

## Amendment to Request for Proposal

**Amendment number:** 1  
**Reference Request for Proposal Number:** RFP-CATALYZE-Edu-2024-0124

**Amendment effective date:** 22 July, 2024

**Description of Amendment:**

1. This amendment serves to modify the questions deadline for one week from August 1 to August 8, 2024.

# Request for Proposal (RFP)

Subject RFP #:	RFP-CATALYZE-Edu-2024-0124
RFP Issue Date:	July 10, 2024
Project	CATALYZE Innovative Blended Finance
The Company	Palladium International, LLC
Country of Performance	Paraguay
Closing Date and Time	August 8, 2024
Questions Deadline	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Accepted at <a href="mailto:catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com">catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com</a> by July 22, 2024 at 5 pm
Bidders' Conference	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> N/A
Details for Submission	Submissions will be accepted: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Electronically: email to <a href="mailto:catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com">catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com</a>
Offer Validity Period	60 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 International LLC is a leading global consulting firm that manages nearly \$2 billion in donor-funded projects in more than 90 countries while simultaneously providing management consulting advice to private sector firms and local and national governments throughout the world. It is well-known for its work in private sector development, market systems, innovative/inclusive finance, and the formation of public-private alliances. Palladium adds value by aligning business interests with development objectives, leveraging donor resources with commercial assets and vice versa. This market-driven approach ensures interventions are impactful, inclusive, and address the root causes of today's biggest development challenges while also being sustainable beyond the life of a particular donor-funded program.

## **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 the W-GDP objectives, but the mechanism can be applied to any development challenge or region.

## **Purpose**

Palladium seeks to engage individual consultants or an organization to support the implementation (e.g., interview, code, analyse) of in-depth qualitative interviews in Paraguay as part of the ongoing CATALYZE's ECCE impact evaluation activities in the region to improve women's employability, physical and emotional well-being, and household dynamics.

The selected consultants/organization will work with Palladium's evaluation team to support the final design of qualitative instruments, be responsible for field work and all data collection, coding, and analysis; and producing the draft of the qualitative findings report.

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**

The period of performance of this contract is expected to be October 2024 to August 2025. In-depth interviews are expected to occur in November/December 2024 and June/July 2025, and the contract is expected to be put in place in time to allow for preparation.

## **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

Complete list of deliverables can be found in Annex A.

## 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)
- (c) Past Experience Information/Capability Statement
- (d) Technical Proposal & Management Approach
- (e) Proposed work plan showing how the firm would execute this project including a timeline which includes all deliverables listed in Annex A (max 2 pages)
- (f) Description of relevant projects previously performed by the firm, demonstrating expertise in managing community-based research or evaluation studies in Paraguay, experience with women and economic development or livelihoods, and demonstrated experience in conducting individualized developmental and/or learning assessments with young children (max 4 pages)
- (g) Contact details for three referees (max 1 page)
- (h) All supporting documentation specified below in the pass/fail evaluation criteria.

Note: GSA has developed a useful interactive PDF tool that guides through the most common scenarios about UEI ([https://www.fsd.gov/sys\\_attachment.do?sys\\_id=af05f8fb1b44851006b09796bc4bcb6d](https://www.fsd.gov/sys_attachment.do?sys_id=af05f8fb1b44851006b09796bc4bcb6d))

### 2. Cost Proposal

Offerors must submit a cost proposal. CATALYZE will provide a budget template upon request through [catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com](mailto: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
- (c) Submission of deliverables table as seen in Annex B with the proposed price of each deliverable.

#### 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:

	<b>Requirement</b>	<b>Supporting Documentation</b>
(a)	Must be a registered legal entity in Paraguay for a minimum of one year	Copy of certificate or articles and memorandum of associate
(b)	Must not have any active exclusions from the working with the US government ( <a href="http://www.sam.gov">www.sam.gov</a> ), the UN (Sanctions List), or the US Department of the Treasury Office of Foreign Asset Control	N/A

(2) If these minimum criteria are met, the offer's technical proposal will be evaluated as follows:

