**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

Rapid Education Risk Assessment

**Qualitative Data Collection**

**Haiti Evaluation and Survey Services (ESS)**

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| **RFP number** | SOL\_HESS\_2020\_005 |
| **USAID Office** | USAID/Haiti |
| **Development Objective(s) (DOs)** | DO2: |
| **Geographic Regions** | Nationwide Haïti |
| **RFP Release Date:** | Thursday, December 31, 2020 |
| **Deadline for Questions:** | Monday, January 11, 2021, 8:00 AM EST |
| **Answers to Questions:** | To be released by Wednesday January 13, 2021 |
| **Deadline for Proposals:** | Monday, January 18, 2021, 5:00 PM EST |
| **Description:** | Request for proposals to provide qualitative data analysis for Rapid Education and Risk Analysis |
| **Funded By:** | United States Agency for International Development (USAID),  Contract No. AID-521-C-17-00002 |
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| **Geographic code:** | 937 |
| **Annexes** | Annex A: Summary of Relevant Capability, Experience, and Past Performance  Annex B: Proposed Data Collection Team and Resumes  Annex C: Disclosure of Conflict of Interest Form  Annex D: Budget Template |

# BACKGROUND

In May 2017, USAID awarded SI the Haiti Evaluation Survey Services (ESS) contract to conduct baseline, mid-term, and final Evaluations for a wide range of projects currently being implemented throughout the country, with more emphasis around USAID’s development corridors of Port-au-Prince, Saint Marc, and Cap-Haitian. The contract also includes sector assessments to inform the Mission in designing its new Strategic Framework (2018-2020).

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)/Haiti requested that Social Impact, Inc.’s (SI) Evaluation and Survey Services (ESS) project design and implement an independent Haiti Rapid Education and Risk Analysis (RERA). USAID/Haiti is currently developing a strategic framework focused on building resilience, prosperity and democracy. The purpose of this mid-term performance RERA is to inform the strategic framework.

In line with the strategic framework and building upon the successes and learnings of USAID’s previous work in early grade reading in Haiti, this analysis will focus on the unique barriers to learning and assets and capacities of each school community. This analysis will better illuminate the effects of the recent school closures on disparate populations, i.e who is impacted and how as well as uncover coping strategies that can be strengthened. This activity will also provide a snapshot of the education system and identify key actors and entry points to support the Mission’s goal of a flexible, resilient system.

***Rapid Education and Risk Analysis***

USAID/Haiti is seeking to conduct a Rapid Education and Risk Analysis (RERA). A RERA is a “good enough”[[1]](#footnote-1) situation analysis of educational institutions, learners, and their communities as a dynamic system of relationships involving assets and multiple contextual risks. A RERA integrates key methodological elements of a rapid education needs assessment and contextual risk analyses, such as conflict analysis, disaster risk assessment, and resilience analysis, to illuminate opportunities to support school community resilience. Importantly, a RERA investigates how risks impact the school community, how education influences risks, and how contextual risks influence each other.

The RERA is designed to be highly adaptable to context and to issues requiring specific investigation. The RERA is therefore highly useful for the Haitian context as it allows a snapshot of the overall resilience of select school communities, as well as a focused investigation into the dynamics introduced by the pandemic and persistent insecurity. The RERA will provide critical information for future USAID education programming to respond to the impact of these challenges on affected Haiti in school communities.

The RERA outcomes will:

* Provide USAID/Haiti a “snapshot” of Haiti’s education system, its interaction with contextual risks, and key challenges to providing equitable, quality education to all school-aged children, including but not limited to out-of-school children and youth, pregnant girls, restaveks and other vulnerable populations;
* Gain a broader understanding of the resilience of affected school communities, including the main risks, needs, assets, and capacities.
* Identify barriers and opportunities to enrollment, retention, and completion for children and youth in target communities;
* Identify key local and government partners, actions, and opportunities for developing a resilient, flexible education system resistant to shocks and stressors;
* Inform future USAID education activities to support affected school communities, including suggestions for potential areas where USAID programming can interact with current actors, programs and strategies to have the greatest impact to provide quality education programming to all children in receptor communities.

