

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Subject RFP #:	CATALYZE-EDU-2024-0114
RFP Issue Date:	3 April 2024
Terms of Reference / Specifications:	
Project	CATALYZE Innovative Blended Finance
The Company	Palladium International, LLC
Country of Performance	Paraguay
Closing Date and Time	3 May 2024
Questions Deadline	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted at catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com by 16 April 2024 <input type="checkbox"/> N/A
Bidders' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Details for Submission	Submissions will be accepted: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronically: email to catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com

Offer Validity Period	120 days

Thank you for your interest in the above procurement. As implementer for the CATALYZE Innovative Blended Finance Project funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Palladium invites you to submit a proposal for the scope of work attached in Annex A. Your proposal must be valid for the Validity Period.

Please email your notice of intention to submit a proposal by the Questions Deadline. Answers to questions shall be distributed to all offerors that have indicated an intention to submit a proposal by the deadline.

Please submit your proposal in accordance with the Details for Submission above by the Closing Date and Time. This RFP in no way obligates Palladium to award a contract nor does it commit Palladium to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal. Palladium bears no responsibility for data errors resulting from transmission or conversion processes.

Yours sincerely,

CATALYZE Procurement Team

Terms and conditions

1. Proposal Conditions

By submitting a proposal, potential suppliers are bound by these terms and conditions. Potential suppliers must submit offers with all details provided in English and with prices quoted in a single currency.

2. Proposal Lodgement

The Company may grant extensions to the Closing Time at its discretion. The Company will not consider any quotes received after the Closing Time specified in the RFP unless the Company determines to do so otherwise at its sole discretion.

3. Evaluation

The Company may review all proposal to confirm compliance with this RFP and to determine the best proposal in the circumstances.

4. Alterations

The Company may decline to consider a proposal in which there are alterations, erasures, illegibility, ambiguity or incomplete details.

5. The Company's Rights

The Company may, at its discretion, discontinue the RFP; decline to accept any proposal; terminate, extend or vary its selection process; decline to issue any contract; seek information or negotiate with any potential supplier that has not been invited to submit a proposal; satisfy its requirement separately from the RFP process; terminate negotiations at any time and commence negotiations with any other potential supplier; evaluate proposals as the Company sees appropriate (including with reference to information provided by the prospective supplier or from a third party); and negotiate with any one or more potential suppliers.

6. Amendments and Queries

The Company may amend, or clarify any aspect of the RFP prior to the RFP Closing Time by issuing an amendment to the RFP in the same manner as the original RFP was distributed. Such amendments or clarifications will, as far as is practicable be issued simultaneously to all parties.

Any queries regarding this RFP should be directed to the Contact Person identified on the cover page of this RFP.

7. Clarification

The Company may, at any time prior to execution of a contract, seek clarification or additional information from, and enter into discussions and negotiations with, any or all potential suppliers in relation to their proposals. In doing so, the Company will not allow any potential supplier to substantially tailor or amend their proposal.

8. Confidentiality

In their proposal, potential suppliers must identify any aspects of their proposal that they consider should be kept confidential, with reasons. Potential suppliers should note that the Company will only agree to treat information as confidential in cases that it considers appropriate. In the absence of such an agreement, potential suppliers acknowledge that the Company has the right to disclose the information contained in their proposal.

The potential supplier acknowledges that in the course of this RFP, it may become acquainted with or have access to the Company's Confidential Information (including the existence and terms of this RFP and the TOR). It agrees to maintain the confidence of the Confidential Information and to prevent its unauthorised disclosure to any other person. If the potential supplier is required to disclose Confidential Information due to a relevant law or legal proceedings, it will provide reasonable notice of such disclosure to the Company. The parties agree that this obligation applies during the RFP and after the completion of the process.

9. Alternatives

Potential suppliers may submit proposals for alternative methods of addressing the Company's requirement described in the RFP where the option to do so was stated in the RFP or agreed in writing with the Company prior to the RFP Closing Time. Potential suppliers are responsible for providing a sufficient level of detail about the alternative solution to enable its evaluation.

10. Reference Material

If the RFP references any other materials including, but not limited to, reports, plans, drawings, samples or other reference material, the potential supplier is responsible for obtaining the referenced material and considering it in framing their proposal. And provide it to the Company upon request.

11. Price/Cost Basis

Prices or costs quoted must show the tax exclusive price, the tax component and the tax inclusive price.

