



AIMS

African Institute for
Mathematical Sciences

NEXT EINSTEIN INITIATIVE

The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program at the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences Final Evaluation and Phase II Program Design

Questions & Answers

18 November 2020

Question	AIMS Response
1. Is there a maximum budget?	AIMS does not provide a specific budget ceiling for this assignment. Interested consultants and firms are invited to present an <i>indicative</i> budget, based on the scale and scope of the described assignment. This will be further reviewed and discussed with shortlisted applicants.
2. Are there any other budget requirements (e.g., format.) that offerors should consider?	AIMS requests that applicants separate consultancy fees (no. of days x daily rate per consultant/team member) from any expected expenses (i.e. materials, equipment etc.) in the proposed budget. However, given that this assignment is expected to be undertaken remotely, expenses are expected to be negligible.
3. Is there a level of effort estimated for the team?	As outlined in Terms of Reference, AIMS expects a team of at least three consultants to undertake the assignment over approximately 15 weeks. AIMS invites interested applicants to calculate the specific level of effort required by each team member, based on the scale and scope of the assignment.
4. Given the uncertainty of travel, should the offeror budget for site visits and site visit reports?	No, interested applicants are requested to budget for the assignment to be undertaken entirely <u>remotely</u> . If, however, it is deemed safe to travel and undertake site visits, AIMS will cover all relevant travel expenses (i.e. flights, airport transfers, accommodation, meals etc.).

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5. Will the contract for the final evaluation and program design be a firm fixed price contract? If not, what form will it take? Could you please share a sample contract with draft contract terms and conditions?	The contract is expected to be a firm fixed contract with payments made upon the successful achievement of agreed milestones. If expenses are foreseen (see above), they must be pre-approved by AIMS and will be reimbursed at cost.
6. Considering the COVID-19 pandemic, is there are preference for the mode of fieldwork? We have a presence in East Africa and can do this face-to-face, but it would be good to know if there is a preference? If both online and face-to-face modes are acceptable, can we cost these as two options for consideration?	Given the current COVID-19 pandemic and uncertainty around the safety and feasibility of in-person meetings and travel, it is advised that interested applicants plan to undertake the assignment entirely <u>remotely</u> , and budget accordingly.
7. Can MCF/AIMS expand on its value for money evaluation criteria?	In brief, AIMS will be looking for the most economical, efficient, and effective use of the budget available to achieve the intended objectives of the assignment.
8. The RFP indicates that the consultant is expected to put forward a “proposed budget, modalities of delivery, and governance/program management requirements” for a follow-on program design. Do you expect offering organizations to have the capacity and/or be able to draw on direct experience implementing such a program? Will firms without institutional experience with program design be considered so long as consultant team members with relevant experience are included on their team?	While applicants aren’t necessarily required to have the capacity or direct experience in <i>program implementation</i> , they must demonstrate previous and relevant experience in <i>program design, development and evaluation</i> of complex Pan-African programs. This could be either institutional experience or the individual experience of a particular team member.
9. For document review, what role will MCF/AIMS play in facilitating access to relevant documents and records within partner organizations?	AIMS will facilitate access to all relevant documents and records, as necessary.
10. To what extent is MCF/AIMS available to assist the evaluation team in obtaining secondary data sources in-country (e.g., EMIS data)?	AIMS will work with its host country government partners to provide all relevant secondary data, as necessary.

