

RFP for Concept Research for AIM Project BRAC International

1. Background

BRAC International is a leading non-profit organisation with a mission to empower people and communities in situations of poverty, illiteracy, disease, and social injustice. Our approach is grounded in the conviction that people living in vulnerable situations can be agents of change if they are empowered with the tools, skills, and hope they need to change their lives. We design proven, scalable solutions that equip people with the support and confidence they need to achieve their potential. BRAC's institutional expertise on successfully implemented programmes is applied across 10 countries, touching the lives of over 130 million people, where our models are adapted according to the country's context.

In 2022, the Mastercard Foundation in partnership with BRAC International (BI) will be announcing an initiative that will create positive and measurable impact for 1.2 million adolescent girls and young women and 9.5 million people across seven countries in East and West Africa, including Ghana, Kenya, Liberia, Rwanda, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Uganda. The programme has the following objectives:

- (i) To increase the agency and voice of 1.2 million AGYW aged 12-35 to make decisions and act on their aspirations
- (ii) To enhance community engagement, particularly of men and boys, to support and advance the empowerment of 1.2 million AGYW living in AIM programme areas
- (iii) To economically empower 1.19 million aged 15-35 to engage in and benefit from decent and sustainable livelihoods
- (iv) To empower 1.19 million AGYW aged 15-35 to advocate for their rights
- (v) To create an enabling ecosystem where key stakeholders including policy and decision-makers are supportive of the social and economic advancement of AGYW

The programme follows an integrated programme implementation approach. At the core of the implementation, modality is BRAC's microfinance footprint. Microfinance is an associated community network providing both the base and accelerator for social and economic interventions to operate at scale by integrating interventions to unlock the potentials of AGYW. BRAC's proven development models will be implemented in a coordinated way for purposeful synergies of impacts - Ultra-Poor Graduation (UPG) and Empowerment and Livelihood for Adolescents (ELA), among others.

Theory of the change (ToC) of the project was constructed based on an interactive process among the partners and some feedback from the community participants and the national level policy actors. However, given the multi-sectoral large scale nature of the project across diverse contexts of countries, it is deemed necessary to have some common operational definitions of the main concepts used in its ToC. The **operational definitions of the main concepts like improved quality of life, dignified employment, agency, and gender equity** should be researched from the perspective of young people especially AGYW, the primary beneficiary of the project. The purpose of this concept research is to ensure a common understanding by the primary stakeholders about the main terms to be used during project implementation, M&E, and other comparative learning documentation.

BRAC intends to conduct this concept research analysis as part of its inception works for the programme. This RFP is inviting interested consultant firms to submit a proposal to conduct this analysis in four countries - Sierra Leone, Liberia, Tanzania, and Uganda.

2. How to Apply and a follow-up communication

▪ Application formats

Bidders may choose any standard application contents/format for their application. However, it is recommended that the application should address these basic components below:

- A cover letter explaining the reasons for applying and their understanding of the context and the task.
- A technical proposal outlining their understanding of the subject matter, the scope of the study, methods, sampling detailed, related data collection protocols and data analysis plan and report writing plan.
- The technical proposal should also explain how the consultant will operate their activities in the Covid-19 uncertainties
- The technical proposal also requires an activity Gantt chart
- The budget of the consultant needs to be clearly stated and justified. The budget of the assignment should include every cost required for the deliverables. BRAC will deduct any required tax at source according to the applicable national and international law.
- Profile of the consultant (bidder/vendor/service provider) or curriculum vitae (if an individual) outlining relevant skills and experience meeting the requirements. If it is a firm applying, the details of the core team should be provided.
- Any time limitations or constraints to your availability during the proposed period should be clearly stated.
- Two professional references should be provided (name, designation, address, and contact info) who could be contacted to comment on the organization/individual applying for this task.

Address:

The bidders can apply via email where they send their application in a zip file to procurement-logistics.uganda@brac.net

The deadline of the submission is 20 March 2022.

