

**Request for Proposal (RFP)
#66677-01**

RFP No. and Title: Study 4: A qualitative study on the operational feasibility of transitioning to Multiple Micronutrient Supplementations (MMS), interviewing healthcare providers, volunteers, and policymakers across all seven provinces of Nepal

RFP Issue Date: August 26, 2024

Proposal Submission Deadline: September 4, 2024 by 5:00 PM Nepal Time

Contracting Entity: Helen Keller International (Helen Keller Intl)

Place of Performance: Nepal

Contents of this Document

SECTION 1: Introduction, Eligibility of Bidders, and Definitions..... 2
SECTION 2: Scope of Work 2
SECTION 3: Proposal Instructions..... 4
SECTION 4: Evaluation Criteria and Basis for Award 6
SECTION 6: Proposal Validity, Submission Deadline and Instructions 6
SECTION 7: Negotiations..... 7
SECTION 8: Terms of the Solicitation 7
ANNEX A: Conflict of Interest Disclosure 9

Bidders are encouraged to read this RFP and all attachments in its entirety paying specific attention to the instructions and requirements. Issuance of this RFP does not in any way obligate Helen Keller Intl to award a contract, nor does it commit Helen Keller Intl to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal. All recipients of this RFP shall treat all information and details included herein as private and confidential.

SECTION 1: Introduction, Eligibility of Bidders, and Definitions

Introduction

Helen Keller Intl invites applications from qualified, eligible organizations interested in providing the services described in this solicitation for the qualitative part of the study entitled, "Adherence and Product Acceptability of Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation (MMS) among Pregnant and Lactating Women in Nepal: Protocol for a Set of Four Mixed Method Studies".

The Helen Keller International (Helen Keller Intl), a nonprofit organization (headquartered in New York, NY, USA), with a country office in Nepal, was co-founded by Helen Keller over a century ago. Registered in 1919 in New York City, we focus on combating blindness and malnutrition worldwide. The organization operates through its headquarters in New York, with additional offices in Washington DC and program offices in 20 countries. Helen Keller Intl works on vision, health, and nutrition, using evidence-based programs and research to address the causes and consequences of these issues. The organization's approach involves building the capacity of local partners to deliver services effectively and sustainably. We have nearly 200 programs that provide support and training to families and individuals, empowering them to tackle challenges in the long term. In Nepal, Helen Keller Intl collaborates closely with the government and external partners on national nutrition programs and policies.

Eligibility of Bidders

This RFP is open to entities that are deemed capable of implementing the scope of work, with a solid record of integrity and business ethics, and that meet the eligibility requirements stated in this Section.

Bidders that submit proposals in response to this RFP must meet the following requirements:

- 1) Be a non-government entity (for-profit and non-profit organization, research institute, non-governmental organization (NGOs), etc.) that is legally registered under the laws of Nepal
- 2) Have demonstrated capacity and expertise to successfully implement the Scope of Work
- 3) Have completed the required representations and certifications incorporated in this RFP
- 4) Be willing to comply with relevant donor rules and regulations and Helen Keller Intl requirements.

Note: Helen Keller Intl will not award a contract to any entity that is debarred, suspended, or proposed for debarment by the U.S. Government, or who proposes to do business with entities whose principals who are debarred, suspended, or proposed for debarment, in the performance of this activity.

SECTION 2: Scope of Work

Helen Keller International (Helen Keller Intl), intends to enter into a professional service contract for the qualitative data collection part of the study entitled, "*Adherence and Product Acceptability of Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation (MMS) among Pregnant and Lactating Women in Nepal: Protocol for a Set of Four Mixed Method Studies*". This is a Request for Proposals (RFP), and we welcome interested organizations to review the work description and criteria outlined below and to submit their applications by the closing date.