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11. To what extent can MCF/AIMS make contact information available to the evaluation team for current/former AIMS staff, scholar program partners, scholars, teacher trainers, teacher trainees, teacher training college administrators, and/or schools where teacher trainees are placed?	AIMS will provide all relevant contact information for staff, partners, scholars, trainers, teachers, and administrators etc., as needed, and provide introductions wherever possible.
12. The RFP mentions the use of “secondary data and information sources.” Can MCF/AIMS describe what data could be made available for these purposes (e.g., academic records, alumni tracer surveys, internal M&E data, etc.)?	The relevant data and information to be shared with the selected consultants/firm includes, but is not limited to, program proposal, annual work plans and budgets, theory of change, baseline survey report, mid-term evaluation report, impact report, Scholars database (current students and past alumni), alumni survey reports, partnership agreements, performance measurement framework, biannual progress reports, financial forecasts, AIMS Annual Reports (narrative and financial), AIMS Strategic Framework 2021-2026, and Mastercard Foundation’s Africa Works Strategy.
13. Is a copy of the midline evaluation available to prospective bidders? It does not seem to be available online, and will constitute an important reference point for the end line evaluation design.	The mid-term evaluation report will be made available to the selected consultants/firm.
14. Is there already a draft design of the second phase of the Scholars Program at AIMS that will be shared with the winning firm, or should they/we develop the design from scratch?	No, there is <i>no</i> draft design for Phase II. There has been some initial, internal thinking on the nature of a second phase and what the key components might be – AIMS will share the internal report capturing this insight with the successful firm/team of consultants.
15. When developing the design for the second phase of the Scholars Program at AIMS: Are you looking for it to suggest ways of improving the existing offering (the three program areas outlined in pages 1 and 2 of the ToRs) or to move beyond these to cover a broader set of program areas?	The proposed second phase need not be limited to the current program areas or structure. More importantly, it must respond to the development challenges of Africa and align with the Mastercard Foundation’s Africa Works Strategy and AIMS Strategic Framework 2021-2026.
16. Are you wanting just a high-level design or a design that also includes much more detailed recommendations around content?	A more detailed program design is expected.
17. To what extent do the aforementioned potential respondents and formal scholars have regular, reliable internet access?	The majority of potential respondents and scholars have regular and reliable internet access and are easily accessible by email or Skype/Zoom.

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18. Does MCF/AIMS expect that counterfactual-based methods be used to assess impact? If so, to what extent can scholar application data be made available for applicants who were not selected for the program?	AIMS encourages applicants to select the methods best suited to assess and demonstrate impact. AIMS student application data can be provided, as needed.
19. How many most significant change (MSC) stories will be expected from each country? Should these all come from scholars, or will MSC stories also be expected from other types of program participants (e.g. school administrators?)	The number and focus of Significant Change Stories can be discussed and confirmed with the selected consultants/firm in the inception phase.
20. Is there flexibility in the proposed timeframe if the appropriate methods to respond to the evaluation questions and inform follow-on program design require more time to design and execute than is indicated?	While AIMS expects the assignment to take approximately 15 weeks to complete, there is some flexibility in this should more time be required.
21. Are there page limits, formatting requirements, etc. for the technical proposal?	No.
22. Is there a possibility of extending the EOI submission deadline?	Not at this time. However, if AIMS fails to find any suitable candidates upon review of all Expressions of Interest received, the call may be readvertised.
23. Should the technical and financial bids can be sent by email and if they need to be password protected for confidentiality and for password to be disclosed after deadline closing of tender submission.	The technical and financial proposals must be sent by email. There is no need to password protect the documents.
24. Were there other additional documents except the TOR for the procedure “The Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program at the African Institute for Mathematical Sciences Final Evaluation and Phase II Program Design”	No, only the Terms of Reference are provided.
25. As for the Administrative documents, we understand that there aren’t specific requests, is this correct?	That’s correct, there are no specific requests for administrative documents at this stage.
26. Has AIMS been collecting Most Significant Change stories already?	No. AIMS has been collecting human interest and success stories for Program Areas 1 and 2.
27. Does AIMS have a program monitoring framework for the MCF Scholars Program? If	Yes. There is a Performance Measurement Framework (PMF) for the Scholars Program at AIMS with detailed indicators at the impact, intermediate

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not a full framework, what indicators have been developed?	outcome, immediate outcome, output and activity levels.
28. Is there a monitoring platform from which data can be pulled?	No, not a platform <i>per se</i> , but AIMS undertakes regular monitoring through internal progress reports and updates to our central database, which the selected consultants will have access to.
29. We note that there is a comprehensive logic model. Is there also a theory of change for the program?	Yes, there is a Theory of Change for the Scholars Program, which the selected consultants will receive in the inception phase.

NB: It is important to clarify a possible misunderstanding: The Mastercard Foundation is the donor partner and AIMS is the implementing partner of the Scholars Program at AIMS. The final evaluation and phase II program design was commissioned by AIMS; Mastercard Foundation has no direct role in the assignment.