# Request for Proposals for Data Collection services

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Contract** | USAID/Mali Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Platform |
| **Funded by** | United States Agency for International Development (USAID),  Contract No. 720-688-23-C-00002 |
| **Activity** | Computer-Assisted Telephone Interview (CATI) Services |
| **RFP Number** | 2024-4 |
| **RFP release date** | October 2, 2024 |
| **Deadline for questions** | October 15, 2024 |
| **Deadline for submission of proposal and budget** | November 1, 2024 |
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| **Geographic Code** | 935 |
| **Cooperating Country** | Mali |

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# Project Background

Social Impact (SI) is a Washington, DC-area international development management consulting firm. SI’s mission is to improve the effectiveness of international development programs to improve people’s lives. SI provides a full range of management consulting, technical assistance, and training services to strengthen international development programs, organizations, and policies. SI provides services globally in the areas of monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning, project, and program design, organizational capacity building, and gender and social analysis. SI services crosscut all development sectors including democracy and governance, health and education, the environment, and economic growth. SI’s clients include US government agencies such as USAID, the Millennium Challenge Corporation, and the US Department of State; bilateral donors; multilateral development banks; foundations; and non-profits.

SI’s official home page is: <http://www.socialimpact.com/>

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) /Mali Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Platform is a five-year activity awarded to Social Impact, Inc. (SI) to provide technical and advisory services to design and carry out various monitoring, evaluation, and learning activities for USAID/Mali. The contract has 3 major components.

1. Third-Party Monitoring (TPM);
2. Evaluation Services and Surveys; and
3. Collaborating, Learning, and Adaptive Management and Communication Services.

# Scope of work

**Activity Background**

As part of the TPM, the SI team has been tasked to develop an Assumptions and Risk Tracking System (ARTS) to provide USAID with a contextual understanding of Mali’s ever-changing trajectory to adapt to the U.S. Government’s development and humanitarian assistance in Mali. This requires examining data from the national to the commune level, using indicators that measure the state of wellbeing and reporting when communes are getting better or worse under each prioritized scenario. With this information, USAID/Mali will review its preparation and mitigation efforts taken to date through its programs and adjust and adapt efforts to better position activities to the changing situation and needs. As part of this effort, the activity will monitor trigger indicators based on three possible scenarios: 1) Mali’s political transition, 2) Crisis and resilience, and 3) Pandemic and socio-economic conditions.

To accomplish this, three ARTS surveys are administered quarterly and ask respondents the same questions every three months, thereby providing USAID staff with a quick sense of public sentiments on key issues of interest to the Mission.

## Firm Request

SI seeks to engage a data collection firm for the ARTS surveys (hereinafter referred to as "subcontractor"). The resulting subcontract will be a firm fixed-price contract with an expected period of performance of November 2024 to March 2025. The initial contract will cover one round of the survey in late 2024 (N=2250), with the possibility of extending the contract to include additional nationally-representative surveys on a quarterly basis based on performance. These specifications describe the technical requirements for data collection for the ARTS survey.

Data Collection Activities

The SI team will lead the design of the survey, which will be built around a nationally representative survey. SI is looking for a firm capable of conducting a telephone survey using a pre-identified list of phone numbers, random digit dialing, or a similar method. The subcontractor will be responsible for identifying and training call center supervisors and interviewers, planning and executing all tasks required for data collection, and operationalizing various quality assurance processes before, during and after data collection.

### Sample Design

The target population is the adult population of Mali. The target sample size for this population is 2,250 individuals. Because the survey is long, at over 75 questions, SI anticipates needing to split the survey into two modules, with each module being administered to 1125 individuals.). The Subcontract should propose a sampling approach for this population that comes as close as possible to representativeness, with coverage in all regions of Mali. If possible, the Subcontractor will design and implement a sampling approach that covers the 19 regions + Bamako implemented as of 2023[[1]](#footnote-2).The SI team expects to use post-stratification weighting to ameliorate any remaining sample imbalances.

### Instrumentation

### The SI team will provide the telephone questionnaire in English. Subcontractor will be responsible for translation into French, Bambara, and any other needed languages. The time estimated for the survey is 20 minutes. Offeror will advise on whether remunerating respondents with a small amount of phone credit is necessary, appropriate, and feasible.

The SI data collection team will program the survey into SurveyCTO and provide access to the server for the Subcontractor’s use. If the Subcontractor prefers an alternative platform or arrangement, this should be explicitly noted in the quotation, along with a detailed explanation of the proposed alternative. Any deviations from the use of SurveyCTO will be subject to SI's review and approval to ensure compatibility with project requirements and data quality and security standards.

