



Request for expression of interest

For Global Consulting Firm with Local Study Lead

Learning Review of HCD Approach being Implemented under Local Impact Program

I. INTRODUCTION

Founded and guided by His Highness the Aga Khan, the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is a group of development agencies with mandates that include the environment, health, education, architecture, culture, microfinance, rural development, disaster reduction, the promotion of private sector enterprise and the revitalization of historic cities. It brings together number of development agencies, institutions, and programmes that work primarily in the poorest parts of Asia and Africa. A central feature of AKDN's approach to development is to design and implement strategies in which its different agencies participate in particular settings to help those in need achieve a level of self-reliance and improve the quality of life. AKDN agencies conduct their programmes without regard to faith, origin or gender and have decades of experience in integrating economic, social and cultural development.

One of the specialized agencies of the AKDN is the Aga Khan Foundation (AKF), which brings together human, financial, and technical resources to address some of the challenges faced by the poorest and most marginalized communities in the world. Special emphasis is placed on investing in human potential, expanding opportunity and improving overall quality of life, especially for women and girls. AKF works in an integrated way in primarily in six areas: Agriculture and Food Security; Economic Inclusion; Education; Early Childhood Development; Health and Nutrition; and Civil Society.

In partnership with the Local Impact Project, in 2021, our Global Learning Partner co-developed a framework to evaluate the extent to which Human Centered Design (HCD) approach has imparted new mindsets, abilities, and ways of working. The HCD measuring framework also aims to evaluate the intended impacts HCD processes and solutions on project outcomes in terms of real-life and potential benefits innovative approaches and processes such as HCD. The HCD measuring framework is an integral part of Local Impact's MERL system. Alongside Local Impact's Performance Monitoring Framework (PMF), the HCD measuring framework aimed at better measuring the effectiveness of the HCD processes as well as its outcomes.

AKF is seeking services of a research and evaluation organization to ascertain learnings from implementation of the HCD measuring framework. Assessing learnings from implementation of the HCD measuring work, the service provider is expected to generate actionable and credible evidence and learnings to help Local Impact informed decision making for better implementation of the approach in the years ahead. It is expected that the assignment will start in January 2024 and is expected to be completed within five-six months.

LOCAL IMPACT OVERVIEW

Working together through a co-created, co-funded, and community-centered agreement, AKF and USAID are implementing Local Impact, a multiyear, multi-sector, multi-country partnership to achieve transformational development outcomes. Local Impact is a Leader with Associates (LWA) award that works with communities to:

1. catalyze inclusive economic growth and ensure basic livelihoods;
2. enhance infrastructure and access to basic services with a focus on clean energy;
3. enhance the capacity of citizens and local institutions; and
4. promote pluralism and social cohesion.

Under Local Impact, AKF and USAID engage locally, regionally, and globally and align on shared priorities. Once priorities are identified, AKF and USAID begin identifying and defining the problem and co-creating the solutions with key stakeholders including local communities, the private sector, local governments, and other donors and relevant partners. Through the co-creation process, AKF utilizes human-centered design tools and processes such as design research (including existing studies, reports, and data) and prototyping and testing solutions directly with users. Through this process, Local Impact mobilizes communities, taps into existing productive efforts at the grassroots level, scales programming on the ground, addresses drivers of unproductive social behavior, and draws out the entrepreneurial spirit and strengths of civil society and the private sector.

Before moving to scale, AKF and USAID will work with the target audience to ensure the solutions work. By piloting, testing, and iterating, AKF and USAID will learn quicker and fail faster, in the way that enterprises iterate solutions to problems that emerge for faster scaling. By learning what doesn't work through testing and piloting, the result is far more likely to be sustainable and achieve the intended goals. For the pilot, testing, and iteration phase, AKF, USAID, and relevant stakeholders—together—can either propose an Associate Award with funding clearly identified from a Mission, or they can call on a pilot pool under the Leader Award to test the solution.

Local Impact is currently being implemented in Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Afghanistan and is its 4th year of programming.

2. SCOPE OF WORK

The Research and Evaluation Organization through this learning review is expected to generate evidence in the following areas:

1. Application of HCD Methodologies Case Studies assess how design teams applied HCD methodologies as well as the effects or changes experienced among design team members (and stakeholders engaged in the design process, potentially) as a result of those methodologies.
2. HCD-Led Solution Effectiveness Evaluations consider the immediate results and effectiveness of solutions developed using HCD methodologies.

3. Understanding HCD Relative to Other Methodologies Studies look at the effectiveness of HCD solutions, the cost, timeliness, and overall value for money relative to similar interventions designed using non-HCD methodologies.
4. Review the HCD measurement framework for its relevance and coherence and provide recommendations on course-correction and further implementation.
5. Establish/strengthen relevant evaluation design to better assess the effectiveness and impacts of HCD approach.