The contract price, which must include any and all taxes, supplier charges and costs, will be the maximum price payable by the Company for the Goods and/or Services.

12. Financial information

If requested by the Company, potential suppliers must be able to demonstrate their financial stability and ability to remain viable as a provider of the Goods and/or Services over the term of any agreement.

If requested by the Company, the potential supplier must promptly provide the Company with such information or documentation as the Company reasonably requires in order to evaluate the potential supplier's financial stability.

13. Referees

The Company reserves the right to contact the potential supplier's referees, or any other person, directly and without notifying the potential supplier.

14. Conflict of interest

Potential suppliers must notify the Company immediately if any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest arises (a perceived conflict of interest is one in which a reasonable person would think that the person's judgement and/or actions are likely to be compromised, whether due to a financial or personal interest (including those of family members) in the procurement or the Company).

15. Inconsistencies

If there is inconsistency between any of the parts of the RFP the following order of precedence shall apply:

- (a) these Terms and Conditions;
- (b) the first page of this RFP; and
- (c) the Schedule

so that the provision in the higher ranked document will prevail to the extent of the inconsistency.

16. Collusion and Unlawful Inducements

Potential suppliers and their officers, employees, agents and advisors must not engage in any collusive, anti-competitive conduct or any other similar conduct with any other potential supplier or person or quote any unlawful inducements in relation to their proposal or the RFP process.

Potential suppliers must disclose where proposals have been compiled with the assistance of current or former the Company employees (within the previous 9 months and who was substantially involved in the design, preparation, appraisal, review, and or daily management of this activity) and should note that this may exclude their proposal from consideration.

Potential suppliers warrant that they have not provided or offered any payment, gift, item, hospitality or any other benefit to the Company, its employees, consultants, agents, subcontractors (or any other person involved in the decision-making process relating to this RFP) which could give rise to a perception of bribery or corruption in relation to the RFP or any other dealings between the parties.

17. Jurisdiction

This RFP shall be subject to the laws of the District of Columbia, United States of America. The language of the arbitration will be English.

The Potential Supplier and the Company will use their best efforts to settle amicably any dispute, controversy, or claim arising out of, or relating to this RFP or the breach, termination, or invalidity thereof. If no agreeable settlement can be found, any dispute, controversy, or claim arising out of or relating to this RFP or the breach, termination, or invalidity thereof, shall be settled by mediation through the American Arbitration Association by filing a request for mediation with the AAA and the other party. The Parties will be bound by any arbitration award rendered as a result of such arbitration as the final adjudication of any such dispute.

Company Information

Palladium is a global leader in the design, development and delivery of Positive Impact — the intentional creation of enduring social and economic value. We work with corporations, governments, foundations, investors, communities and civil society to formulate strategies and implement solutions that generate lasting social, environmental and financial benefits.

Project Background

The CATALYZE Blended Finance Mechanism is a \$250 Million, 8-year contract (5-year base period, with a single 3-year option period) which uses a facilitated partnership model to craft solutions to crowd in \$2 Billion in blended finance (i.e. blended concessional and commercial finance) to USAID partner countries and initiatives.

CATALYZE allows USAID Bureaus and Missions to efficiently deploy investment facilitation solutions that respond to the needs of specific sectors, issues, and geographies. Initial programs focus on education finance to implement sustainable education business models serving low-income communities, and achievement of women's economic empowerment objectives, but the mechanism can be applied to any development challenge or region.

Purpose

The CATALYZE EduFinance ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) activity is a one-stop hub for cross-sectoral ECCE models. It currently works in Ethiopia, Honduras, India, Liberia, Malawi, Paraguay, Rwanda, and South Africa to further the goal of increasing access to low-cost, quality childcare and education specifically for children ages 0-6. The activity will build an evidence base around effective models for expanding equitable access to high-quality ECCE. The activity strives to learn how expanded access to high-quality ECCE can drive improved learning and development outcomes in children, increase women's empowerment, and create decent jobs, especially in the care sector.

Globally, women engage in the labor force at substantially lower rates than men, with an average of 50 percent for women working compared to 80 percent for men (World Bank, 2022; J-PAL, 2023). One major contributor to this disparity is the disproportionate amount of childcare and household responsibilities placed on women. Not only do women lack the time to engage in the labor force due to unpaid domestic responsibilities, but the (World Bank, 2022) practice of women working outside the home, especially married women, is considered unacceptable in many societies (de Santos, 2022). Provision of affordable childcare, changes in attitudes towards women working outside the home, and shifts in family roles related to childcare and other household responsibilities can support women to increase their engagement in the labor force (Devercelli & Beaton-Day, 2020; J-PAL, 2023). Both children's welfare and women's ability to engage meaningfully in employment are linked to norms around women's roles in the home, in relation to childcare, and in the workforce.¹

A complete scope of work is attached as Annex A.