## Planning Tasks

The data collection firm will be responsible for the following planning tasks prior to fieldwork:

1. **Workplan**: Subcontractor shall develop a detailed work plan and schedule within one week of finalization of this SOW. The document will detail key aspects of technical and managerial approaches, including the expected duration and sequencing of tasks, logistics, staffing/team composition, team roles/responsibilities, respondent sampling, data collection, data quality assurance protocols, data analysis and reporting. The workplan will include quotation for the entire components of the survey. Finally, the document shall outline any areas for which subcontractor requires support from the SI team.
2. **Sampling**: The subcontractor shall develop a detailed sampling plan within two weeks of finalization of this SOW for the SI team’s review and approval. The Subcontractor should also outline this plan in their response to this proposal.

The Subcontractor will begin all interviews with a set of eligibility questions including region, gender, age, place of residence (urban, peri-urban, rural) and other relevant variables.

The subcontractor will use a quota system to ensure that the sample required for the telephone survey is distributed among the regions in proportion to their population size.

1. **Planning**: Subcontractor is responsible for all aspects of data collection planning, including identifying and organizing validated cellphone and sampling plan. Note that data collection activities must be compliant with policies regarding local ethics. Any changes to the administration of the survey need to be communicated with the SI Team.
2. **Comment on data collection protocols**: Subcontractor shall review and provide feedback on the SI Team’s data collection protocols, to ensure that they are properly contextualized, and to ensure that SI Team has properly considered likely eventualities.
3. **Comment on instruments**: The SI team will provide instruments to Subcontractor for review. The subcontractor will review and provide feedback on all instruments, suggesting revisions for context, flow, or other aspects.
4. **Translation of instruments**: The subcontractor will translate instruments to French and any other needed languages. The instruments should be translated and independently back-translated to English to ensure meaning is retained in translation. SI reserves the right to review the back-translation for accuracy, appropriateness and fidelity of the original meaning.
5. **Survey Programming:** The SI team will be responsible for programming the survey into SurveyCTO. Subcontractor will be responsible for ensuring the use of SurveyCTO compatible smartphones equipped with phone audio available for audio audits. SI will include various automated data quality assurance checks, such as survey timestamps, GPS location checks, and audio audits. As requested, Subcontractor will test the programmed survey instruments to ensure survey fidelity and adherence to required skip-patterns.
6. **Pre-testing**: Subcontractor shall conduct pre-testing for all data collection instruments prior to training. Pre-testing is focused on the flow, translation, and logic of the instrument. Subcontractor shall conduct a pre-test with a sample similar to but not part of the final sample, with an eye towards representation across key demographic targets (i.e. urban vs rural, gender, age, etc.). The Subcontract should propose a sample size for the pretest; the SI team estimates that approximately 50 would be sufficient. After completing the pre-test, Subcontractor shall hold debriefing sessions in which any difficulties or problems with the survey will be identified. The subcontractor shall communicate any proposed changes to the SI team and after approval the questionnaire will be modified.
7. **Training/Field Manual**: The subcontractor will develop a manual for supervisors and enumerators. These should contain basic information like i) background on the project, ii) enumeration best practices, iii) the instrument itself, iv) metadata and tracking protocols, etc. The SI team will review the manual, ask clarification questions, make suggested revisions in tracked changes, and subcontractor share revised manual with the SI team at least five business days prior to the start of training.
8. **Staff training**: All supervisors and call center operators involved in the data collection are required to receive training prior to data collection from the data collection firm. The training shall be comprised of classroom (in-person) as well as practice sessions administering surveys.
9. **Communication**: The SI team requests recurring meetings before, after, and during data collection to conduct quality control and provide managerial oversight.

## **Field Work Tasks**

The Subcontractor must check all surveys carefully against documented minimum standards, and any cases that do not meet various quality control procedures (described below) will have to be removed from the final data file. Any interviews removed for non-compliance with protocols will be readministered by the Subcontractor with no additional compensation.

**Supervisors**: At all times during training and data collection, Subcontractor will maintain a minimum supervisor to call center operators ratio. One supervisor may not supervise more than ten call center operators.

**Callbacks**: In the event that a respondent is not available for an interview, enumerators must make at least three additional attempts before the respondent can be considered unavailable. Each of these four attempts must be at different times of the day and at least one should be made on a weekend. All attempts must be clearly documented.

**Response Rate**: Subcontractor shall calculate and communicate the response rate with the SI team. This is important for the SI team to account for sampling bias.

