Terms of Reference: Early Childhood Education Research Study

December 18, 2019

Response to Questions

1. **Question:** We would like to find out how much has been allocated to this project as this would help in budgeting for the project

    DevTech response: DevTech has not assigned a floor or ceiling amount for this procurement. However, we expect responses to this award to submit a comprehensive budget that includes real costs associated with data collection that aligns to the Scope of Work.

2. **Question:** What format/template should the budget be presented in? If there is a preferred format, we request that you furnish us with the relevant template.

    DevTech response: DevTech does not have a standard format or template for the budget to be presented in. Part of our evaluation of the proposal will be on the cost and comprehensiveness of the proposed budget that is developed.

3. **Question:** May we please have access to the sampling plan (including the provinces and list of schools to be visited) to assist with planning and budgeting as we prepare the proposal?

    DevTech response: We are not able to provide the list of sampled schools; however, we can confirm that two provinces were randomly selected: Eastern and Western provinces. 27 government-run primary schools from 9 district were sampled from Eastern province and 25 GRZ schools from 12 district from Western Province were chosen.

4. **Question:** Is it possible to provide concrete information on the targeted districts in the province? This has budgetary implications.

    DevTech response: The tentative districts for Eastern province are 9: Chadiza, Chipata, Katete, Lunazi, Mambwe, Nyimba, Petuke, Sinda, and Vubwi. The tentative districts for Western provinces are 12: Kalabo, Kaoma, Limulunga, Lukulu, Mongu, Mulobezi, Mwandi, Nkeyemba, Senanga, Seseke, and Shangombo, Sioma.

5. **Question:** What proportion of community versus government schools is the study targeting?

    DevTech response: The ECE Research Study will only be targeting government schools, no community schools will be assessed.

6. **Question:** Is the sample size indicated in the document (10 ECE learners and 12 Grade 1 learners) the final sample per school?

    DevTech response: Education Data activity does not have detailed school enrollment data per school, so assessors will randomly select students upon arrival at the school. The maximum number of learners that will be assessed in each school in 10 ECE learners and 12 Grade 1 learners, however, in some schools there may less learners enrolled to assess. Statistical analysis determined that a minimum of 52 schools needs to be assessed with 264 learners in treatment and 264 in comparison to draw statistical comparisons between their mean scores. DevTech drew its Grade 1 sample (6 who attended ECE last year and 6 who did not) based on this number and drew a slightly larger sample of ECE learners at the beginning of ECE due to the expected attrition of learners by end line. Education Data activity used Grade 2 learner questionnaire data collected as part of its baseline EGRA in November 2018 to sample GRZ schools where some learners reported that they attended ECE and some learners reported that they did not, to ensure that each of the three learner groups can be found at each selected school. Please see the research proposal for additional information on the sampling methodology.

7. **Question:** Is the number of assessors cast in stone? Is there any chance of increasing this to 24? This will ensure that work is completed sooner, thereby impacting the budget.

    DevTech Response: The number of assessors is not cast in stone, they are approximate. Firms are welcome to suggest a different number of assessors and/or a different length for data collection.

8. **Question:** We are not clear on which is the control group in the study. Please clarify.

    DevTech response: Let's Read is training all ECE teachers across all five provinces, therefore there is no valid control group, and as such this study is not an impact evaluation nor longitudinal study that will be able to report the magnitude of effects for the intervention. However, the comparison group will be Grade 1 learners assessed in January 2020, that just completed ECE reception in December 2019 in the absence of the Let's Read ECE intervention.

9. **Question:** Please confirm that the contractor will only be involved in the provision of logistical and administrative support to DEVTECH for the research and will not the preparation of the baseline and end line research reports.

    DevTech response: DevTech confirms that under this Terms of Reference, the Scope of Work is in the provision of logistical and administrative support to DevTech as well as technical oversight and quality assurance throughout data collection. However, the local survey firm may help inform a Scope of Work for an independent consultant to support the preparation of the baseline and end line research reports if required.

10. **Question:** Will the Ed-Data team provide the tablets to be used in data collection?

    DevTech response: Yes, USAID Education Data activity will provide the tablets to be used for data collection.

11. **Question:** We wish to get clarification on who is responsible for purchasing the gadgets that will be used for data collection.

    DevTech response: DevTech will purchase all tablets related for the data collection including the chargers. If there are other particular gadgets that the firm believes are required for data collection, then they should include it within their proposal along with the associated costs.

12. **Question:** We wish to get clarity on the inclusion and exclusion criteria for ECE and Grade 1 learners that will be included in the study. ECE begins from 3-4 years (nursery), the learners then move to reception (ages 5-6). If the target is the latter group, will the focus be on those that have accessed nursery as well or just those that are starting ECE at ages 5-6?

    DevTech response: At baseline, the study will collect assessment data from three groups of learners: (1) up to 10 ECE learners just beginning reception who are 5 -6 years old and; (2) up to 6 grade 1 learners who just finished ECE reception in December 2019 (comparison group for Let's Read) and; (3) up to 6 Grade 1 learners who but did not attend ECE prior to Grade 1. The study will answer two separate research questions using the learner assessment data: (1) differences in learner scores with and without Let's Read ECE intervention (baseline and end line data) and; (2) differences in learner scores of those that attended ECE and those that did not (baseline only). Please see the research proposal for additional details.

13. **Question:** Is the detailed training and data collection plan to be submitted as part of the proposal, or at a later date?

    DevTech response: The detailed training and data collection plan do not need to be submitted as part of the proposal – these deliverables are due after the award is issued to the selected firm. Proposals do need to submit a **Detailed Work Plan** that includes your technical approach to the SOW including timelines, a description of the organization, and team composition including the CVs (2-page maximum per CV) of the individuals who will execute the SOW. Please see **VIII. Application** within the terms of reference for a complete list of the requirements for submission.

