# Invitation to Tender

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| **Tender Name: Baseline assessment for the 2nd/3rd phases of McGovern-Dole Food for Education Program in Uzbekistan** | | **Tender No: TAS- 0142** |
| Location: (Tashkent, Uzbekistan) | Correspondence Language(s): English | |
| Brief Summary Description of Project:  The Government of Uzbekistan issued a reform agenda to improve education and health outcomes, focusing mostly on its youth population. Despite significant economic development over the last decade, approximately 12 percent of the population lives below the poverty line, of which 75 percent are rural dwellers. The COVID‑19 pandemic drove an additional half-million people into poverty as exports and remittances fell, and employment insecurity increased, especially among young entrepreneurs and small business owners.  Upon gaining independence, the Government of Uzbekistan inherited a severe environmental crisis. Intensive irrigation during the Soviet period, combined with climate change, has devastated the Aral Sea. This ecological disaster is draining local economies of their livelihoods and wiping out fishing industries that once dominated the region. Crop damage and increased air and water pollution are causing severe health consequences in the region, particularly among women and children. Anemia and respiratory illness among children is particularly high as a result of pollution and poor nutrition.  In addition to health and malnutrition risks, children in Uzbekistan lack access to quality early childhood education. While strides have been made in urban centers, enrollment remains disproportionately lower in rural areas. In preparation for a demographic boom and the need for youth job creation, the Government of Uzbekistan is investing in children and young people. Improving the education sector, and in particular early childhood education, will help build the foundation needed to facilitate growth and job creation.  Pre-primary education (preschool) covers children ages 3-7, with the final year of preschool prior to entering Grade 1 now mandatory as of the 2020-2021 school year per national legislation. The new requirement and the increasing demographic realities of children under seven across the country will put significant pressure on the educational system in the coming years. This is especially true given the number of preschools in Uzbekistan decreasing markedly over the past 20 years by almost half (- 45%) with only 818,000 out of 2,450,000 children accessing preschool education as of 2017. This figure has improved though and as of 2021, 62.4% of children were enrolled of the 2,800,000 eligible. Access to quality pre-primary education remains a challenge, particularly in rural and under-resourced areas. Official statistics from 2021 show enrollment of 74.2% in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and 45.1% in Surkhandarya. Additionally, evidence suggests that nutritional deficiencies leave preschool children vulnerable to poor cognitive and physical development, impeding their ability to learn and thrive. For that reason, meals in preschools are one of the most effective incentives for families to send their children back to preschool.  USDA McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Child Nutrition program in Uzbekistan, implemented by Mercy Corps, addresses these challenges by providing students in targeted preschools with a strong foundation in reading, nutrition and health interventions and improving literacy. This holistic investment in young children increases their likelihood of future academic and workforce success. Children’s environments and experiences during early childhood shape their developing brains, influence what knowledge, skills and attitudes they bring with them to school, and determine their trajectory for success in school and life. As adequate nutrition is a fundamental part of healthy growth and better educational performance, the program also includes health and nutrition-sensitive activities such as the use of micronutrient-fortified food products, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) projects, and curriculum-based nutrition education.  **Program Summary**  Mercy Corps is a leading global organization powered by the belief that a better world is possible. In disaster, in hardship, in more than 40 countries around the world, we partner to put bold solutions into action — helping people triumph over adversity and build stronger communities from within.  The USDA McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition program in Uzbekistan will target 294 preschools in the Republic of Karakalpakstan and Surkhandarya Region reaching over 40,000 children of 3-7 years old enrolled in the target preschools. The objectives of the program are to:   * Improve student attendance in preschools through the provision of daily preschool meals, improved learning environment, and access to clean water and sanitation. * Promote reading readiness in preschools through the provision of age-appropriate pre-literacy activities, training and mentoring of preschool teachers and administrators on pre-literacy instruction and enhancing community and family support for reading. * Improve preschool infrastructure and the learning environment of preschool children through the construction or rehabilitation of preschool kitchens, classrooms and water and sanitation facilities. * Increase knowledge of nutrition, health, and hygiene practices and safe food preparation and storage practices, by facilitating training for cooks, nurses, and information sessions for parents.   The program implementation takes place from October 1, 2019, to September 30, 2024. The implementation targets a total of 294 preschools that will be enrolled in the program for two years. For that reason, program implementation is divided into three phases during which preschools will be enrolled. Phase I will target 60 preschools, phase II will target 160 preschools (including 60 preschools continuing from phase I in addition to 100 newly enrolled preschools). Phase III will target a total of 234 preschools (100 continuing preschools from phase II in addition to 134 newly enrolled preschools).  **Purpose of the Baseline Assessment for Phases II and III**  For Phases II and III, Mercy Corps will recruit a consulting entity to conduct a baseline assessment for all newly 234 enrolled preschools. The baseline assessment will serve two main purposes:   * It will provide baseline values for several key program performance indicators (please see Table 1 for the list of indicators and suggested data collection tools); * It will serve as a tailored needs assessment focusing on infrastructure facilities, preschool staff capacity, household practices and parental perspectives for each preschool entering the program to help guide program intervention (please see Table 2 for the details on topics and suggested data collection methods). | | |