**Completion Rate:** The Subcontractor shall provide statistics for completed surveys and those from abandoned ones.

**Communication:** Throughout the project, meetings will be held weekly between the SI team and the subcontractor to discuss issues and the progress of the survey. It is the responsibility of the subcontractor to identify and communicate problems at all phases of engagement with the SI team. Minor problems should be corrected on site, as long as they do not alter the scope of services or increase costs. More significant problems should be reported to the SI team and discussed collaboratively before corrective action is taken, which may require an amendment to the subcontract.

## Quality Assurance, Respondent Protection and Data Security

Overall Quality Assurance:

Subcontractors will be required to conduct quality control, at minimum following the requirements listed below. SI will be conducting independent quality assurance for the duration of this activity. Subcontractors will be required to respond in a timely manner to SI questions regarding data quality control and other measures of data quality assurance.

Subcontractor

Data Quality Assurance processes are required in real-time during all phases of this engagement. The Subcontractor shall implement quality control measures to ensure a high level of enumerator performance. A full description of these measures and the results of the quality control must be included in the final technical report. Subcontractor shall ensure that every respondent can be matched to a questionnaire and a call center operator. For each verification conducted, a brief verification form should be completed. The SI team may request to review these forms. Subcontractor shall describe how they will conduct quality control during data collection, at minimum, following the requirements listed below.

• Daily team debriefs: Subcontractor will schedule daily check-ins with supervisors, and call center operators 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.

• Supervisor checks: Supervisors will check their teams’ forms before they are submitted to the server, to ensure completeness and spot-check for errors.

• Accompaniment: Subcontractor Shall ensure that at least 5% of interviews are directly observed by the SI team. All interviewers should be directly observed at least once during the first week of data collection. Observations will be summarized in an accompaniment form developed by the SI team.

• Back-checks: The Subcontractor shall conduct telephone back-checks for the telephone on 5% of the total sample. The sample for the set of backcheck will be provided by the SI team. Back-check will be administered using an instrument developed by the SI team. Back-check surveys should not be made available to enumerators. Back-checks should be conducted by separate teams from the enumerators.

• Logbook: Enumerators should always record relevant information on what happens during calls, such as contact and call-back details in a digital logbook (on tablet). SI team will approve the logbook before its use and data will be uploaded to the Social Impact server (as with interview data). The logbook should also contain all the information required for calculating response rates. This log should include information on all attempted contacts. Information needed for response rate calculation for the telephone survey includes total numbers of the following:

o No contact (i.e., telephone numbers that were dialed a total of four times, but no response was obtained).

o Subscriber that answers call refuses to answer eligibility questions.

o Subscriber that answers call is not an eligible respondent.

o Subscriber that is eligible does not consent to participate in survey.

o Survey terminations (survey begins, but never completed)

o Survey completions

• Audio audit: Subcontractor shall record the calls for auditing purposes. The subcontractor shall randomly audit 5% of the calls for each enumerator. Moreover, during the data collection SI team will review a set of audio samples to evaluate how enumerators administer the questionnaire.

• Supervisors must provide a weekly report based on the information included in the logbook to the Subcontractor for each of the communities they call. The Subcontractor will then relay this information SI team in a weekly report.

• Piloting: The SI team requests the Subcontractor to submit a pilot dataset and short summary of issues prior to full data collection, through which issues will be resolved collaboratively.

SI Team

SI staff will perform independent Quality Assurance activities during the entire evaluation, including, at a minimum, the following actions:

• Survey programming quality control: SI Team will program various quality control measures into the electronic survey. These may include speed limits, logic checks, or audio audits. The final set of quality control measures will be agreed upon by the SI team and Subcontractor during preparations for data collection and finalization of the instruments.

• Independent weekly quality checks of the data downloaded directly from the server, summarizing any questions or feedback for subcontractor from each check. Subcontractor will be required to respond to these questions within 1-2 business days of receiving them.

• In-person supervision at call center during data collection by SI team member assigned. The SI team shall be allowed access to the call center to perform both announced and unannounced spot visits to monitor operators and check on general progress.

## Respondent Protection and Data Security:

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

All field staff and telephone call center operators 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).

Subcontractors will ensure proper measures are taken in the field to monitor enumerators’ behavior with respect to respondent protection and data security (including interviewing, handling of devices, etc.).

## Timeline and Deliverables

The base period of performance will be from award through March 30, 2025, with possibility for renewal to conduct additional nationally-representative surveys on quarterly basis through 2027. Data collection is expected to take four weeks starting mid-December, with training of all staff taking place starting early December (the firm should propose the precise schedule).