The specific focus of this RFP is a qualitative study on the operational feasibility of transitioning to MMS within antenatal and postnatal care (ANC/PNC) settings across Nepal. The study will involve gathering qualitative data from ANC/PNC providers, Female Community Health Volunteers, and policymakers in all provinces to understand their perspectives on implementing MMS.

Helen Keller is seeking applications from qualified, eligible Nepali entities to conduct and manage the data collection and management, including hiring, training, coordinating, and overseeing enumerators for **operational feasibility** in Nepal.

Scope of Work, Key Objectives and Activities

This qualitative study explores the operational feasibility of transitioning from IFA to MMS in Nepal's routine antenatal care and postnatal care. The research employs the social-ecological model to understand how

factors across different levels (individual, community, and policy) influence this transition. Data collection is expected to strictly adhere to the protocols and discussion guides for the FGDs and KII. Data collection will take place in all of Nepal's seven provinces (Lumbini Province, Koshi Province, Madhesh Province, Bagmati Province, Gandaki Province, Karnali Province, and Sudurpaschim Province). The principal investigators at Helen Keller have developed study protocols and tools, but the entity selected is expected to support their finalization including methodologies such as focus group discussions (FGDs), in-depth interviews (IDIs) and other participatory methods (i.e. pile sorts, free listing, and narrative inquiry). Once agreed by both parties and the protocol is finalized, data collection is expected to strictly adhere to the protocols and discussion guides.

The research entity is expected to develop standard operating procedures for data collection and training for all qualitative interviewers. The research entity will also ensure that all research involving human subjects is conducted following the relevant host country, institutional, and ethical guidelines. The research entity is responsible for data management, including full transcription in Nepali (or the local language) followed by translation of all transcripts from Nepali to English (and perhaps sometimes first to Nepali). In collaboration with the Helen Keller study team, the research entity will be responsible for qualitative data coding using a pre-defined codebook of all FGDs and IDIs.

The proposed data collection will include:

1. Conduct of FGDs (n=28)
 - ANC healthcare provider= 2 FGDs per province (n=14)
 - FCHVs= 2 FGDs per province (n=14)

2. Conduct of KIIs: (n=65)

Policymakers (n=42)

- Federal Level (n=7)
- Provincial level (n=21)
- Municipal level (n=14)

Logistic/ Supply chain specialist: (n=23)

- Federal Level (n=2)
- Provincial level (n=14)
- Municipal level (n=7)

This RFP contains the following Annexes:

- Annex A: Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Deliverables and Illustrative Timeline

| S.N | Deliverable | Description | Target Completion Date |
|------------|--|---|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Qualitative Data Collection Prep Materials (Final protocols and tools; Training Materials; Standard Operating Procedures for data collection and management) | 3-day in-person training for qualitative interviewers on data collection and management methods, SOPs, and ethical considerations | Month 1 |
| 2 | Raw Data Collection Materials (informed consent; audio and written documents) | Completed tools and guides Audio recordings. Written informed consent forms. | Month 2 |
| 3 | Nepali and English Translated Transcripts | Verbatim transcription in Nepali High-quality English translations of all Nepali transcripts. | Month 3 |

| | | | |
|---|-----------------|---|---------|
| 4 | Coded Data Sets | De-identified and coded transcripts in Nvivo 14 | Month 4 |
|---|-----------------|---|---------|

Anticipated Contracting Period and Award Mechanism

SECTION 3: Proposal Instructions

The Bidder's proposal will consist of two separate documents:

Part 1 – Technical Offer

Part 2 – Financial Offer

The Technical Offer and the Financial Offer (altogether "proposal") must be submitted separately. The Bidder should not include any cost data in the Technical Offer.

The proposal should be concisely presented and structured, and should explain in detail the Bidder's availability, experience and resources to provide the requested services.

Proposals that are incomplete or do not address these criteria may not be considered in the review process. All proposals **must be submitted in English**.