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Documents Evaluated</b>	<b>Points</b>
Experience in organizing and managing large community-based research or evaluation studies	Past Experience Information/Capability Statement, Description of relevant projects previously performed by the firm	20
Research/evaluation experience in Paraguay, preferably related to women and economic development or livelihoods	Past Experience Information/Capability Statement, Description of relevant projects previously performed by the firm	20
Experience in conducting individualized developmental and/or learning assessments with young children	Past Experience Information/Capability Statement, Description of relevant projects previously performed by the firm	20
Experience in quantitative statistical analysis	Past Experience Information/Capability Statement, Description of relevant projects previously performed by the firm	20
Proven ability to lead on-time, quality data collection, data entry, and data analysis	Past Experience Information/Capability Statement, Description of relevant projects previously performed by the firm, Technical and Management Approach	10
Ability to hire and supervise skilled enumerators and supervisors.	Past Experience Information/Capability Statement, Description of relevant projects previously performed by the firm, Technical and Management Approach	10
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>100</b>

(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](mailto:Catalyze.procurements@thepalladiumgroup.com)

## Annex A: Scope of Work

### SCOPE OF WORK Qualitative Research Consultants CATALYZE ECCE LAC—Paraguay

#### A. COMPANY OVERVIEW

Palladium International LLC is a leading global consulting firm that manages nearly \$2 billion in donor-funded projects in more than 90 countries while simultaneously providing management consulting advice to private sector firms and local and national governments throughout the world. It is well-known for its work in private sector development, market systems, innovative/inclusive finance, and the formation of public-private alliances. Palladium adds value by aligning business interests with development objectives, leveraging donor resources with commercial assets and vice versa. This market-driven approach ensures interventions are impactful, inclusive, and address the root causes of today's biggest development challenges while also being sustainable beyond the life of a particular donor-funded program.

#### B. PROJECT AND BUY-IN OVERVIEW

**Palladium International, LLC** is implementing the \$250 million, 8-year USAID CATALYZE contract which offers a facilitated partnership model that will craft solutions to crowdsource \$2 billion in blended finance (i.e., blended concessional and commercial finance) to USAID partner countries; it can work in any development sector or region.

The **CATALYZE Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) activity** aims to enhance access to low-cost and high-quality ECCE which unlocks inclusive development, improving child outcomes, promoting women's economic empowerment, enhancing family welfare, and driving overall economic growth. ECCE seeks to fill the gap in education that nearly 593 million children below primary school age currently experience; specifically, they lack access to appropriate childcare in emerging economies, constraining human capital growth. Meanwhile, women, who assume an estimated 75% of childcare responsibilities worldwide are often unable to pursue economic opportunities given care responsibilities. As a result, 606 million women worldwide are excluded from the global labor force, with consequent impacts on productivity and economic growth.

The gap in access to high-quality ECCE results from both supply and demand-side constraints. While the public sector provides ECCE in most markets, coverage is often incomplete or poorly aligned with household needs. Non-state, including private, faith-based, philanthropically supported, and community-led ECCE are an important complement to government provided ECCE, but non-state ECCE providers are scarce in many markets. Barriers to offering non-state ECCE services include inconsistent or fragmented registration and accreditation requirements, limited access to financing, and limited profitability given substantial operating costs resulting from high caregiver-child ratios. Even when childcare providers exist, accessible options are often low-quality due to a lack of trained professionals in the field. On the demand-side, many families do not access ECCE due to high cost, low-quality provision, misalignment between existing services and their needs, and cultural norms discouraging use of childcare outside the home.

In addition to expanding equitable access to high-quality ECCE to improve learning outcomes for children and improving livelihood outcomes for women, the ECCE Family of Investments aims to building an evidence base around the most effective models and approaches for leveraging multi-stakeholder investment and innovation to reach these goals. These interventions serve as the innovation incubator aimed at providing evidence to clarify how blended finance approaches and public-private partnership models can efficiently improve outcomes for young learners and their families.