The Research and Evaluation organization will:

1. Implement a measuring framework that can help Local Impact evaluate the impact of the Human-Centered Design (HCD) processes and solutions on project outcomes in order to better understand the real-life benefits that can be gained through the application of innovation processes such as HCD.
2. Will employ a broad array of contextually relevant data collection tools such as (1) surveys, (2) key informant and stakeholder interviews, (3) observation studies reflection processes; (4) co-design workshops and processes, (4) and structured review of materials.
3. Will co-reviewed and analyzed the data through (1) collaborative analysis and interpretation processes; (2) benchmarking case studies and (3) contribution analysis to generate communication products that are tailored to resonate with target audiences.
4. Will generate evidence of the impacts of the HCD process by measuring aspects such as:
 - changes in working culture (factors such as motivation, team collaboration and alignment, engagement and trust)
 - changes in the project outcomes (improved quality of choices, reduce risk and cost of failure)
 - changes in capacities (changes in capacity for collective action and problem solving, increased access to networks and pooled resources)
 - changes in mindsets (increased value of diversity and pluralism as drivers leading to better innovation outcomes; encourages learning mindset and action orientation)
5. Will engage multiple stakeholders including the country leadership team, Local Impact leadership team, country project management team, innovation team, design team, MERL team, community-based stakeholders, partner organizations, on-ground staff, local community members and the end-beneficiaries of the solution for a comprehensive and holistic assessment.
6. Will generate impactful, actionable evidence that supports Local Impact in assessing whether investment in innovation/co-creation has helped us achieve marginally/significantly better solution or increase in capacity of community to design and manage their own solution, which drives local impact, economic growth, quality of life, or social cohesion. This might include benchmarking the intervention against similar intervention conceived using traditional methodology to compare and contrast results.

The study will include following components for data collection:

- Collection of quantitative and qualitative data through key staff/team member interviews
- Collection of quantitative and qualitative data through key informant and stakeholder interviews
- Collection of quantitative and qualitative data through community beneficiary interviews
- Collection of Baseline and Endline data from beneficiaries of selected HCD pilots PMF
- Collection of quantitative Facility data (Facility Assessment) of sampled facilities
- Collection and analysis of secondary sources

The following indicators are expected to be collected through the interviews of team member and beneficiaries:

QUALITATIVE INDICATORS
% of project beneficiaries reporting improvements in their quality of life as a result of project interventions.
% of women able to access to program relevant locations, businesses or services, within and outside their residential locality on their own
% of individuals with better employment following participation in USG-assisted workforce development programs
% of trainees reported increased ability, skills and mindsets around HCD
% of project beneficiaries reporting increased participation in decision making at the community level

Additional indicators shall be added to the RFP based on the selection of the specific HCD solutions for the study.

HCD solutions shall be studied at three levels, first, those at the planning phase, second, during the execution/implementation phase and third those completed the pilot phase. Three different types of

3. KEY ACTIVITIES AND DELIVERABLES

The key deliverables expected from the Research and Evaluation Organization for this assignment are as follows:

- **Review** the HCD Measuring Framework and relevant innovation documents, studies and other data sources relevant to HCD work the three countries, including performance indicators and definitions identified in the project Performance Measurement Framework¹.
- **Study Plan/Inception Report²:** a detailed study plan/inception report and work plan is to be produced including the following elements:
 - Study design and methodology, including sampling strategy and proposed sample size for quantitative components
 - Sampling strategy for qualitative component, including individual respondent selection and criteria for qualitative methodologies
 - Data collection activities and approach
 - Detailed work plan that includes all tasks by the Consultant and team members and incorporating the overall study timelines³.
 - Level of effort of each team member
 - Ethical considerations
 - Detailed study budget including professional fees, expected reimbursable, etc.
 - A copy of quantitative and qualitative tools for data collection and plan for translation and/or back translation
- **Review/Finalization of data collection tools:** development of quantitative and qualitative tools for data collection and plan for translation and back translation. These tools will be reviewed during the

¹ A copy of the PMFs and other relevant documentation will be provided to the consultant prior to the inception meeting.

² The inception report is an elaborated version of the initial proposal submitted. A detailed outline for the inception report will be provided to the successful candidate(s) prior to the inception meeting.

³ Timelines will need to be coordinated with AKF country office. AKF will facilitate this with the consultant.

inception phase and must be included in the inception report/work plan.

