**Request for Qualification**

**Monitoring, Evaluation, & Research (MER) Service Providers**

**Tender Number: PQ002**

**Closing Date: Wednesday, November 29th, 2023 at 5pm PST**

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# Introduction

Mercy Corps is a global team of humanitarians working together on the front lines of today’s biggest crises to create a future of possibility, where everyone can prosper. Our mission: to alleviate suffering, poverty, and oppression by helping people build secure, productive, and just communities. In more than 40+ countries around the world, over 5,400+ team members work side by side with people living through poverty, disaster, violent conflict, and the acute impacts of climate change. We’re committed to creating global change through local impact — 84% of our team members are from the countries where they work.

The Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) team supports both foundational and cutting-edge adaptive management approaches to program management, with design, monitoring, evaluation and learning functions as key processes and benchmarks to ensure evidence-based decision making for quality program implementation. The team works across a wide spectrum of stakeholders both internal and external to Mercy Corps, as well as diverse technical program approaches and sectors.

The MEL team has maintained a Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Master Service Agreement (MER-MSA) since 2018, made up of a pool of qualified firms with expertise in monitoring, evaluation, and research services (MER). The MER-MSA has helped to increase Mercy Corps program team’s access to qualified organizations to fill key monitoring, evaluation, learning, research, and analysis needs.

With the expiration of the MER-MSA in 2023, Mercy Corps is once again seeking to build out a roster of qualified firms to provide MER services for Mercy Corps teams. In lieu of a Master Service Agreement (MSA), we are seeking to build a pre-qualified pool (PQP) of Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research vendors. Prequalification is a process to pre-screen competing suppliers against a pre-determined set of criteria, helping to ensure that vendors have the standard capacity and capability to provide services or works prior to being invited to bid for a particular procurement activity. Like an MSA, a good prequalification system streamlines the procurement process (removing several requirements or steps for both firms & Mercy Corps teams) and helps minimize the risk of contract failure. The pre-qualified pool of MER vendors (MER-PQP) will be publicized to Mercy Corps field offices as recommended MER vendors and firms will be invited to submit proposals for opportunities at the discretion of the requesting Mercy Corps team based on a firm’s stated expertise and relevant experience. If a firm is successful, they will receive a contract for that project. Please note that prequalification does not guarantee business award and firms will only be contracted on a project-by-project basis.

We are seeking exceptional firms and organizations willing to support remotely or travel on assignment to provide support at various stages of the program cycle in one or several of the following areas: 1) Value for Money, Costing, & Cost-Benefit/Effectiveness Studies 2) Impact Evaluations 3) Program Evaluations, Mid-term Evaluations, and Baseline / Endline Studies 4) Formative Studies, including but not limited to Gender, Equality, and Social Inclusion (GESI) analyses; political economy analyses, and market systems assessments.

This is a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for monitoring, evaluation, and research firms or organizations interested in being evaluated to receive future MER projects.

## 1.1 Procurement Description

Statements of Qualification should be developed in strict accordance with this request and are to be evaluated in a transparent manner by a committee of reviewers, per the provided evaluation criteria.

The purpose of this pre-qualification tender is to shortlist/pre-qualify suppliers for a variety of future procurement of Mercy Corps. Only shortlisted contractors will receive future Requests for Bids whereby the contract award will be issued to the *highest scoring bid per selection criteria listed in each scope of work.*

The initial shortlist will be for 24 months (two years). This Request for Qualification will however be re-issued after 12 months to provide an opportunity for additional suppliers to be included on the shortlist. After 24 months, the process will be re-advertised and all firms will be required to reapply and provide updated information for the next round of the prequalified pool.

New suppliers and suppliers that were not pre-qualified in prior selections will have an opportunity to re-apply for future pre-qualification.

## Overview of Desired Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Services

Below is an overview of the four service categories we are looking to include in the MER-PQP as well as overarching work standards for all qualified firms. Firms may apply for only one or up to all four service categories. Common selection criteria will be used for all service categories, but each organization will be evaluated for individual service categories separately. Organizations will be notified about which service categories they have been qualified for.

We are seeking to pre-qualify firms, organizations, or freelancers with expertise in one or more of the following categories:

1. **Value for Money, Costing, & Cost-Benefit / Effectiveness Studies**

Cost-benefit, Cost-effectiveness, and Value for Money studies are types of economic evaluations. Costing studies are also considered as economic evaluations even though they do not include measuring intervention outcomes, as is the case in the afore-mentioned studies. Economic Evaluations identify, measure, value, and compare the costs and consequences of different interventions. Allocating resources and implementing these interventions—whether policies or programs—require an understanding of the relationships between resources used and the outcomes achieved by the program. It is more frequent that these studies be done on a specific component of large, complex programs rather than for the entire program. Economic evaluation can consider both resources used and outcomes achieved simultaneously and are useful in supporting decision-making when resources are limited.