Both the Technical Offer and Financial Offer must be submitted with a **Cover Letter** which must include the following information and must be signed by an authorized representative of the Bidder organization:

- i. Date of Submission of the Proposal
- ii. Term of proposal validity (minimum 90 days)
- iii. Name of the company/organization
- iv. Name and title of authorized representative of organization
- v. Type of company/organization
- vi. Address
- vii. Telephone
- viii. E-mail
- ix. Taxpayer Identification Number
- x. Other required documents that shall be included as attachments to the cover letter:
 - a) Copy of registration or incorporation in the public registry, or equivalent document from the government office where the bidder is registered.
 - b) Copy of company tax registration, or equivalent document.
 - c) Copy of trade license, or equivalent document.

Bidders must also submit a signed Conflict of Interest Declaration Form. This form will be assessed to establish whether the Bidder has any present or potential future conflict of interest according to the definition in Annex A. If the conclusion is reached that any conflict of interest declared by the Bidder could have a negative impact on the Bidder's ability to perform the Service, Helen Keller Intl may decide to reject the submitted proposal. Failure to accurately complete the Conflict-of-Interest Declaration Form may also lead to the rejection of the submitted proposal.

Part 1: TECHNICAL OFFER

A maximum number of pages for each component of the Technical Offer is given below.

The Technical Offer should include the following:

1) Bidder past performance record/relevant experience (3 pages maximum recommended)

Information related to Bidder's past performance/prior experience in conducting work similar in nature and volume to the services requested (brief description, deliverables, date, client etc.).

Bidders must also provide contacts for at least three (3) professional references for previous work and/or experience under similar SOWs. Contact information should include, at a minimum: name of individual, name of company, brief information on relationship to Bidder, address, email, and phone number. Helen Keller Intl reserves the right to contact any and all references provided. Contact information for references is not subject to the page limitation for this section.

2) Technical approach (3 pages maximum recommended)

The technical approach must describe the proposed approach to achieving the objectives and must address the following:

- a) A brief description of the Bidder's understanding of the objectives and scope of work for the consultancy.
- b) A detailed presentation of methodology and process showing how the Bidder proposes to complete the requested services indicated in this RFP.
- c) A clear outline of the timeline for completion of the proposed task.

3) Team Composition (2 page maximum recommended, excluding CVs)

- a) Team Composition: Bidders must describe the team composition that will deliver against the objectives and scope of work described in this RFP. Team composition must clearly identify the project manager (or Team Lead) and other team members, detailing the roles and responsibilities each will have throughout the duration of the consultancy. CVs must be submitted for team lead and core team members.

Helen Keller Intl may choose to contact the Bidder prior to making a final decision.

Part 2: FINANCIAL OFFER

This contract will be issued as a Professional Services Contract with payment made against specific completed and accepted deliverables. Helen Keller Intl will only issue payment via electronic payment methods and all bank accounts must be in the name of the company only.

As part of the Financial Offer, Bidders must include a detailed budget, expressed in NPR with an accompanying budget narrative, describing the basis for the listed cost elements. Supporting information should be provided in sufficient detail to allow a complete analysis and determination of the reasonableness of each cost element. Bidders are required to include and clearly label **all** costs deemed necessary to complete the work called for hereunder.

DETAILED FEE BREAKDOWN WORKSHEET (SAMPLE FORMAT)

| Cost Element | Unit Cost | Quantity | Total Cost |
|------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|------------|
| 1. Personnel | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| 2. Travel and Transportation | | Number of trips | |
| A. Travel | | | |
| | | | |
| B. Per Diem | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| SUBTOTAL | | | |

| | | | |
|----------------------|--|-------|--|
| 3. Activity Cost | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| SUBTOTAL | | | |
| 4. Other Direct Cost | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | | |
| | | Total | |

SECTION 4: Evaluation Criteria and Basis for Award

Helen Keller will follow a Best Value Trade-Off selection methodology. Helen Keller may award to, responsible entity whose proposal(s) are most advantageous to the program, with price and other factors considered including but not limited to compliance with the requirements of the RFP without material deviation. Bidders may not modify non-responsive offers after the proposal deadline in order to make them responsive. However, Helen Keller may request a Bidder to clarify its offer as long as no material deviation exists.

