shall be submitted electronically and in English. All documents should be submitted in Microsoft Word. Spreadsheets should be submitted in Microsoft Excel. Any digital photo files should be submitted in JPG format. Any presentations should be submitted in Microsoft PowerPoint. The enterprise survey dataset should be submitted in either STATA (\*.dta file) or SPSS (\*.sav file), with a strong preference for STATA. Any other format(s) must be agreed upon by SI. The contract number shall be placed on each report. In addition, each report shall be accompanied by a letter or other document that identifies the report.

The Subcontractor should note that payment of fees for the services is linked to approval of individual deliverables by Social Impact. The Subcontractor should note that all reports will be considered draft until they are reviewed and approved by Social Impact.

## Scoring Criteria

The bidder should have a strong track record of large-scale survey data collection in Malawi. The bidder should have a qualified team of local staff and be able to provide adequate logistical resources to organize, train, deploy, and supervise them in the field. Selection will be made on a best value tradeoff process based on the criteria listed below. Criteria are listed in order of importance. The technical quality of proposals will be weighted the most. However, offerors should strive to be as economical as possible in their offers.

Social Impact will weigh the following factors to score proposals:

* **Technical Proposal**: Compliance with requirements of scope of work; understanding of data collection activity requirements; innovative approaches presented if applicable. The proposal should include a description of (1) project management, (2) project start-up, (3) training and piloting, (4) outreach and data collection, (5) quality assurance, (6) risk mitigation, (7) reporting, and (8) a workplan.
* **Personnel**: Compliance with required qualifications and overall demonstrated experience of the personnel presented.
* **Past Performance**: Demonstrated, successful experience conducting similar activities in comparable settings, as specified in the Scope of Work (e.g., enterprise survey in Malawi). This experience should reflect institutional capacity, not just that of individual team members.
* **Cost**: Compliance and alignment with technical scope of work; competitiveness; value.

## Submission Instructions

Bidders should follow the instructions below for submission of questions and proposals:

### QUESTIONS

Please use subject line “MCC Malawi Power – RFP Endline Enterprise Survey Questions”

Please send to all email addresses in the “Contact” field on page 1 by the deadline for questions. Late submission of questions will be considered on a case by case basis by the SI project team.

### PROPOSALS

***Technical Proposals:*** Bidders will submit technical proposals, using the page limitations described below. Material that exceeds the page limitations will not be reviewed or scored by SI. Technical proposals will not include any financial information; SI may disqualify bids that include financial information in the technical proposal. The technical proposal will consist of the following components, such that the full technical proposal does not exceed 23 pages (including CVs).

* Technical Approach: no longer than ten (10) pages
* Personnel: no longer than two (2) pages summarizing key personnel qualifications and experience within the technical proposal along with a description of the approach for recruiting other field staff for the data collection activity; CVs for key personnel should be included in the technical proposal, and altogether shall not exceed eight (8) pages.
* Past Performance: Three (3) past performance reports, not exceeding three (3) pages.

***Cost Proposals:*** The cost proposal shall consist of a budget in Excel with traceable formulas and clear explanation of any assumptions made. Bidders are strongly encouraged (though not required) to use the budget template provided in Annex A to this RFP. Costs should be presented in USD.

Bidders are also required to submit a budget narrative (Word or PDF) summarizing key assumptions in the budget. Budget narratives should not exceed a total of five (5) pages.

***Submission:*** Please use subject line “MCC Malawi Power – RFP Endline Enterprise Survey Proposal Submission”. Please send to all email addresses in the “Contact” field on page 1 by the deadline for proposals. Late submissions will not be accepted.