#### C. OBJECTIVE and PURPOSE OF ECCE LAC—Paraguay

The LAC-Paraguay buy-in has two components. The first is ECCE focused and aims to:

- **Increase equitable access to ECCE.** Per [USAID's How -To Note on Developing High-Quality Pre-Primary Programs](#), all children between ages 3-6 should have at least one year of steady access to quality ECCE (where availability is limited), but children should ideally be enrolled in ECCE for two to three years. Likewise, access to quality ECCE is also important for younger children between 0-3 as it provides a safe, nurturing environment for care and quality education outside the home, enabling



female caregivers pursue economic opportunities. Access is defined along the following five key dimensions:

- **Availability:** ECCE should be available during hours that facilitate the engagement of women in the formal labour force, although half-day programs are not inappropriate for improving children’s learning and development outcomes.
  - **Accessibility:** High-quality ECCE services targeting children ages 0-6 should be present in urban, peri-urban and rural communities, and households should not be required to put forth undue effort to use ECCE services.
  - **Accommodation:** ECCE service provision should be adapted to address the specific needs of the poor, children with disabilities, and ethnic or religious minorities between ages 0-6.
  - **Affordability:** The cost of ECCE should be commensurate with household income levels in a given community such that no children are unable to attend on the basis of cost.
  - **Acceptability:** Social norms should not stigmatize the use of ECCE services or otherwise hamper women’s ability to access childcare.
- **Improve program quality.** “Program quality” includes issues of structural quality such as teacher training (see also below), class size/student-teacher ratio, access to adequate nutrition, and the physical safety of the learning environment. Program quality also encompasses process quality; for example, are curricula developmentally appropriate? Are there positive teacher-student interactions? Does the program follow play-based pedagogy with appropriate learning materials readily available? Do ECCE providers appropriately engage with families and communities to encourage better learning outcomes, etc.? Is the provider using validated metrics to monitor and evaluate learning and child development? Is the provider using regular formative assessment data to inform the provision of education including appropriate play?
  - **Support the professionalization of ECCE providers.** Per the USAID How-To Note, a pre-primary “teacher” is anyone who leads a group of children with the aim of improving their early learning skills, including people recognized by an authority as a professional, as well as those who are not. This could include teachers, teaching assistants, facilitators, paraprofessionals, care providers, volunteers, etc. Ideally “teachers”, as broadly defined above, would receive specialized pre- and in-service training, and be guided by a professional competency framework that details the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behaviors needed to provide quality ECCE. Professionalization also includes strengthening management practices and establishing payment systems for teachers, among other tasks.
  - **Design and promote market-based solutions that increase formal employment and self-employment opportunities both inside and outside the ECCE sector.** The workforce in the care economy (including ECCE) is largely female and offers employment and income generation opportunities for women who expand affordable childcare to underserved communities. Additionally, expanded access to high-quality ECCE may enable female caregivers to access childcare to pursue income-generating opportunities outside the ECCE sector.

The second ECCE LAC/Paraguay Activity, funded by the Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment Hub (GenDev) at USAID, will support activities focused on intrafamilial dynamics related to roles and engagement in both domestic/household labor and childcare and economic activities among female caregivers and male partners or household members. This component aims to:

- **Increase women’s advancement, economic security, and empowerment** (formality of sector, pay, and women’s flexibility, e.g., with schedules).
- **Increase intrahousehold impacts**, including but not limited to bargaining power, IPV, and time use (both paid and unpaid for women and men).
- **Improve wellbeing**, including but not limited to, physical and mental health, and stress.

#### D. THE EVALUATION

CATALYZE ECCE is conducting an impact evaluation in Paraguay of activities designed to improve women’s employability, physical and emotional well-being, and household dynamics. The evaluation has a quasi-experimental design and is focusing on the impact of having young children in CATALYZE ECCE centers,

and of female caregivers of children participating in CATALYZE ECCE activities and their male household members participating in intrafamilial dynamics activities around women's workforce participation and men's engagement in domestic labor and childcare. The evaluation is focusing on female caregivers and their children (mother/child dyads). It is being conducted in several locations throughout Paraguay.<sup>1</sup> Female caregivers will be surveyed, and a development and learning assessment will be administered to their young children in approximately, June/July 2024 and June/July 2025. In addition, CATALYZE ECCE is conducting implementation research on changes in access to and quality of ECCE services over the course of the Activity. Data collected about ECCE centers, teachers and classrooms will be collected in approximately June/July 2024 and June/July 2025.