The criteria below will serve as the basis upon which proposals will be evaluated. Selection will be based principally on the technical merits of the proposals, but price and other factors will be considered, and award will be made only if the proposal is determined to be technically acceptable and cost reasonable.

| Evaluation Criteria per Solicitation | Total Max (100) |
|--|------------------------|
| Past Performance/ Prior relevant experience | 35 |
| | |
| | |
| Technical Merit | 30 |
| | |
| | |
| Operational Capability | 35 |
| | |
| | |
| Total Points | 100 |

Upon completion of the evaluation of Technical Offers, Helen Keller Intl will evaluate Financial Offers for budget presentation, details of the budget narrative (if needed), and cost effectiveness (reasonable, realistic, match the Technical Offer and meet requirements of RFP). No points are assigned to Financial Offers, but these criteria will be considered, in conjunction with the total score of the Technical Offer.

SECTION 6: Proposal Validity, Submission Deadline and Instructions

Proposals should have a 90-day validity period from the proposal submission date, as provided in the Cover Letter.

Proposals must be submitted electronically by the deadline listed on the cover page of this RFP by E-mail to Nepal.Procurement@hki.org indicating in the subject line of the e-mail the company name and the RFP number.

A full proposal submission will include the following documents, all of which must reference the RFP number as stated on the cover page of this document:

- Cover Letter
- Technical Offer
- Financial Offer
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure Form
- Copies of Bidder legal registration documents
 - o Company registration certificate
 - o VAT registration certificate
 - o Income tax clearance certificate of the current year
- Other pertinent information relevant to the proposal submission

SECTION 7: Negotiations

Best offer proposals are requested. It is anticipated that an award will be made solely on the basis of the original offers received. However, Helen Keller Intl reserves the right to conduct discussions, negotiations and/or request clarifications prior to awarding a contract. Furthermore, Helen Keller Intl reserves the right to conduct a competitive range and to limit the number of bidders in the competitive range to permit an efficient evaluation environment among the most highly-rated proposals. Highest-rated bidders, as determined by the technical evaluation committee, may be asked to submit their best prices or technical responses during a competitive range. At the sole discretion of Helen Keller Intl, bidders may be requested to conduct oral presentations. If deemed an opportunity, Helen Keller Intl reserves the right to make separate awards per component or to make no award at all.

SECTION 8: Terms of the Solicitation

1. Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of Helen Keller, nor does it commit Helen Keller to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a bid.
2. Attached files are an integral part of this RFP.
3. Helen Keller may contact Bidders to confirm contact person, address, bid amount and to confirm that the proposal was submitted for this solicitation.
4. False Statements: Bidders must provide full, accurate and complete information as required by this solicitation and its attachments.
5. Conflict of Interest Disclosure: In Annex A Bidders must provide disclosure of any past, present or future relationships with any parties associated with the issuance, review or management of this solicitation and anticipated award. Failure to provide full and open disclosure may result in Helen Keller having to re-evaluate selection of a potential Bidders.
6. Right to Select/Reject: Helen Keller Intl reserves the right to select and negotiate with those entities it determines, in its sole discretion, to be qualified for competitive proposals and to terminate negotiations without incurring any liability. Helen Keller Intl also reserves the right to reject any or all proposals received without explanation.
7. Reserved rights: All RFP responses become the property of Helen Keller Intl and Helen Keller Intl reserves the right in its sole discretion to:
 - a. To disqualify any offer based on Bidder's failure to follow solicitation instructions;
 - b. To waive any deviations by Bidders from the requirements of this solicitation that in Helen Keller Intl's opinion are considered not to be material defects requiring rejection or disqualification or where such a waiver will promote increased competition;
 - c. Extend the time for submission of all RFP responses after notification to all Bidders;
 - d. Terminate or modify the RFP process at any time and re-issue the RFP to whomever Helen Keller Intl deems appropriate;
 - e. Issue an award based on the initial evaluation of offers without discussion;

- f. Award only part of the activities in the solicitation or issue multiple awards based on solicitation activities.
8. Bidders and its proposed personnel shall disclose any factors that could limit the organization's ability to independently perform the services such as relationship with counterpart employees, past employment, etc.