The selected firm will submit the following deliverables on the following timeline. As with all complex projects, the timeline is preliminary and subject to change.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Tasks | Description | Anticipated Deadline |
| Work Plan | Subcontractor is responsible for developing a detailed work plan and schedule within 1 week upon award. The contents of the document will be agreed with SI after contract award and will, at minimum, detail the following aspects of data collection approach: expected duration and sequencing of tasks, staffing/team composition, team roles/responsibilities. Subcontractor should submit a quotation considering the sampling approaches. The Work Plan should outline any areas for which Subcontractor requires support from the SI Team. | Nov 29, 2024 |
| Comment on instrument and data collection protocol | Subcontractor will provide feedback to SI on the data collection protocols and instruments to ensure that they are properly contextualized | Dec 2, 2024 |
| Sampling | The Subcontractor is responsible for developing a detailed sampling plan to be submitted to SI for review and approval within two weeks of finalization of this SOW. The sampling plan will outline the Subcontractor’s approach to identifying a sampling frame of subscribers in target areas, to sampling a subset of numbers for dialing, and their plans for operationalizing the quota system and other measures needed to ensure the required sample sizes in each geographic area are achieved. | Dec 6, 2024 |
| Translated Instruments | The Subcontractor will translate the English version of the instruments provided by SI into French, Bambara and any other necessary local languages. | Dec 6, 2024 |
| Final Training Manual | The Subcontractor will provide the training manual for SI’s review and make any necessary changes prior to training. | Dec 6, 2024 |
| Pre-Testing Report | This report will describe the activities undertaken during the pre-testing of the instruments and identify problems, solutions, and the way forward. | Dec 13, 2024 |
| Weekly Progress Report & Weekly Progress Calls | This report will cover activities undertaken during the period, progress made, 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. Weekly reports should include statistics on completion rates and response rates. Meetings will be held weekly between the SI team and the subcontractor to discuss issues and the progress of the survey. | Weekly (Dec 16-Jan 3) |
| Completed Survey | The Subcontractor shall upload the surveys in real time to Social Impact server using SurveyCTO. The subcontractor will also submit a short report of any data quality issues including a response to any issues raised by SI | Daily (Jan 10) |

# **Submission Instructions**

Offerors are responsible for ensuring that their offers are received by SI in accordance with the instructions, terms, and conditions described in this RFQ. Failure to adhere with instructions described in this RFP may lead to disqualification of an offer from consideration.

## Questions

Questions regarding the technical or administrative requirements of this RFP may be submitted no later than the deadline and to the contact specified on page 1. Questions must be submitted in writing; **phone calls will not be accepted**. Questions and requests for clarification—and the responses thereto—that SI believes may be of interest to other offerors will be circulated to all RFP recipients who have indicated an interest in bidding.

Only the written answers issued by SI will be considered official and carry weight in the RFP process and subsequent evaluation. Any verbal information received from employees of SI or any other entity should not be considered as an official response to any questions regarding this RFQ.

## Offer Deadline and Protocol

Offers must be received no later than the deadline and to the contact specified on page 1. Please reference the RFP number in any response to this RFQ. Offers received after the specified time and date will be considered late and may be considered only at the discretion of SI.

The firm must submit a proposal and budget in English. The proposal must follow the following outline (maximum 7.5 pages, plus annexes):

1. Background and Past Performance (summarize the organization’s professional experience, the organization’s suitability based on the required and preferred qualifications, plus annex with three references) (maximum 1 page)
2. Technical approach to the task (including any technology) (maximum 3 pages)
3. Proposed approach to quality assurance and data security (maximum 1.5 pages)
4. Description or outline of proposed, a) weekly reports, b) logbooks, and c) data collection report (maximum 1 page)
5. Management, staffing, and logistics plan, including a plan for rapid mobilization (maximum 1 page)
6. Draft work plan with key milestone and timelines (submitted as an annex)
7. Budget (see attachment Annex A for budget template and instructions)

## 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.

# Evaluation and Award

An award may be made to one or more responsible offeror(s) who follow the RFP instructions, meet the eligibility requirements, and is selected via a trade-off analysis judged to offer best value based on application of the following evaluation criteria

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Maximum Points** |
| Past performance - *Did the offeror describe at least three experiences providing similar products and services? Did the offeror provide three positive references?* | 15 |
| Overall strength of the technical approach - *Is the offeror able to meet the specifications included in the “2. Description of Services”? Is the offeror able to offer all type of equipment/services requested in the “2. Description of Goods/Services”?* | 20 |
| Strength of the quality assurance and data security approach | 20 |
| Ability to rapidly mobilize | 10 |
| Strength of the management, staffing, and logistics plan | 20 |
| Cost Reasonableness - *Is the offeror’s pricing realistic and reasonable?* | 15 |
| **Total** | **100** |

**Please see Annex A for budget template and instructions**

# Terms and Conditions

## Offer Validity

Offers must remain valid for not less than ninety (90) calendar days after the offer deadline.