Type of Contract

Palladium intends to issue a Firm Fixed Price subcontract to the selected offeror.

Anticipated Contract Period of Performance

May 2024 – May 2025

Place of Performance

The activities to be performed under this contract will take place in Paraguay. See the Instructions for Submission of Cost Proposal for travel assumptions.

Key Deliverables and Timeline

¹ https://www.alignplatform.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/align_-_report-wee-digital.pdf
ARBP PC01 GL01 TL02 Request for Proposal

Deliverable Number	Deliverable	Proposed Payment Percentage	Proposed Due Date
1	Implementation workplan	10%	2 weeks after award
2	Session materials finalized, shared with ECCE team at least 3 weeks before start date	25%	3 weeks before session facilitation
3	Pre-session survey completed	5%	TBD – please include in proposal
4	Facilitation of sessions related to childcare and parenting responsibilities, women’s decision-making, and domestic violence	45%	TBD – please include in proposal
5	Post-session survey completed	5%	Within 1 month of session finalization
6	Final report with findings and recommendations	10%	2 weeks before close of subcontract

Instructions to Offerors

Separate technical and cost proposals must be submitted by email no later than the time and date specified on the cover page.

1. Technical Proposal

For the technical proposal, the offeror must submit:

- (a) Cover letter with the following information:
 - 1. Firm contact info and address
 - 2. Type of company or organization
 - 3. Unique Entity Identification (UEI) Number (Company must have a UEI number or obtain one within 5 days of being notified of selection)
 - 4. Signed by an authorized representative of the company
- (b) Background on the firm and relevant expertise (max 2 pages)
 - a. Annexes of samples of session materials and citations backing up methodology proposed in technical proposal
- (c) Description of relevant projects previously performed by the firm, demonstrating expertise in positive parenthood, community strengthening, attitudes around division of labor, harm mitigation, and guided facilitation (max 4 pages)
- (d) Past Experience Information/Capability Statement
- (e) CVs of personnel involved in the delivery of this program
- (f) Technical Proposal & Management Approach

- a. Proposed work plan showing how the firm would execute this project, including a timeline (max 2 pages)
- b. A detailed proposal for their training and harm mitigation strategy
- c. GANNT chart for trainings conducted over period of performance
- (g) Contact details for three referees (max 1 page)
- (h) All supporting documentation specified below in the pass/fail evaluation criteria.

2. Cost Proposal

Offerors must submit a cost proposal. CATALYZE will provide a budget template upon request through catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com. The cost proposal consists of:

- (a) Budget in Microsoft Excel with all formulas visible (unlocked)
- (b) Accompanying Word Document with all cost assumptions and explanations

Key assumptions

- Budget in USD
- All prices are to be inclusive of relevant taxes
- Separate unit cost and number of units
- Break down activity costs into as much detail as possible
- Offeror should budget for:
 - Defense Base Act (DBA) insurance in accordance with FAR 52.228-3, as applicable.

The selected offeror will be required to complete the Due Diligence Questionnaire (attachment 1) and provide a UEI number within 5 days of being notified of selection.

Submission of Offers

Electronic proposals must be submitted by sending two separate emails, one for technical proposal and one for cost proposal with the RFP number in the subject lines. If submitting in hard copy, the technical proposal and cost proposal must be in separate sealed envelopes. Mark envelopes with the RFP number and offeror’s name. Ensure all required documents are attached. The RFP number can be found on the cover page.

Offers received past the deadline stated on the cover page will be deemed non-responsive and will not be considered for award.

Evaluation and Award Process

Proposals will be evaluated using a best value trade off methodology. This is a three-stage process.