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| **Tender Package Available from:**  **(6 /January / 2023)** | **Tender Package Pickup Location:**  **(26 Bog’saroy Street, Tashkent or uz-pro@mercycorps.org)** |
| **Deadline for Offer Submission:**  **(17 /February / 2023; 18:00 Tashkent time)** | **Submit Offers to:**  **(26 Bog’saroy Street, Tashkent or uz-pro@mercycorps.org)** |

*Mercy Corps reserves the right to accept or reject any late offers*

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| **Questions and Answers (Q&A)** | |
| If any, Submit Questions in writing to: (**26 Bog’saroy Street, Tashkent**, **uz-pro@mercycorps.org)** | |
| Last Day for Questions:  (**27 /January / 2023; 18:00 Tashkent time** / month in letter / year; Time) | Questions will be answered by:  (**3 /February / 2023; 18:00 Tashkent time**) |
| Questions will be answered through: (email, uz-pro@mercycorps.org) | |

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| **Q&A Session** | |
| Date / Time: | Location: **N/A** |
| Point of Contact: **Q&A Session will be held if requested by suppliers or many questions are raised by suppliers that needed to discuss with all potential vendors.** | |

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| **Documentation Checklist** | |
| These documents are contained within this tender package: | * Invitation to Tender * General Conditions for Tender * Criteria and Submittals * Price Offer Sheet * Applicant Information Form * Applicant Self-Certification of Eligibility * Company Project Experience Form * Scope of Work * Sample Contract |

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# General Conditions for Tender

Mercy Corps invites offers for the goods, services and/or works described and summarized in these documents, and in accordance with procedures, conditions and contract terms presented herein. Mercy Corps reserves the right to vary the quantity of work/materials specified in the Tender Package without any changes in unit price or other terms and conditions and to accept or reject any, all, or part of submitted offers.

**2.1 Mercy Corps’ Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Statement**

**Mercy Corps strictly prohibits**:

* *Any form of bribe or kickback in relation to its activities*

This prohibition includes any *request* from any Mercy Corps employee, consultant or agent for anything of value from any company or individual in exchange for the employee, consultant or agents taking or not taking any action related to the award of a contract or the contract once awarded.  It also applies to any *offer* from any company or individual to provide anything of value to any Mercy Corps employee, consultant or agent in exchange for that person taking or not taking any action related to the award of the contract or the contract.

* *Conflicts of interests in the awarding or management of contracts*

If a company is owned by, whether directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any Mercy Corps employee or any person who is related to a Mercy Corps employee, the company must ensure that it and the employee disclose the relationship as part of or prior to submitting the offer.

* *The sharing or obtaining of confidential information*

Mercy Corps prohibits its employees from sharing, and any offerors from obtaining, confidential information related to this solicitation, including information regarding Mercy Corps’ price estimates, competing offerors or competing offers, etc.  Any information provided to one offeror must be provided to all other offerors.

* *Collusion between/among offerors*

Mercy Corps requires fair and open competition for this solicitation.  No two (or more) companies submitting proposals can be owned or controlled by the same individual(s). Companies submitting offers cannot share prices or other offer information or take any other action intended to pre-determine which company will win the solicitation and what price will be paid.