These quantitative assessments will be supplemented by in-depth qualitative interviews with a small sample (n=20 women and 20 men) of female caregivers of children attending CATALYZE ECCE centers (with and without family dynamics engagement activities) and male household members. These interviews will be conducted at or around the end of the 2024 school year in November/December, to learn about caregivers' experiences with ECCE, including their perspectives on service quality, accessibility, and any notable challenges or difficulties in these areas. The interviews will also include questions regarding economic position, change in employment, shifts in intra-household dynamics, overall physical and emotional wellbeing, and the wellbeing of their children enrolled in ECCE centers, to help better understand and contextualize findings from the quantitative baseline assessment and interpret changes from baseline to endline.

In addition to the in-depth interviews with women and men in November/December 2024 (n=40 in total), the evaluation will also include interviews with ECCE center in approximately June/July 2025. At this time, the plan is to conduct in-depth interviews with 10 center directors and 10 teachers (one each, in each of 10 centers selected for the intervention and evaluation). This information will be used to capture insights on service quality, accessibility, relevance, sustainability, and changes in teacher capacity. Also, at two points in time, in approximately November/December 2024 and in about June/July 2025, approximately 20 semi-structured interviews are planned with policymakers, government representatives, project team members, and USAID officials, to provide insights into intervention relevance and sustainability.

## **E. TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

Palladium intends to engage individual consultants or an organization to support the implementation (e.g., interview, code, analyze) of the in-depth qualitative interviews in approximately November/December 2024 and June/July 2025. The selected consultants/organization will work with Palladium's evaluation team to support the final design of the qualitative instruments, be responsible for field work and all data collection, coding, and analysis, and produce the draft of the qualitative findings report. The following is a list of specific activities to be provided by the consultants/organization:

1. Review and provide input to the qualitative interview guides;
2. Ensure the interview guides are appropriate to the Paraguay context; include Guaraní as needed for localization;
3. Pre-test the interview guides;
4. Finalize the interview guides after pre-testing - in Spanish, and Guaraní;
5. Obtain IRB approval in Paraguay, and support US-IRB submission;
6. Coordinate and manage all fieldwork activities, including transportation and lodging (if needed), while ensuring that the protocol is carefully followed;
6. With support from Palladium's evaluation team, develop an analysis plan and a priori codebook;
8. Conduct the interviews;
9. Transcribe audio-recordings;
10. Code and analyze the data using the analysis plan agreed upon with Palladium's evaluation team, using a qualitative analysis software package such as NVivo or Atlas.Ti and synthesize thematic data to respond to the research questions;

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<sup>1</sup> The departments of intervention are Asunción, Central, Misiones, Presidente Hayes, Itapúa, San Pedro, Alto Paraná, Caagazú, and Guairá.

11. Draft the qualitative analysis report, with narrative text summarizing the themes and specific quotes presented to demonstrate common themes and outlying viewpoints, and finalize it after receiving feedback from Palladium's evaluation team; and
12. Support Palladium's evaluation team in dissemination activities such as dissemination meetings and webinars.

## F. DELIVERABLES AND REPORTING

If an organization is selected, it will be responsible for all of the following deliverables. If multiple consultants are selected, they will be paired together by Palladium and will share responsibility for Activity deliverables. The consultants/organization will be required to submit reports and deliverables as per their contract and Scope of Work. Deliverables will include:

- Inception report, with detailed planning on all aspects of the work
- Data collection instruments in Spanish (and Guaraní as required)
- Local Paraguay IRB approval
- Pilot testing report with recommended changes to data collection instruments
- A priori codebook
- Report of fieldwork
- Final codebook
- Final audio recordings
- Final transcripts
- Final qualitative study report after feedback from Palladium evaluation team and USAID.

The organization/consultants will be required to submit reports and deliverables as per their contract and Scope of Work. Deliverables can be found in the table below. Each deliverable must be submitted within two weeks of completing the relevant task and must be approved by the PI or Co-PI. The contracting mechanism for this RFP will be a fixed-price deliverables-based consulting agreement for individuals or fixed-price deliverables-based subcontract for organizations.