- (1) The first set of criteria is graded on a pass/fail basis. Offerors must meet the following minimum eligibility qualification criteria and provide supporting documentation:

	Requirement	Supporting Documentation
(a)	Must have experience working in Paraguay; registered legal entity in Paraguay for a minimum of one year desired	Copy of certificate or articles and memorandum of associate
(b)	Must not have any active exclusions from the working with the US government (www.sam.gov), the UN (Sanctions List), or	N/A

	the US Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control	
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(2) If these minimum criteria are met, the offer's technical proposal will be evaluated as follows:

Evaluation Criteria	Documents Evaluated	Points
Experience working with men and women in Paraguay on intra-household dynamics and attitudes around division of unpaid labor	Technical proposal, samples of past sessions facilitated	20
Experience implementing evidence-based programming to support positive male engagement in household activities and the support of women's economic advancement and working outside the home	Technical proposal, samples of past sessions facilitated	15
Demonstrated understanding of family dynamics like religion and culture that affect women's economic advancement, wellbeing, and domestic / care responsibilities	Technical proposal, samples of past sessions facilitated	20
Ability to deliver sessions in multiple departments (Guairé, Misiones, Presidente Hayes, Central, Alto Paraná, Concepción, Asunción, and San Pedro) within Paraguay	Personnel CVs, technical proposal	20
Ability to incorporate domestic violence and harm mitigation into program design	Technical proposal, samples of past sessions facilitated	25
TOTAL		100

(3) The offeror's cost proposal will be evaluated for:

- Proposed total price, relative to other offers received
- Realism and reasonableness of the work to be performed
- Price reflects a clear understanding of the requirements
- Price is consistent with various elements of the technical proposal
- Compliance with USAID cost principles (select one: Non profit entities – Cost Principles in 2 CFR 200 Subpart E or For profit entities – Cost Principles in FAR Part 31)

Palladium reserves the right to award under this solicitation without further negotiations. The offerors are encouraged to offer their best terms and prices with the original submission.

PROCUREMENT INTEGRITY AND ETHICS

It is Palladium's Policy that no gifts of any kind and of any value be exchanged between vendors/contractors and Palladium personnel. Discovery of the same will be grounds for disqualification of the vendor/contractor from participation in any Palladium's procurements and may result in disciplinary actions against Palladium personnel involved in such discovered transactions.

Resulting Award

This RFP in no way obligates Palladium to award a contract. Palladium may opt to select multiple offers in response to this RFP.

Any contract/purchase order resulting from this solicitation must be signed by both parties in order to be considered valid and in force. All costs associated with, but not limited to, production, preparation and/or delivery of goods or services, including deliveries, accepted by Palladium staff, without a fully executed (signed by both parties) contract/purchase order, are at the vendor's risk only. Palladium shall not pay for any costs, without limitation, associated with production, preparation or delivery of goods and/or services under this or any other contract/purchase order, which has not been signed by both parties.

If your proposal is successful, you will be required to enter into the Company's standard contract for the types of goods or services being provided. In the provision of the Goods and Services, you will be required to comply with the Company's policies, including (without limitation) its Business Partner Code of Conduct and any relevant client terms and conditions. Potential suppliers must also comply with the Company's Business Partner Code of Conduct in the submission of any proposals pursuant to this RFP.

If you are bidding as part of a joint venture, partnership or similar, please make this clear in your submission. Likewise, if you propose to subcontract any part of the goods or services provision, then disclose this fact within your submission. The Company may require additional information from you and approval for subcontracting will not be automatic as subcontractors will be subject to Palladium's Due Diligence process.

Attachments

Please review the additional documentation and proposed contracts terms and conditions which should be given consideration when preparing your proposal. By submitting your bid you will certify that that you are in agreement with the contract terms and conditions as included in this solicitation and that all prices include all aspects of the required compliance with the terms and conditions of the proposed contract.

Attachment 1- Due Diligence Questionnaire

Attachment 2- FFATA Form (will be required only for successful offeror, where applicable – included for awareness only)

Palladium Business Partner Code of Conduct and Child Protection Guidelines can be downloaded in full at: <http://www.thepalladiumgroup.com/policies> or request through email from Catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com

Annex A: Scope of Work

The goal of this scope of work is to develop and implement a series of evidence-based interactive sessions that address attitudes and behaviors around men and women's roles in childcare, home and work in order to improve women's livelihood outcomes, including enhanced economic resources (e.g., higher pay and schedule flexibility),

intra-household dynamics (e.g. women's bargaining power, time use, decision-making) and well-being (e.g., mental and physical health in households with children ages 0-6 enrolled in the CATALYZE ECCE centers. These centers are located in 10 departments in Paraguay and deliver quality childcare and education for families from rural, underserved or otherwise marginalized communities. Approximately half of the 52 centers will offer these sessions, to be determined in collaboration with the CATALYZE programming and monitoring and evaluation teams. This programming will build off of the subcontractor's previous work, with an emphasis on developing the curriculum based on the frequency or duration of prior sessions, lessons learned from earlier technical interventions or needs assessments conducted.