1. **Impact Evaluations**

Studies using experimental or quasi-experimental design methods to generate evidence that responds to critical questions about Mercy Corps’ programming strategies, policy issues, and broader debates in the industry. Studies almost always rely on primary data but may include data from secondary sources. In all cases where quantitative data are collected, statistical tests of difference between groups must be used. In all cases, the study must be designed to rigorously determine if any statistical differences observed between treatment and counterfactual groups are attributable to one or more interventions.Components and activities in this category include, but are not limited to, developing the study design and study protocol (including study instruments and sampling), obtaining IRB approval, logistics and field work management/supervision, preparing tablets/phones for data collection, data collection, training, data management, coding guides, statistical plan of analysis, analysis, developing training material and conducting training relative to studies, literature reviews, report/manuscript/abstract writing, and presentation/learning materials.

1. **Program Evaluations, Mid-term Evaluations, and Baseline / Endline Studies**

Program evaluations, also called performance evaluations or mid-term/final evaluations are designed to document whether a Mercy Corps program achieved its performance targets (outputs and outcomes) over the life of the project/program. These also identify the factors that influenced target achievement (or not), if assumptions were held, and if and how the program changed from its original design over the life of the program. Program evaluations are always mixed method using (a) monitoring data from the M&E system (b) program work plans and (c) primary qualitative data; they may also include primary quantitative data. They are not impact evaluations (so do not have comparison/control groups) but they do try to identify if there is plausible evidence that the program’s interventions contributed to observed changes in anticipated outcomes. . Activities in this category may include, but are not limited to, study design, study instruments, sampling, logistics and field work management/supervision, data collection, data quality control, training, data management, coding guides, preparing tablets/phones for data entry, plan of analysis, analysis, document review/synthesis, developing training material and conducting training relative to studies/evaluations, report writing and presentation/learning materials.

1. **Formative Studies (including Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Assessments, Political Economy Analyses, and Market System Assessments)**

Formative studies for Mercy Corps are meant to provide insight into social phenomena or contextual nuances to inform how Mercy Corps, peer organizations, donors, or others invest in interventions designed to address critical humanitarian and development challenges. The purpose of these formative studies is to fill knowledge gaps needed for research, learning and adaptive management. These studies are typically cross-sectional and either mixed methods or exclusively qualitative. In particular, we are interested in firms with expertise in conducting Gender Equality and Social Inclusion Analyses, Political Economy Analyses, and Market Systems Assessments.

**Work standards overarching all service categories include:**

**Knowledge & Experience:**

* Theoretical knowledge and practical experience in monitoring, evaluation, training, learning and adaptive management or implementation science (based research) appropriate for categories for which you are approved and submit proposals
* Knowledge of major aspects of humanitarian and development program implementation and documentation
* Demonstrated capacity to draw programmatic recommendations from data
* Ability to conceptualize, plan and implement monitoring, evaluation, learning, training and/or research activities in fragile countries with complex crises, as well as possess the ability to analyze data and utilize lessons learned for the continuous improvement of program implementation and to promote a culture of learning
* Commitment to capacity building

**Technical Leadership:**

* Ensure adherence to best practices in MEL and research
* Facilitate connections between program and MEL teams during execution of contracts to ensure data is analyzed and used for learning

**Skills & Capacity:**

* Promote a culture of learning through systematic analysis and reflection of program/research data
* On the job training and mentoring during contract implementation
* Active contributor and collaborator with regional and global counterparts to promote the use of MEL and research best practices

# 2. Tender Instructions

## 2.1 Schedule

The following is a schedule of the pre-qualification tender process; all dates are subject to change.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Activity** | **Date** |
| Issue Request for Qualification | October 25, 2023 |
| Deadline for Questions | November 1, 2023 |
| Mercy Corps to Provide Responses to all Questions | November 3, 2023 |
| Statement of Qualification Due | November 29, 2023 |
| Announcement of Pre-Qualified Suppliers (estimate) | January 2024 |
| Active Date of MER Pre-Qualified Pool (estimate) | March 1, 2024 |

## 2.2 *S*ubmittal Requirements and Format

Mercy Corps will accept Statement of Qualification as follows:

**Due Date: Wednesday, November 29th, 2023 at 5pm PST**

**Email Submissions: gsuarez@mercycorps.org**

**Subject Line: PQ002 MER Statement of Qualification – [FIRM NAME]**

Statement of Qualification should follow the requirements and format described in this Request for Qualification. All electronic copies must be submitted in Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. All text should be in English. Any other information shall be presented in a readable format. All signatures must be accompanied by a printed name, title, and date.