- **Develop** Enumerator Guidelines and Protocols for Data Collection
- **Coordinate/Conduct Enumerator Training** following a detailed agenda and outlining study protocols (this agenda should be included in the inception report)
- **Ensure Data Entry Quality** by reviewing initial data entry conducted at the country level and provide feedback to Country Study Leads, where applicable
- **Analyze** qualitative and quantitative data. It is also expected that the Consultant will do a critical analysis of the data through statistical treatment and triangulation with other sources and literature review.
- **Summary** of all results to be used for external audiences.
- **Draft and final Study Reports** including Executive Summary and Full Consolidated Report. Final Report is to be submitted in both Word and PDF versions with all annexes and raw data files included. A suggested Table of Contents (ToC) will be provided by AKF.
- **Copies of original and cleaned data sets** including any field notes are to be submitted to AKF with the draft report.

4. QUALIFICATIONS OF Research and Evaluation Organization

- Minimum of 10 years of experience in administering studies, collecting data and producing quality baseline/end line study reports, preferably for international non- international non-profit organizations or multilateral agencies and multi-country studies
- Human-centered design, design thinking, systems thinking or other innovative approaches.
- Engaging various stakeholders, from government to communities, in data interpretation processes
- Demonstrated experience in designing baseline and end line studies including proven experience in sound sampling, mixed method approaches (quantitative and qualitative), tool development, enumerator training, and writing comprehensive reports for a variety of internal and external stakeholders etc.
- Excellent facilitation skills and ability to recruit and manage facilitators for qualitative component.
- Experience working with complex, multi-stakeholder partnerships and alliances.
- Engaging various stakeholders, from government to communities, in data interpretation processes
- Experience of working with development agencies including donors and implementing partners.
- Capacity and ability to work in relevant local languages such as Russian, Kyrgyz and Tajik;
- Fluency in English is mandatory and familiarity with and understanding of Tajikistan, and Kyrgyz Republic is an asset.
- Designing dissemination products for multiple audiences
- Knowledge and experience in gender issues are highly preferred.
- Ability to produce high quality work under tight timeframes.

5. APPLICATION PACKAGES AND PROCEDURES

Qualified and interested parties are asked to submit the following:

1. Letter of interest, including the names and contact information of two previous clients who can be contacted regarding relevant experience. Research and Evaluation Organization is also expected to disclose any conflict of interest related to this mandate with AKF⁴.
2. Detailed **technical proposal** clearly demonstrating a thorough understanding of this request for proposals and including the following:
 - i. Description of quantitative and qualitative methodology
 - ii. Demonstrated previous experience in mixed methods and other qualifications outlined in this RFP
 - iii. Proposed data analysis and management of performance indicators
 - iv. A proposed timeframe detailing activities and a schedule/work plan (including a Gantt chart)⁵
 - v. Team composition and level of effort of each proposed team member
2. A **financial proposal** with a detailed breakdown of costs for the study
 - i. Itemized consultancy fees/costs
 - ii. Itemized field data collection expenses
 - iii. Itemized administrative expenses
 - iv. Validity period of quotations
 - v. Expected payment plan and method
3. Curriculum Vitae(s) of all proposed staff outlining relevant experience
4. Names and contact information of three references who can be contacted regarding relevant experience
5. A copy of a previous reports of similar work undertaken on: a) baseline study; OR b) end line study
6. A Consulting Firm profile (if applicable).

Evaluation of proposals will be weighted at 75% for the technical component and 25% for the financial components.

Complete applications should be submitted only electronically to:

AKF, c/o [Azizullah Baig, Regional MERL Manager] at Azizullah.baig@akdn.org with the subject line of: 'Local Impact, Review of HCD Approach Application'

*Closing date for submission of the application package is end of business day on **Monday, February 12th, 2024***

6. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following set of criteria:

CRITERIA	MAXIMUM SCORE
Technical Component	
Demonstrated experience in conducting similar studies	

⁴ including previous involvement in the project and/or relationship with a staff member/Board member

⁵ Prior to commencement on the inception report, the successful candidate/consultant will be provided with data collection dates in order to incorporate into the inception report and plan.

Education and Technical Experience of Team	
Proposed Methodology and Approach	
Human-Centered Design experience and proposed approach	
Total Technical Component	75
Financial Component	
Realistic Costs for proposed work	
All relevant costs included to carry out proposed work	
Total Financial Component	25
	100

Proposals will be evaluated only if the complete package as outlined above is received.

7. DISCLOSURE OF INFORMATION

It is understood and agreed that the Research and Evaluation Organization shall, during and after the effective period of the contract, treat as confidential and not divulge, unless authorized in writing by AKF, any information obtained in the course of the performance of the Contract. Information will be made available for the Research and Evaluation Organization on a need-to-know basis. Any necessary field visits will be facilitated by AKF. The selected Research and Evaluation Organization will commit to respect AKF Policies.