## Best Offer Quotations

Best-offer quotations are requested. It is anticipated that award will be made solely based on these original quotations. However, SI reserves the right to conduct negotiations with and/or request clarifications from any offeror prior to award.

## Taxes and VAT

The agreement under which this procurement is financed does not permit the financing of any taxes, VAT, tariffs, duties, or other levies imposed by any laws in effect in the Cooperating Country. No such Cooperating Country taxes, VAT, charges, tariffs, duties or levies will be paid under an order resulting from this RFQ.

## Source and Nationality

All goods and services offered in response to this RFPor supplied under any resulting award must meet **USAID Geographic Code** 935 in accordance with the United States Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), [22 CFR §228](https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/CFR-2015-title22-vol1/pdf/CFR-2015-title22-vol1-part228.pdf). The cooperating country for this RFP is specified on the cover page of this RFQ.

Offerors may not offer or supply any commodities or services that are manufactured or assembled in, shipped from, transported through, or otherwise involving any countries which are deemed ineligible by the US 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.

## Payment Terms

SI’s standard payment terms are net 30 days after receipt and acceptance of an approved invoice, and submission of deliverables if applicable. Payment will only be issued to the entity submitting the offer in response to this RFP and identified in the resulting award; payment will not be issued to a third party.

## Additional Terms and Conditions

This is an RFP only. Issuance of this RFP does not in any way obligate SI or its client to make an award, nor does it commit SI or its client to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal.

By submitting a response to this RFQ, the offeror understands that SI’s client is not a party to this solicitation and the offeror agrees that any protest hereunder must be presented—in writing with full explanations—to SI for consideration, as SI’s client will not consider protests regarding procurements carried out by implementing partners. SI, at its sole discretion, will make a final decision on the protest for this procurement.

This solicitation is subject to SI’s standard terms and conditions. Any resultant award will be governed by these terms and conditions; a copy of the full terms and conditions is available upon request.

SI may cancel this RFP at any time.

# Annex A: bUDGET

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Line Item** | **Description** | | **Unit** | **Qty** | **Unit Price**  [enter currency] | **Total Price**  [enter currency] |
| 1 | **Labor Category Name** | | Hour |  |  |  |
| 2 | **Labor Category Name** | | Day |  |  |  |
| 3 | **Air travel from X to X** | | Each |  |  |  |
| 4 | **Per Diem in X** | | Day |  |  |  |
| 5 | **Ground Transportation** | | Day |  |  |  |
|  | | **Subtotal:** | | | |  |
|  | | **Tax/VAT:** | | | |  |
|  | | **Delivery Costs:** | | | |  |
|  | | **Other Costs (Describe: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_):** | | | |  |
|  | | **GRAND TOTAL** [enter currency]**:** | | | |  |

# Annex B: Past Performance

1. Describe your experience relevant to this RFP or similar activities:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Description of Activities** | **Period of Performance** | **Location** | **Client Name** | **Total Contract Value [enter currency]** |
| 1 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |  |  |
|  | Add additional rows as needed |  |  |  |  |

1. Provide names of references and specify your consent authorizing SI to reach out to references:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| # | **Reference Name** | **Reference Contact Information** | **Relevance of the Reference to this RFP (how the reference is known to offeror)** |
| 1 |  |  |  |
| 2 |  |  |  |
| 3 |  |  |  |
|  | Add additional rows as needed |  |  |

# Annex C Evidence of responsibility

*Company Letterhead*

**Evidence of Responsibility**

*Company Name*

*Company Name* (hereinafter “Company”)makes the following statements with respect to Contractor Responsibility:

1. Company has adequate financial resources to perform the contract, or the ability to obtain them;
2. Company is able to comply with the required or proposed delivery or performance schedule, taking into consideration all existing commercial and governmental business commitments;
3. Company has a satisfactory performance record;
4. Company has a satisfactory record of integrity and business ethics;
5. Company has the necessary organization, experience, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills, or the ability to obtain them (including, as appropriate, such elements as production control procedures, property control systems, quality assurance measures, and safety programs applicable to materials to be produced or services to be performed by the prospective contractor and subcontractors);
6. Company has the necessary production, construction, and technical equipment and facilities, or the ability to obtain them; and
7. Company is qualified and eligible to receive an award under applicable laws and regulations.

I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

*Signature*

*Name*

*Title*

*Company Name*

1. If this is not feasible, the subcontractor shall propose an approach that uses the 10 regions + Bamako instead [↑](#footnote-ref-2)