Any Statement of Qualification that fails to meet the deadline may be rejected.

**Submission Format: Firms should submit each Mock Proposal Package as a combined PDF (one combined PDF per service category, including work samples). All forms can be submitted as separate attachments.**

## 2.3 Clarifications

Requests for clarifications regarding this pre-qualification process should be sent to **gsuarez@mercycorps.org** by **5pm PST November 1, 2023**. All responses to questions received will be consolidated and uploaded on the Mercy Corps website by 5pm PST November 3, 2023.

## 2.4 Acceptance of Successful Response

Documentation submitted by suppliers will be verified by Mercy Corps and evaluated as per established criteria. The successful suppliers will be added to the “pre-qualified” status for a period of two years.

Mercy Corps will invite pre-qualified suppliers to submit bids in response to a given future Scope of Work. Pre-qualified suppliers will be notified of pre-qualified status by email, using the contact address provided in the Statement of Qualification.

## 2.5 Past Performance

Past performance will be given due consideration in the pre-qualifying process. Previous contracts in line with this pre-qualification requirement will be considered.

# 3. Eligibility Criteria and Submittal Requirements

## 3.1 Supplier Eligibility

Supplier may not apply, and will be rejected as ineligible, if they:

* Are not registered companies
* Are bankrupt or in the process of going bankrupt
* Have been convicted of illegal/corrupt activities, and/or unprofessional conduct
* Have been guilty of grave professional misconduct
* Have not fulfilled obligations related to payment of social security and taxes
* Are guilty of serious misrepresentation in supplying information
* Are in violation of the policies outlined in Mercy Corps Anti Bribery or Anti-Corruption Statement
* Supplier (or supplier’s principals) are on any list of sanctioned parties issued by; or are presently excluded or disqualified from participation in this transaction by: the United States Government or United Nations by the United States Government, the United Kingdom, the European Union, the United Nations, other national governments, or public international organizations.

Additionally, all prequalified firms will be required to be registered in Ariba (online procurement system) in order to receive RFPs for future Scopes of Work. **Any firms unwilling to register on Ariba after being prequalified will be considered ineligible.**

Additional eligibility criteria, if applicable, are stated in section 3.2 of this pre-qualification package.

## 3.2 Mercy Corps’ Anti-Bribery and Anti-Corruption Statement

Mercy Corps strictly prohibits:

● Any form of bribe or kickback in relation to its activities

This prohibition includes any request from any Mercy Corps employee, consultant or agent for anything of value from any company or individual in exchange for the employee, consultant or agents taking or not taking any action related to the award of a contract or the contract once awarded. It also applies to any offer from any company or individual to provide anything of value to any Mercy Corps employee, consultant or agent in exchange for that person taking or not taking any action related to the award of the contract or the contract.

● Conflicts of interests in the awarding or management of contracts

If a company is owned by, whether directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, any Mercy Corps employee or any person who is related to a Mercy Corps employee, the company must ensure that it and the employee disclose the relationship as part of or prior to submitting the offer.

● The sharing or obtaining of confidential information

Mercy Corps prohibits its employees from sharing, and any suppliers from obtaining, confidential information related to this solicitation, including information regarding Mercy Corps’ price estimates, competing suppliers or competing offers, etc. Any information provided to one offeror must be provided to all other suppliers.

● Collusion between/among suppliers

Mercy Corps requires fair and open competition for this solicitation. No two (or more) companies submitting Statements of Qualification can be owned or controlled by the same individual(s). Companies submitting offers cannot share prices or other offer information or take any other action intended to pre-determine which company will win the solicitation and what price will be paid.

Violations of these prohibitions, along with all evidence of such violations, should be reported to:

[integrityhotline@mercycorps.org](mailto:integrityhotline@mercycorps.org)

Mercy Corps will investigate allegations fully and will take appropriate action. Any company, or individual that participates in any of the above prohibited conduct, will have its actions reported to the appropriate authorities, will be investigated fully, will have its offer rejected and/or contract terminated, and will not be eligible for future contracts with Mercy Corps. Employees participating in such conduct will have his/her employment terminated.

Violations will also be reported to Mercy Corps’ donors, who may also choose to investigate and debar or suspend companies and their owners from receiving any contract that is funded in part by the donor, whether the contract is with Mercy Corps or any other entity.