* *Any form of exploitation, abuse, human trafficking or internal sexual misconduct*

Mercy Corps requires its partners to adhere to its Safeguarding policies including its policies on Child Safeguarding, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse of Beneficiaries and Community Members, Anti-Trafficking and Sexual Misconduct (available at https://www.mercycorps.org/who-we-are/ethics-policies). Companies will be expected to ensure that they have the capacity to abide by these policies, that their employees and subcontractors understand these policies, and that they communicate to its employees and subcontractors the duty to report any violation or suspected violation. Mercy Corps will not engage with a company that is found to be in violation of these policies.

Violations of these prohibitions, along with all evidence of such violations, should be reported to:

[**http://mercycorps.org/integrityhotline**](http://mercycorps.org/integrityhotline)

Mercy Corps will investigate allegations fully and will take appropriate action.  Any company, or individual that participates in any of the above prohibited conduct, will have its actions reported to the appropriate authorities, will be investigated fully, will have its offer rejected and/or contract terminated, and will not be eligible for future contracts with Mercy Corps. Employees participating in such conduct will have his/her employment terminated.

Violations will also be reported to Mercy Corps’ donors, who may also choose to investigate and debar or suspend companies and their owners from receiving any contract that is funded in part by the donor, whether the contract is with Mercy Corps or any other entity.

**2.2 Tender Basis:**

* All offers shall be made in accordance with these instructions, and all documents requested should be furnished, including any required (but not limited to) supplier-specific information, technical specifications, drawings, bill of quantities, and/or delivery schedule. If any requested document is not furnished, a reason should be given for its omission in an exception sheet.
* No respondent should add, omit or change any item, term or condition herein.
* If suppliers have any additional requests and conditions, these shall be stipulated in an exception sheet.
* Each offeror may make one response only.
* Each offer shall be valid for the period of [90 days] from its date of submission.
* All offers should indicate whether they include taxes, compulsory payments, levies and/or duties, including VAT, if applicable.
* Suppliers should ensure that financial offers are devoid of calculation errors. If errors are identified during the evaluation process, the unit price will prevail. If there is ambiguity on the unit price, the Selection Committee may decide to disqualify the offer.
* Any requests for clarifications regarding the project that are not addressed in written documents must be presented to Mercy Corps in writing. The answer to any question raised in writing by any offeror will be issued to that offeror. In some cases, Mercy Corps may choose to issue clarifications to all offerors. It is a condition of this tender that no clarification shall be deemed to supersede, contradict, add to or detract from the conditions hereof, unless made in writing as an Addendum to Tender and signed by Mercy Corps or its designated representative.
* This Tender does not obligate Mercy Corps to execute a contract, nor does it commit Mercy Corps to pay any costs incurred in the preparation and submission of proposals. Furthermore, Mercy Corps reserves the right to reject any and all offers, if such action is considered to be in the best interest of Mercy Corps.

**2.3 Supplier Eligibility**

Suppliers may not apply, and will be rejected as ineligible, if they:

* Are not registered business
* Are bankrupt or in the process of going bankrupt
* Have been convicted of illegal/corrupt activities, and/or unprofessional conduct
* Have been guilty of grave professional misconduct
* Have not fulfilled obligations related to payment of social security and taxes
* Are guilty of serious misinterpretation in supplying information
* Are in violation of the policies outlined in Mercy Corps Anti-Bribery or Anti-Corruption Statement
* Supplier (or supplier’s principals) are on any list of sanctioned parties issued by; or are presently excluded or disqualified from participation in this transaction by the United States Government or United Nations by the United States Government, the United Kingdom, the European Union, the United Nations, other national governments, or public international organizations.

**2.4 Response Documents**

Offerors must submit an offer in their own format and ensure it contains all the required documents and information specified in this tender. Where an itemized Price Offer Sheet is included in the tender package, the offeror must complete and submit it with the rest of their offer.

**2.5 Acceptance of Successful Response**

Documentation submitted by offerors will be verified by Mercy Corps. The winning offeror will be required to sign a contract for the stated, agreed upon amount.