The main research questions for the RERA are

1. What are the main social, economic, political, environmental, and health barriers and risks to the provision of safe, equitable, and quality primary education for all school-age children (early childhood through the 4th grade, overage children, and out of school youth up to age 18) in USAID’s Haiti RFZs, and in what ways do school communities interact with these risks?
2. In what ways have the main barriers and risks (including chronic insecurity, the pandemic, and school closures) changed school conditions with regards to enrollment and retention, equitable access (including gender and disability), the school and classroom environment, teaching practices, learning outcomes, and the availability and reliability of data on these conditions?
3. What are the variety of assets, capacities, and resilience practices communities employ to cope with obstacles to safe and quality primary and secondary education?
4. How do the findings and conclusions of this assessment inform future USAID support to target school communities, and how can USAID support to the education and youth sectors (economic growth, health, and governance) in Haiti be improved and reoriented toward a focus on building resilience, prosperity, and democracy?

# Scope of work

ESS is seeking to engage a Haitian research firm as a Subcontractor who is well versed in collecting qualitative data particularly pertaining to the education sector. The Subcontract will be Firm Fixed Price with the anticipated period of performance starting February 2021 and the data collection taking place nationwide.

This Request for Proposals (RFP) describes the specifications for the field data collection services required to complete the RERA. Offerors will prepare a technical proposal that addresses all aspects of the data collection as detailed in each section below.

## Data Collection Activities

*Overview of Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)*

The Subcontractor will conduct FGDs with school communities and local organizations, and KIIs with local government representatives.

These data collection events will take place in throughout the 4 Haitian geographical department. The specific sampling plan will be determined based on the number of school communities found in the USAID Resilience Focus Zones of Influence (RFZs) in Haiti. The RERA team will lead the sampling frame and plan development, with input from the Subcontractor. The Subcontractor will be required to coordinate with ESS, SI home office staff, and the RERA team on the design, planning, and implementation of the data collection. The Subcontractor will be responsible for the planning, facilitator/note-taker training, piloting, data collection implementation and logistics, data security, recordings, mobilizing people, providing technologies for remote data collection in the face of COVID-19 as appropriate The Subcontractor will provide detailed summary notes in French for each data collection event. The notes must be anonymized to protect participants’ identities, with a separate spreadsheet that lists who participated in each FGD with basic demographic data like age, gender, etc. A unique identifying code should be attached to each entry to link the participants to the notes.

The exact number of data collection sites (school communities), FGDs and KIIs will not be determined until after the Subcontract is awarded. As such, Bidders should prepare preliminary budgets that include four FGDs and ten KIIs per school communities, as suggested in the table below:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Department** | **Communes/RFZs** | **# FGDs** | **# KIIs** |
| Nord | 3 | 4 | 10 |
| Nord’ EST | 5 | 4 | 10 |
| Plateau Central | 3 | 4 | 10 |
| Sud | 11 | 8 | 20 |
| Total | 22 | 20 | 50 |

## Data Collection Tasks

### Preparation

**Clearances –** The Subcontractor will be responsible for identifying and liaising with the necessary authorities to gain permission/clearances to legally perform all tasks specified in this RFP. The Subcontractor will be required to keep documentation of all requests, approvals, and correspondence between relevant parties and provide copies to SI upon request. The Subcontractor will be expected to maintain positive, professional relationships with all local stakeholders and report any challenges therein immediately to ESS.

**Planning -** The Subcontractor is responsible for planning all FGDs and KIIs in the field and identifying and organizing the FGD participants, based on lists provided and sampling plan developed by the ET with input from the Subcontractor. Note that data collection activities must be compliant to policies regarding restrictions due du COVID-19. All FGDs and KII should be virtually conducted to the extent possible.

**Instrument Development –** The ET will assume primary responsibility for developing the data collection instruments. However, the Subcontractor will be required to review and provide input on the instruments.

**Translation –** The Subcontractor will arrange for instruments translation in Creole. The Subcontractor is responsible for ensuring translation quality, by verifying that translators possess adequate credentials. The Subcontractor will be responsible for reviewing the final wording of all data collection instrument translations to ensure that they are appropriate for the relevant respondent groups.

**Develop Manuals for Field Staff** **–** With input from ESS, SI home office staff, and the ET, the Subcontractor will be responsible for developing comprehensive manuals for field staff. These will include manuals for facilitators and notetakers. ESS, SI home office staff, and the ET must have a chance to review and approve the final manuals at least five business days prior to the start of training.