Questions and answers

Communication or persuasion to influence the selection process in any form will disqualify the candidacy for the assignment. All questions related to this RFP awarding process should be addressed exclusively to procurement-logistics.uganda@brac.net

3. Eligibility, RFP timeline, and assessment criteria

▪ Eligibility

Any organization or individual that has a professional track record of conducting PEA at the country or cross-country level or similar studies can apply to the call. Some specific eligibility criteria are as below –

- Extensive research experiences in macro-level gender, equity, dignified life, and empowerment and understanding of youth empowerment issues, policies, approaches, and stakeholder analysis.

- Track record of strong analytical and publication skills and knowledge of qualitative and quantitative impact evaluation methods.
- If the applicant is a firm, the names of the leading researcher/s for each country will have to be specified with confirming their availability for the study.
- The bidders can apply for a single country, several countries, or all four countries. Those who intend to work in multiple countries, need to explain how and who will be the core team for each country. The capacity statement of the bidder/s must describe their capacity for each country separately and the capacity statement must mention the name, affiliation, contact (email & mobile), and short biography of the lead researcher/s for each country.
- Consortium covering all four or more than one country is encouraged. However, in-country teams under the consortium should be formed mostly with national researchers.
- The team must consist of African researcher(s) and any team with exclusively African researchers is preferred.

▪ **RFP timeline**

Advertisement/ LTM period	9-20, 2022
Service delivery agreement signed	1 April 2022
Draft report submission date	20 May 2022
Final report submission date	10 June 2022

▪ **Proposal assessment grid**

The proposals will be assessed by a cost and quality principle in the following manner.

Relevant experience and team composition	30%
Quality of technical proposal and work plan	40%
Financial/Cost Proposal	30%

4. Scope of the deliverables and activity timeline

▪ **Scope and process for the deliverables**

The consultant in discussion with BRAC will revisit to decide the concepts to be researched for their operations definitions. The concepts referred to in this RFP (improved quality of life, dignified employment, agency, and gender equity) are more for examples than for propositions. These operation definitions of the main terms should be defined more from the operation perspective of the AIM project than their academic meaning. The relevance and comments of the primary beneficiaries and the stakeholders are more definitive defining criteria than their other meaning. The outcome of this concept research is to propose functional definitions of different concepts based on a grounded understanding of these concepts from the AGYW perspective and within communities. The purpose and scope of this analysis can be highlighted as below –

- To identify the concept and terms used in the theory of change of the project which require a customised operational definition.
- To document the youth's relevance and understanding about the concepts.
- To propose the operational definitions of the concepts to use them during project implementation, M&E, documentation, and communication across countries.

- **Methodology**

While the bidders are encouraged to propose the best-fit research methods they can bring in, there are some broad outlines for consideration. This qualitative cross-sectional study is primarily expected to be based on primary data. Secondary data e.g. literature review should be used more to consolidate the terms from the perspective of academic meaning and other organisational usages. The project documents and related other organisational documents will be some mandatory reading.

The bidders should propose how they will collect the youth’s perspective from the project area and the national perspective to propose the operational definitions of the concepts relevant for the AGYW and accepted by the key stakeholders.

- **Activity Gantt chart outline**

The table below shows the main activities, timeline, and comments. The bidders are encouraged to adjust according to their technical proposal and transform this into an activity Gantt chart in more details.

Activities	7 d	15 d	30 d	45 d	60 d	67 d	75 d	Comments
Finalise the methodology as co-design								Method & tools need to be finalise in discussion with BRAC
Secondary data collection								The consultant conducts the literature review.
Primary data collection								Consultant collects primary data to complement the secondary data.
Data validation & draft report								Consultant validates data & submit a draft report
Feedback fed into and final report								BRAC provides feedback &the consultant submits the final report.

2. Reporting, performance assessment, and finance

The consultant will report to the Head of Operations (Research) or any assigned person by BRAC. Consultant’s performance will be assessed along with the consultancy duration particularly the quality of research tools and protocols, their timely implementation, time commitment, and meeting the scope and objective of the task. Other conditions like incidental liability, intellectual property, non-disclosure policy, ethical standard and data protection protocol, and safeguarding policy will be applicable as per BRAC’s related policies.

The maximum budget threshold for four countries is USD 48,000.