**2.6 Certification Regarding Terrorism**

It is Mercy Corps’ policy to comply with humanitarian principles and the laws and regulations of the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, the United Kingdom, host nations, and other applicable donors concerning transactions with or support to individuals or entities that have engaged in fraud, waste, abuse, human trafficking, corruption, or terrorist activity. These laws and regulations prohibit Mercy Corps from transacting with or providing support to any individuals or entities that are the subject of government sanctions, donor rules, or laws prohibiting transactions or support to such parties.

# Criteria & Submittals

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| **3. Contract Terms**  Mercy Corps intends to issue a **Fixed Price** contract to one or several company(ies) or organization(s). The successful offeror(s) shall be required to adhere to the statement of work and terms and conditions of the resulting contract. The anticipated contract is incorporated in Section 6 herein. By submitting an offer, offerors certify that they understand and agree to all of the terms and clauses contained in Section 6. |
| **4. Specific Eligibility Criteria**  Eligibility criteria must be met and the corresponding supporting documents listed below under “Tender Submittals” **must** be submitted with offers. Offerors who do not submit these documents may be **disqualified** from any further technical or financial evaluation.  **Technical Criteria:**   * Be a legally registered consulting company * Demonstrated successful experience with carrying out social research, quantitative and qualitative data collection for international organizations particularly in the field of education, nutrition or infrastructure * Ability to provide a highly competent team consisting of: * A highly experienced team leader to manage the overall process and lead methodology development, analysis and reporting: * A masters’ degree qualification from a recognized university in any of the following areas: sociology, development studies, education, health, nutrition or any other relevant field * Demonstrable experience in leading teams in designing and conducting assessments or research projects in Uzbekistan and/or Central Asia, preferably for similar international programs * Fluent in English and Russian with a proven ability to write reports in both languages. Uzbek language skills are desired. * Solid methodological and research skills, qualitative and quantitative, demonstrated through a list of research pieces and evaluations * Previous experience with standard international literacy tools, such as MELQO, IDELA, EGRA * In-depth knowledge of the socio-cultural, economic and political context of Uzbekistan, especially the target regions * Excellent report writing skills, demonstrated by a list of published articles or reports * Excellent analytical interpersonal and communications skills   **An analyst / statistician / digital data collection expert**   * A degree in statistics, data analysis, economics, social sciences or other relevant field * Significant experience conducting surveys, baseline assessments and research studies * Experience of analyzing qualitative and quantitative data using statistical software * Solid experience with designing survey questionnaires * Solid experience with designing questionnaires using mobile data collection tools (ONA, ODK) * Fluent in English and Russian with a proven ability to write reports in both languages. Uzbek and Karakalpak language skills are desired.   **A team of experienced enumerators for the health, hygiene and nutrition assessment with the following qualifications:**   * Minimum 2-3 years of direct field data collection experience with qualitative and quantitative tools * Educational and/or professional background as nurses and cooks in a preschool setting * Fluency in spoken Uzbek and Karakalpak; proficiency in Russian is desired * Direct experience with mobile-based data collection platforms (Ona, ODK) on tablets and/or smart phones * Attention to detail and ability to follow strict data collection protocols * Knowledge of Uzbek government standards on health, hygiene and nutrition in preschools * excellent interpersonal skills (positive attitude, teamwork, communication, listening)   **A team of enumerators for the pre-literacy assessment with a specific background and/or expertise in literacy-related measurements with the following qualifications:**   * Minimum 2-3 years of direct field data collection experience with qualitative and quantitative tools * Educational and/or professional background in education, preferably at the preschool or primary school level (teachers, assistant teacher, librarians, etc.) * Fluency in spoken Uzbek and Karakalpak; proficiency in Russian is desired * Direct experience with mobile-based data collection platforms (Ona, ODK) on tablets and/or smart phones * Attention to detail and ability to follow strict data collection protocols * Previous experience with standard international literacy tools, such as MELQO, IDELA, EGRA is desired * Previous experience with and knowledge of main concepts of working with preschool children * excellent interpersonal skills (positive attitude, teamwork, communication, listening)   **Supporting team members as needed (translation, data entry, transcription and note taking, etc.).**   * Proven internal data quality assurance mechanisms with immaculate attention to detail * Good standing with any taxation or legal authority * Satisfactory record of performance and business ethics based on information available to Mercy Corps * Submission of the list and 3 samples of past research projects or reports * Satisfactory reference check from 3 past clients.   **Desired qualifications and skills:**   * Previous experience with Mercy Corps and/or US Government-funded projects |
| **3.3 Tender Submittals**  Documents and required information listed in tender submittals are necessary in order to support the eligibility criteria and to conduct technical evaluations of received offers (and due diligence). While absence of these documents and/or information does not denote mandatory disqualification of suppliers, the lack of these items has the potential to severely and negatively impact the technical evaluation of an offer.  **Documents supporting the Eligibility Criteria:**   * A copy of the Registration Certificate * No tax due Certificate/Report * Signed Applicant Information Form * Confirmation to sign USDA terms that are integral part of the contract   **Documents to conduct the Technical Evaluation and additional Due Diligence:**   * Proposed scope of services and tasks as per the Scope of Work * Proposed partnership if any * Proposed data quality assurance mechanism * Experience with mobile-based data collection platforms (Ona, ODK) on tablets and/or smartphones * Proposed mobilization and training strategy for enumerators * CVs of key personnel, 3 pages max per personnel * List of similar projects implemented by the Offeror in the area of education, nutrition, infrastructure * List of reports and publications produced by the Offeror in the area of education, nutrition, infrastructure * Three samples of past research projects or reports. Mercy Corps may request additional samples. * Three references from past clients * Price offer based on the template below |
| **3.4 Currency**  Offers should be submitted in: USD  Payments will be made in: USD |