#	Deliverable Name	Acceptance Criteria	Due Date	% Payment of Total Contract Value
1	Inception report, with detailed planning on all aspects of the work	Approval of PI or co-PI		10%
2	Data collection instruments, in Spanish (and Guaraní as needed)	Approval of PI or co-PI		10%
3	Local Paraguay IRB approval	Approval of PI or co-PI		5%
4	Pilot testing report with recommended changes to data collection instruments	Approval of PI or co-PI		5%
5	A priori codebook	Approval of PI or co-PI		10%
6	Report of fieldwork for November/ December 2024	Approval of PI or co-PI		5%
7	Final codebook for November/ December 2024	Approval of PI or co-PI		5%
8	Final audio recordings for November/ December 2024	Approval of PI or co-PI		5%

9	Final transcripts for November/ December 2024	Approval of PI or co-PI		5%
10	Final qualitative study report for November/ December 2024 after feedback from Palladium evaluation team and USAID.	Approval of PI or co-PI		10%
11	Report of fieldwork for June/July 2025	Approval of PI or co-PI		5%
12	Final codebook for June/July 2025	Approval of PI or co-PI		5%
13	Final audio recordings for June/July 2025	Approval of PI or co-PI		5%
14	Final transcripts for June/July 2025	Approval of PI or co-PI		5%
15	Final qualitative study report for June/July 2025 after feedback from Palladium evaluation team and USAID.	Approval of PI or co-PI		10%

## G. MINIMUM/PREFERRED REQUIREMENTS

Palladium will engage two or more individuals in Paraguay, who will undertake the work jointly, or one organization. They can submit separate offers for this RFP. They must fulfill the following minimum requirements:

- Qualitative research expertise with demonstrated success in Paraguay implementing all phases of qualitative research, including: research design, participant identification, scheduling of interviews, in-depth interviewing, note-taking, transcription of recordings and translation from Guaraní to Spanish when needed, qualitative data analysis and data cleaning, and report writing. The successful candidate will be able to ensure the collection of high-quality qualitative data, using rigorous methods and upholding standards of ethical research.
- Experience conducting research in Paraguay with service providers and with community members. Experience conducting research with women, rural, and marginalized populations preferred.
- Ability to work in a multicultural, dynamic and agile environment with changing requirements and priorities.
- Strong time management and attention to detail.
- Ability to work independently and solve day-to-day problems.
- Strong interpersonal, writing, and oral presentation skills.
- Intuitive ability to relate and connect with people from different cultures, orientations, and operating lens (political, technical, funder, business partner, etc.).
- Fluency in Spanish - working proficiency in Guaraní.
- The successful candidate must be able to accept international bank wire payments.

## H. MONITORING

The consultants/organization will collaborate closely with, and be monitored by, the Palladium evaluation team. Palladium will embed principles of equity in the partnership with the consultants/subcontractor, e.g., will build opportunities for two-way technical mentorship into the evaluation timeline.

## I. PERIOD OF PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY TIMING

The period of performance of this contract is expected to be October 2024 – August 2025. In-depth interviews are expected to occur in November/December 2024 and June/July 2025, and the contract is expected to be put in place in time to allow for preparation.

## Annex B: Deliverables Table for Cost Proposal

#	Deliverable Name	Proposed Payment Amount
1	Inception report, with detailed planning on all aspects of the work	
2	Data collection instruments, in Spanish (and Guaraní as needed)	
3	Local Paraguay IRB approval	
4	Pilot testing report with recommended changes to data collection instruments	
5	A priori codebook	
6	Report of fieldwork for November/ December 2024	
7	Final codebook for November/ December 2024	
8	Final audio recordings for November/ December 2024	
9	Final transcripts for November/ December 2024	
10	Final qualitative study report for November/ December 2024 after feedback from Palladium evaluation team and USAID.	
11	Report of fieldwork for June/July 2025	
12	Final codebook for June/July 2025	
13	Final audio recordings for June/July 2025	
14	Final transcripts for June/July 2025	
15	Final qualitative study report for June/July 2025 after feedback from Palladium evaluation team and USAID.	

Please refer to the table in Annex A that provides the range and estimates of the payment schedule proposed by Palladium. The offeror should return this table with the proposed payment amount per deliverable as part of the cost proposal accordingly.