The main objective of these sessions is to positively shift household dynamics and how male household members perceive women's workforce participation and economic advancement, including through support of women in the workforce (e.g., in higher paying, flexible and/or formal sector jobs), equity in household decision-making and division of labor (e.g., increased male engagement in childcare responsibilities that also support children's development)², and improvements to women's physical and mental wellbeing. From discussions with local partners and Palladium's experience working on workforce training programs in Paraguay, Paraguay in recent years has also seen a spike in "conservative values" which could threaten gains made by women in entering the labor force, even though the gender gap in labor force participation in Latin America has closed the most compared to other regions (World Bank, 2022). Barriers to equitable access to economic opportunities creates cyclical patterns of women taking on most childcare and domestic duties, and these duties reinforcing household and community dynamics that inhibit women from seeking new income-generating opportunities.

Specifically, these interactive sessions will facilitate dialogue around topics such as roles in the home vs. workforce, intra-household dynamics and division of labor related to household responsibilities such as childcare, bargaining power, and domestic violence. The sessions may consist of a combination of community groups with men and women together, breakout groups, remote groups with support from technology-supported messaging (e.g., WhatsApp groups), and/or other appropriate formats. The sessions should follow evidence-based practices of what works for addressing local norms, such as a strong basis in behavioral sciences, highly participatory programming, etc.

An external impact evaluation will measure the effects of these interventions on the extent to which female caregivers pursue more highly paid, flexible and formal sector roles, changes in intra-household dynamics and drive improvements in physical and emotional wellbeing. The project will be required to collaborate, support, and provide data to the IE firm. For these sessions, we are including the following general parameters:

- Conduct surveys on attitudes around attitudes and behaviors related to men's and women's roles in division of paid and unpaid labor and related intra-household dynamics before and after trainings, disaggregated by sex.
- Engage caregivers and household members on topics such as positive parenting and labor distribution within and outside households where they can observe, provide feedback, and practice applicable skills and approaches.
- Work with caregivers and household members to develop plans for more equitable involvement in domestic labor and support for women's engagement in income-generating activities. Create peer groups (in person or virtual) to enable household members to reflect on their progress and troubleshoot their struggles.
- Conduct sessions specifically on male engagement including in relation to fatherhood, male household member involvement in childcare, and intra-parent dynamics within households, with an emphasis on positive engagement from male household members and driving a shift in their behavior. Role play and/or videos of real-life positive household engagement and fatherhood should be used to ensure practice is grounded in realities of these roles.

² The USAID REAL Fathers program documented a direct link between involving fathers in positive parenting (decrease in harsh physical punishment/yelling and partaking in more aspects of childcare) with bettered intra-household dynamics, decreased instances of domestic violence, and positive relationships between male caretakers and children. https://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/PA00ZPQM.pdf

- Conduct session(s) with female caregivers on domestic violence, including the signs and the resources available to them. As these sessions could result in disclosure of assault or abuse, a trained counselor will be present to offer support during or after sessions and manage referrals.
 - Ensure hotlines and government resources are available and contact information and anonymity guarantees are shared during each session.
- Conduct session(s) with male caregivers on domestic violence – managing anger, redirecting frustrations away from partner(s) and children, finding positive outlets, leading to an expansion of conception of “acceptable” male behaviors and responsibilities .
 - Ensure hotlines and government resources are available and contact information and anonymity guarantees are shared during each session.
- Conduct session on household financial management, specifically including both male and female caregivers in decision-making. Demonstrations, feedback and question sessions, and roleplay practice sessions will be included in each module.

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1	Implementation workplan	10%	2 weeks after award
2	Session materials finalized, shared with ECCE team at least 3 weeks before start date	25%	3 weeks before session facilitation
3	Pre-session survey completed	5%	TBD – please include in proposal
4	Facilitation of sessions related to childcare and parenting responsibilities, decision-making, and IPV	45%	TBD – please include in proposal

Deliverable Number	Deliverable	Proposed Payment Percentage	Proposed Due Date
5	Post-session survey completed	5%	Within 1 month of session finalization
6	Final report with findings and recommendations	10%	2 weeks before close of subcontract