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| **4. Technical Evaluation** *List Evaluation Criteria (for either method) and relative weighting (for Trade-Off method only): List as many evaluation criteria as needed (Refer to section 5.11 of the FP3 or consult with Global Procurement for additional assistance)*   |  |  |  |  | | --- | --- | --- | --- | | **Evaluation Criteria** | **Weight (%)** | **Points (1-10)** | **Weighted Points** | | **A** | **B** | **(A\*B)** | | *Offeror’s ability to provide key personnel and enumerators with the necessary qualifications* | *25%* |  |  | | *Data collection experience for relevant projects in Central Asia and/or Uzbekistan* | *15%* |  |  | | *Data collection experience in public pre-schools or schools* | *10%* |  |  | | *Price per unit* | *20%* |  |  | | *Data quality assurance mechanism* | *15%* |  |  | | *Experience with mobile-based data collection platforms (Ona, ODK) on tablets and/or smartphones* | *10%* |  |  | | *Experience with Mercy Corps and/or US Government-funded projects* | *5%* |  |  | | *Overall Score:* | *100%* |  |  |   The Contractors who **Pass** the technical evaluation will go through the following due diligence stages:   |  |  | | --- | --- | | **Due Diligence Stage** | **Basis of Evaluation** | | Interviews & office/yard visit | Passing Required/ | | Client references check both internal and external (Mercy Corps team visit the completed works in the past) | | *RPS verification* | | *Financial stability of the contractor The company should submit the financial statement for the previous 2 fiscal years as a soft copy either on CD or Flash Memory* | |

# Offer Form

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| **Offerors must submit their own independent offer including at least (but not limited to):**   * All documents requested in the “Eligibility Criteria” section of this Tender Package * All documents requested in the “Tender Submittals” section of this Tender Package * All information listed in the “Documents Comprising the Proposal” section below   **All offers must be duly signed (including position and full name of the signer) and stamped, with the date of completion.** |

***Documents Comprising the Proposal***

The following information must be included in the offer of any potential offeror:

* **Cover Letter** explaining interest to be a contracted vendor or supplier. The content of the cover letter shall include the following information:
* A detailed specification of the offered services
* Delivery time
* Price validity date (for this purpose and as stated on the advertisement, quote given shall remain unchanged for 90 working days)
* A Price Offer detailing the unit price only using the **Price Offer Sheet** (template provided in section 7)
* Completed and signed Mercy Corps **Applicant Information, Applicant Self-Certification of Eligibility and Company Project Experience Forms**
* Other important documents offeror feels need to be attached to support their proposal

The original proposal shall be signed by the offeror or a person or persons duly authorized to bind the offeror to the contract. Financial offer pages of the proposal shall be initialed by the person or persons signing the proposal and stamped with the company seal.

Any interlineations, erasures, or overwriting shall be valid only if they are initialed by the person or persons signing the propsal.