14. **Question:** Will presentation material for QCO and assessor baseline and end line training be provided by Ed-Data, or do we have to plan to prepare this material?

    DevTech response: Education Data activity will provide some materials from the IDELA toolkit and the MELE toolkit that can be adapted for the assessor training. However, it is expected that the local survey firm will have to develop supplementary materials to ensure a high-quality training is conducted. Some technical support will also be provided by Education Data activity field and home office staff. Materials used at baseline may also be used at end line with some adaptation and revisions required.

15. **Question:** Has a tentative date for the kick-off meeting been set? The revised ToR reads December 2020, which we assume is a typo.

    DevTech response: A tentative date for the kick-off meeting will be scheduled once a local survey firm has been awarded this contract. It is expected to take place in early January

16. **Question:** We wish to get clarification on the months for data collection. It is not very clear in the document when baseline and end line are scheduled to take place. There seems to be a discrepancy in the document between January 2021 and December 2020. Could you please clarify when the trainings will be done; when the baseline will take place; when training for end line will take place and finally when end line data collection will take place? Are the timelines for the activities cast in stone? We have asked because we are not sure conducting end line in January 2021 is a good idea. We risk attrition of learners and maybe even teachers, especially if learners do not continue with the same teacher to the next grade. We would like to understand the rationale of choosing January 2021. Is this the period you were envisioning the end line to take place? Is it possible to conduct the end line in term 3, November 2020?

    DevTech response: The baseline assessor training will take place in January 2020 – it is tentatively scheduled for the last week in January (Jan. 27th – Feb. 1st), with baseline data collection beginning to take place during the first week in February. This may change slightly but this is what DevTech is aiming for. The end line is tentatively to take place in January 2021 – to assess Grade 1 learners who just finished ECE in December 2020. The end line timeline is not cast in stone. However, the Let's Read ECE intervention will begin to be rolled out in April/May 2020 – rather than January 2020, as originally scheduled. Given this, DevTech has been asked to push back the end line timeline to allow more time for implementation prior to assessing learners. To clarify, under this study, DevTech is not tracking individual learners –the same schools will be assessed at baseline and end line, but learners at baseline and end line may not be the same as assessor will randomly select learners each time.

17. **Question:** When can we expect to hear back about the decision on this procurement opportunity?

    DevTech response: DevTech intends to evaluate all submitted proposals and to notify the selected local survey firm by January 3rd, 2020.

18. **Question:** The mechanism for financial reporting implies that an organisation which already has established financial internal processes, including auditors, will have to report to both the university and DEVTECH. Is it possible for DEVTECH to provide funds based on the budget that will be agreed on and allow financial reporting to take place with the institution that it reports to (i.e. UNZA)?

    DevTech Response: This award is funded by USAID/Zambia, which is implemented by DevTech. All subcontractors will need to submit invoices to DevTech to comply with USAID financial reporting regulations, this will include providing receipts for all reimbursable costs under the contract including for meals provided during training, per diem/daily subsistence allowance, lodging and transport during data collection, signed proof of payment forms for all assessors and other relevant receipts. DevTech will work with the selected firm to agree upon a template to be used to submit all financial reporting requirements.

19. **Question:** The payment structure, where 20% is paid before data collection may need to be revisited depending on the budget. The idea is to ensure that the contractor has enough funds to conduct all the activities at baseline. Is DEVTECH willing to make necessary adjustment to the disbursement structure, should the need arise, for each of the data collection points?

DevTech Response: a modified payment structure is included in Addendum 1 and attached on the page below. In accordance with a higher sample at baseline, 60% of the contract is allocated for baseline and 40% is for end line data collection. To ensure that all final deliverables are submitted to the satisfaction of DevTech, some percentage of the payment structure must be withheld until after all final deliverables are submitted to the satisfaction of DevTech.

Terms of Reference – Early Childhood Education Research Study

Addendum 1 – December 18, 2019

DevTech is pleased to provide the following updated addendum to the Terms of Reference for the ECE Research Study Award. Highlighted changes below demonstrate areas that were affected by the Questions and Answers.

I.   PAYMENT

This subcontract will be disbursed in four payments, according to the submission and approval of the following products:

Baseline (60% of the award value)

- First disbursement corresponding of 10% after the approval of the: (1) Work Plan; (2) detailed baseline data collection plan; (3) draft screening protocol; and (4) draft ICA
- Second disbursement of 30% for the successful completion of the: (1) QCO and assessor training, including submission and approval of all training materials; and (3) submission of all QCO and assessor contracts for data collection
- Third disbursement of 20% after the completion of the baseline data collection and submission to the satisfaction of DevTech and USAID of: (1) verification that 100% of sampled schools were assessed at baseline in accordance with the sampling plan using the agreed-upon tools; (2) financial report outlining all expenses and proof of payment; (3) Baseline summary report; and; (4) submission of all data collection materials from data collection teams

End line (40% of award value)

- First disbursement of 10% after the approval of the: (1) detailed end line data collection plan; (2) draft screening protocol; and (3) draft ICA

- Second disbursement of 20% for the successful completion of the: (1) QCO, assessor, and teacher observer training, including all approved training materials and (3) submission of all QCO and assessor contracts for data collection

- Third disbursement of 10% for 100% of the contract value after the submission of the following deliverables to the satisfaction of DevTech and USAID: (1) verification that 100% of sampled schools were assessed at end line in accordance with the sampling plan using the agreed-upon tools; (2) financial report outlining all expenses and proof of payment for all QCOs and assessors paid under the award; (3) End line summary report; and; (4) submission of all data collection materials from data collection teams