**Staff Training –** All facilitators and notetakers are required to receive training prior to data collection. The training shall be comprised of classroom as well as practice sessions administering FGDs and KIIs, while respecting restriction due to COVID-19. Offerors are required to specify the recommended duration and content of field staff training as part of the technical approach. Offerors shall describe in their technical proposal their approach to assessing facilitators, and notetakers’ readiness to conduct data collection during and after the training. It is recommended that more facilitators and notetakers be trained than will be required for any data collection activity, so top performers can be selected, and a pool of back-up facilitators and notetakers be ready in case of need. ESS and ET Representatives will assist with the training, may test facilitators and notetakers as needed and may require, at their discretion, replacement of facilitators and notetakers deemed to be performing inadequately in training or in the field.

**Piloting** **–** Piloting will be done as part of staff training and will focus on the entire data collection process. This is meant to be a “real-life” practice of the data collection. The Subcontractor should plan to conduct pilots remotely. Following piloting, major changes to the tool are not expected. Final version of the instruments will be produced, eventually integrating minor changes suggested during the pilot, and shared with ESS and the ET.

### Quality Assurance

Data Quality Assurance processes are required in real-time during all phases of this engagement: translation, facilitator and notetaker training, pilot testing, data collection, and all deliverable development. Most critically, the Subcontractor is required to provide significant oversight of facilitators and note-takers during data collection. It is the Subcontractor’s responsibility to identify and communicate problems in all phases of the engagement with ESS. Minor issues should be corrected on the spot, to the extent that they do not change the scope of services or cause an increase in costs. Larger problems should be raised with ESS and collaboratively discussed before taking any remediation measures, which may require a subcontract modification.

* **The Subcontractor** will be required to conduct quality control, at minimum, following the requirements listed below.
  + Daily Team Debriefs: Check-ins with the facilitators, notetakers 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.
  + Facilitator checks: Facilitators will check their teams’ notes daily before they are submitted to the server to ensure completeness and spot-check for errors.
* **ESS and SI home office staff** will be performing independent Quality Assurance, including, at a minimum, the following:
  + Collaboration with Haiti ESS staff: ESS will delegate a TL, Education Specialist, an Assessment Consultant and a Social Cohesion Specialist to oversee data collection, provide guidance and support in the data collection process, conduct in-depth interview with primary project stakeholders, and conduct additional quality assurance. The Subcontractor should work closely with the ESS team, providing updated information about logistics, plans, and insights during their supervision visits.
  + ESS and SI home office staff will conduct independent quality checks of the data downloaded directly from the server at least three times a week, summarizing any questions or feedback for the Subcontractor from each check. The Subcontractor will be required to respond to these questions within one business day.

### Respondent Protection & Data Security

The Subcontractor is required to abide by SI’s respondent protection and data security protocols (to be provided upon award). The Subcontractor will be given an opportunity to comment on the protocol and provide feedback that allows ESS to better contextualize the protocol (without modifying SI’s “required minimums”).

All field staff will be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement (to be provided upon award) signifying their understanding of ethical behavior in the field and proper handling of respondents’ confidential and private information, including personally identifiable information (PII). The Subcontractor will ensure proper measures are taken in the field to monitor facilitators’ and note-takers’ behavior with respect to respondent protection and data security (including interviewing, handling of recording devices, etc.). The Subcontractor will also be responsible for ensuring that detailed summary notes and other documentation do not include PII.

### Reporting

The Subcontractor will be required to submit eight main deliverables, namely a (1) Workplan (2) Instrument Translations, (3) Field Manuals, (4) Training, and Pilot Report, (5) Weekly Status Reports, (6) detailed summary notes of each FGD and KII, (7) audio recordings of FGDs, and (8) a Final Report.

General guidance is provided below. Social Impact will provide report templates as guidance to the Subcontractor following award.