ANNEX A: Conflict of Interest Disclosure

Helen Keller Intl Code of Conduct & Ethics Policy: In accordance with the Helen Keller Intl Code of Conduct and Ethics Policy, Helen Keller Intl requires full and open disclosure when dealing with procurement. As such, Helen Keller Intl employees must avoid any conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest. Helen Keller Intl employees must at all times provide full disclosure of their actions or relationships with prospective vendors, contractors, or consultants. Helen Keller Intl employees shall not solicit, request, accept, or agree to accept any gift from a vendor or prospective vendor.

Helen Keller Intl reserves the right to reject any or all quotes when considered to be in the best interest of the organization and/or the people it serves. All parties submitting a proposal in response to this Request for Proposal are obligated to disclose the existence of any actual or possible conflict of interest relating to every country included within their proposal in the attached *Conflict of Interest Declaration Form*.

Failure to fully disclose such information could lead Helen Keller Intl to reject a proposal. If a party has no conflict to declare for any of the countries covered in their proposal, they may submit one form, listing all of the countries covered.

“Conflict of Interest” means a situation in which an Bidder, or an Affiliate (as defined below), or a sub-contractor (if any) of an Bidder, has interests (financial, organizational, personal, reputational or otherwise) that would or may appear to make it difficult for an Bidder to fulfill its obligations to Helen Keller Intl in its role as the vendor in an objective, independent and professional manner, or a situation in which it is reasonable to foresee that such an interest would arise. A Conflict of Interest may arise in the following circumstances, which are not exhaustive:

- i. a Bidder has been, or is involved in the design of a proposal or request for funding that has been, or will be submitted to Helen Keller Intl;
- ii. an Bidder has been, or is involved in the provision of advice to an entity that is a Principal Recipient or a Sub-recipient;
- iii. a Bidder has been, or is involved in, or has provided advice in relation to the procurement of goods and/or services by a Principal Recipient and/or a Sub-recipient;
- iv. a Bidder has been, or is involved in the provision of auditing services to a Principal Recipient and/or a Sub-recipient; or
- v. a Bidder has submitted an expression of interest, tender, bid or otherwise indicated interest in providing services of any nature to a Principal Recipient or a Sub-recipient that remains valid at the time of, and for the duration of the term of this Contract.

“Affiliate” means a business concern, individual or other entity that, directly or indirectly: (i) controls or can control an Bidder; (ii) is controlled by, or can foreseeably be controlled by, an Bidder; or (iii) along with an Bidder, is controlled by, or can foreseeably be controlled by, the same third party.

Bidder Conflict of Interest Declaration Form

Please check one box below, as appropriate:

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The Bidder hereby declares that it has read and understood the Conflict of Interest rules set forth in the Request for Proposals (RFP) and warrants that no Conflict of Interest exists on the part of the Bidder or an Affiliate of the Bidder, with regard to the services to be performed under the RFP. The Bidder hereby agrees to comply with the Conflict of Interest rules set forth in the Request for Proposals (RFP). |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | The Bidder wishes to disclose a real or potential Conflict of Interest situation(s) and propose mitigating action(s). <i>Note:</i> if this box is checked, please describe in an attachment, <i>in detail</i> , the situation and present a proposed mitigation plan / arrangement for consideration by Helen Keller Intl. |

Bidder:

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| Signature: | |
| Printed Name: | |
| Title: | |
| Date: | |