* **Workplan**: The Subcontractor is responsible for developing a detailed work plan and schedule within one week of contract award. The document will detail the following: expected duration and sequencing of tasks, staffing/team composition, team roles/responsibilities, pilot approach, facilitator and note-taker training approach and data quality assurance protocols. The Work Plan should outline any areas for which the Subcontractor requires support from ESS.
* **Instrument Translations**: The Subcontractor will submit translated versions of the instruments.
* **Field Manuals**: The manuals will cover roles, responsibilities, and protocols for facilitators and notetakers.
* **Training, & Pilot Report:** This report will describe the activities undertaken during the training and piloting, and identify problems, solutions, and the way forward.
* **Weekly Status Reports**: This report will cover activities undertaken during the period, challenges faced, strategies adopted to overcome such challenges, programming of upcoming activities for the next reporting period, and any identified risks related to upcoming activities.
* **Detailed Summary Notes of each FGD and KII**: After each FGD and KII, the team needs to meet to write detailed summary notes, which consist of a faithful detailed report of what was said during the interview, enriched with details from audio recording such as examples, illustrations, explanations, and direct quotes. The summary notes will remain the raw qualitative data to inform ESS about findings from the field. They must be in French, stay as close as possible to the recordings, and contain as many quotes as possible. The notes must be anonymized to protect participants’ identities, and the Subcontractor must provide a separate spreadsheet that lists who participated in each FGD with basic demographic data like age, gender, etc. Summary notes must be uploaded **daily** to the server.
* **Audio-recording:** The audio recording of each FGD must be submitted to ESS as a backup file that supports the summary notes. Audio recordings must be uploaded **daily** to the server.
* **Final Report**: This report will describe the overall activities, limitations, challenges, any modifications to the data collection protocols, data quality process, identification of any data quality issues, results and lessons learned. The Subcontractor is required to submit to Social Impact the data in electronic format together with the final report.

# Personnel

Bidders must provide CVs for required team members (key personnel) positions as listed below, which meet the minimum qualifications specified. In this section, Bidders should also describe their recruitment strategy for other field staff and should specify the total number of facilitators and notetakers that will conduct the activity.

#### Table 2

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Key Personnel | Qualifications |
| Coordinator (1) | Required 5-10 years of relevant experience managing qualitative data collection in Haiti |
| Facilitators | Required 5 years of relevant experience managing FGDs and/or in-depth interviews in Haiti |
| Notetakers | Required 3 years of relevant experience in qualitative data collection exercises in Haiti |

The field coordinator will oversee the interface with ESS, plan all the activities and author the reports.

# Proposal Submission and Format

* **Eligibility**
  + By submitting an offer in response to this RFQ, the offeror certifies that it and its principal officers are not debarred, suspended, or otherwise considered ineligible for an award by the U.S. Government. SI will not award a contract to any firm that is debarred, suspended, or considered to be ineligible by the U.S. Government.
* **Prohibition of Terrorism** 
  + In addition, Offerors understand that U.S. Executive Orders and U.S. law prohibits transactions with, and the provision of resources and support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism. It is the legal responsibility of the offerors to ensure compliance with these Executive Orders and laws.
* **Prohibition on Contracting for Certain Telecommunications and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment (Aug 2020)** 
  + In accordance with U.S. law and Section 52.204-25 of the Federal Acquisition Regulation, offerors must not use any prohibited technologies during the performance of work on the projects governed by this agreement.

Bidders must submit the following information and documents:

* Valid business license
* Contact person, telephone, office address, and email
* **Technical proposal** 
  + Proposals must be in English and not exceeding 10 pages.
  + The bidder should demonstrate understanding of the SOW and provide technical specificity regarding the expected tasks.
  + Proposal should provide specific approaches and strategies for fieldwork, including sound staffing plan and staffing approaches.
  + In addition, the technical proposal shall include the following appendices (which do not count towards the page limit):
    - Past performance showing similar data collection services provided in the country (Appendix A in Technical Proposal). Offerors should submit a summary of three past performance reports including relevant past performance in education sector (no more than 3). It should include contact information for references. ESS reserves the right to contact references provided in these past performance reports. Experience working with US Government preferred, but not required.
    - Data Collectors Qualifications: Please provide the qualifications of personnel that would be involved in providing the above services. (Appendix B of the Technical Proposal)
    - Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for both the firm and key personnel (Appendix C in Technical Proposal)
* **Price proposal**, which shall be submitted as a separate file from the technical proposal. The Bidder shall submit its best price as per the following requirements:
  + Offeror shall submit quotes in US Dollars (USD)
  + The Bidder shall propose costs for events in Table 1.
  + The rates quoted shall be for complete services inclusive of all taxes and charges for service contingent to the work
  + ESS will establish the scope of the services mentioned in this RFP at the design phase and will request a full budget based on the original budget. However, ESS anticipates needing 70 events total with 20 FGDs and 50 KIIs (see Table 1)
  + Payment term: Net 30 days
  + Proposals validity: Net 30 days from date of submission

## Evaluation Criteria

All quotations received in response to this solicitation will be evaluated by the Haiti ESS bid review committee. The contract shall be awarded based on the criteria listed in this RFQ. Haiti ESS will conduct a source selection based on the evaluation factors listed below. These factors will serve as the standard against which all information will be evaluated and identify the factors that the bidder should address. The quotations will be evaluated according to best value with the following criteria:

1. Technical (50%) – Haiti ESS will consider the technical specifications of the vendor’s ability to provide the services listed in the “Description of Services Requested” section of the RFP;
2. Past Performance (20%) – Haiti ESS will consider Appendix A detailing past performance information (to be included in the technical proposal).
3. Personnel Qualifications (30%) – Haiti ESS will consider Appendix B detailing the qualifications of each bidder’s data collection team.

This solicitation does not commit SI to award a contract or pay any costs incurred in preparing the quotation. SI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all quotations received or to cancel in part or in its entirety the solicitation when it is in SI’s best interest.

**ANNEX A**

**Summary of Relevant Capability, Experience, and Past Performance**

Include **three** projects that best illustrate your experience relevant to this RFP or similar activities, sorted by decreasing order of completion date. The projects should have been undertaken in the past three years (i.e. 2017, 2018, and 2019). Projects undertaken in the past five years may be taken into consideration at the discretion of the evaluation panel.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Item #** | **Project Title and Description of Activities** | **Location** | **Client Name and Contact Information** | **Cost in USD** | **Completed on Schedule (Yes or No); if no, then explain** |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |

**ANNEX B**

**Proposed data collection team and resumes**

**ANNEX C**

**Disclosure of Conflict of Interest for Rapid Education Risk Assessment**

**Please fill one form for each for the firm and each team member.**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Organization Name** | | | |
| **Evaluation Position?** |  |  | Service Provider Team Leader \_ Team member |
| **Evaluation Award Number** *(contract or other instrument)* | RFP #: SOL-HESS-2020-005 | | |
| **USAID Project(s) Evaluated** *(Include project name(s), implementer name(s) and award number(s), if applicable)* | RERA | | |
| **I have real or potential conflicts of interest to disclose.** |  |  | Yes No |
|  |
| **If yes answered above, I disclose the following facts:**  *Real or potential conflicts of interest may include, but are not limited to:*   1. *Close family member who is an employee of the USAID operating unit managing the project(s) being evaluated or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* 2. *Financial interest that is direct, or is significant though indirect, in the implementing organization(s) whose projects are being evaluated or in the outcome of the evaluation.* 3. *Current or previous direct or significant though indirect experience with the project(s) being evaluated, including involvement in the project design or previous iterations of the project.* 4. *Current or previous work experience or seeking employment with the USAID operating unit managing the evaluation or the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* 5. *Current or previous work experience with an organization that may be seen as an industry competitor with the implementing organization(s) whose project(s) are being evaluated.* 6. *Preconceived ideas toward individuals, groups, organizations, or objectives of the particular projects and organizations being evaluated that could bias the evaluation.* |  | | |

I certify (1) that I have completed this disclosure form fully and to the best of my ability and (2) that I will update this disclosure form promptly if relevant circumstances change. If I gain access to proprietary information of other companies, then I agree to protect their information from unauthorized use or disclosure for as long as it remains proprietary and refrain from using the information for any purpose other than that for which it was furnished.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Signature** |  |
| **Date** |  |

**ANNEX D**

**Budget Template**

Please see separate Excel attachment.

1. The phrase “good enough” references the methodology applied to data collection, processing, and analysis of both primary and secondary data. The methodology may not be as rigorous as that employed for a long-term research investment or evaluation, but it is sufficiently systematic to allow informed preliminary decisions about education programming, if decision makers recognize that the activity may be taking place in a fluid context. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)