## 3.3 Certification Regarding Terrorism

It is Mercy Corps’ policy to comply with humanitarian principles and the laws and regulations of the United States, the European Union, the United Nations, the United Kingdom, host nations, and other applicable donors concerning transactions with or support to individuals or entities that have engaged in fraud, waste, abuse, human

## 3.4 Content

The Statement of Qualification shall contain only the sections listed below as per the provided submission templates and shall respond fully to all requirements of the Request for Qualification. See below for required sections and page limits. The prequalification application forms which are not filled out completely and submitted in the prescribed manner will not be considered. For submissions that exceed the stated page limit, reviewers will disregard any pages in excess of the stated limit. All the documents that form part of the proposal must be written in English and be indelible.

## 3.5 Submission Requirements

All firms must submit all documents listed below. Submissions will consist of two sections:

1. Mock Proposal Package (firms must submit ONE (1) package for EACH service category they are applying for)
2. Forms & Eligibility Documents (only 1 set of forms total is required per firm)

### 3.5.1 Mock Proposal Package (1 PER Service Category) | [TEMPLATE HERE](https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/1.%20Mock%20Proposal%20Template_English.docx)

Using the proposal template linked above, please submit **ONE mock proposal package** in response to thesemock Scopes of Work (SoW) **for EACH service category** you would like to be evaluated for. The proposal should be based on the project as described in the mock SoW. **For the ‘Formative Studies’ service category, applicants may choose ONE of the three mock Scopes of Work (GESI Analyses, Market Systems Assessment, Political Economy Assessment) to base their proposal on.** Please closely follow page limits for each section as noted below. **Any pages in excess of the limits listed below will be disregarded by reviewers**. The absence of any required submittal information may disqualify. Proposal packages should be submitted as one combined PDF file (one per service category). Each proposal package should include:

* **Cover Letter** (500 words max)**.** Submit a cover letter which generally familiarizes reviewers with the company’s understanding of and ability to provide the services requested under that service category. The intent of the Executive Summary is to give a brief introduction to the company’s capabilities, experience, and interest in performing one or more of the services described in [section 1.2](#_Overview_of_Desired).
* **Technical Proposal** (Maximum 3 pages in Arial 10 point, single spaced). The technical proposal will be used to assess the technical proficiency of the company and their ability to provide high-quality support in a given service category.
* **Level of Effort (LOE) Proposal** (table provided). The LOE proposal will be used to assess the general efficiency and cost effectiveness of the company. Firms will be scored according to the appropriateness of the LOE estimate, both in terms of number of staff (and their location) and number of suggested billable days given the scope of the project. **Please note that the two requested roles described in the Scope of Work under the ‘CV Submissions’ section *are for CV submissions* *only* (see below)**. For LOE proposals, firms should disregard both the number and level of the roles described in that section and instead suggest whatever number and combination of consultants they feel is appropriate for the project. For example: though a firm will only submit two CVs that match the requested profiles in the SOW, in their LOE proposal, they recommend 6 total staff for the project: 1 project lead, 1 technical specialist, 1 analyst, and 3 enumerators).
* **Resumes/CVs** of TWO (2) current, qualified staff members (2 pages max per CV; **please use the CV template provided**): one CV for a senior project lead / specialist and one CV for a mid-level researcher / analyst. Staff CVs will be used to determine whether firms have current staff with the required experience and skills to meet Mercy Corps teams’ needs pertaining to the service categories in this RFQ.
* **TWO (2) Work Sample Excerpts**. Work sample excerpts will be used to assess past performance of firms and whether they have experience providing similar kinds of support to those described in this RFQ. Please do not include annexes.

### 3.5.2 Forms & Eligibility Documents (Only one set of forms total per firm)

### References | [TEMPLATE HERE](https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/2.%20References.docx)

Using the template above, please provide three client references that can speak to the quality of the firm’s services. References will be contacted as part of the due diligence phase, only once a firm has passed the technical evaluation.

### Pricing Sheet | [TEMPLATE HERE](https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/3.%20Pricing%20Sheet.xlsx)

Please fill out the price offer sheet linked above with standard labor rates by position type and level. *Please note that firms will not be held to these rates if pre-qualified*; however, rates should be reflective of typical rates used when preparing budget proposals to provide us with a general understanding of pricing by firm.

### Self-Certification of Eligibility | [TEMPLATE HERE](https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/4.%20Self-Certification%20of%20Eligibility.docx)

Please complete the self-certification form linked above to certify that your company is eligible for pre-qualification as defined in [section 3.1](#_3.1_Supplier_Eligibility).

* **Eligibility documents**

Please provideacopy of your company / firm’s Certificate of Incorporation / Registration and a document indicating the firm is complying with tax regulation requirements in the country where incorporated / registered.

### Supplier Information Form | [TEMPLATE HERE](https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/5.%20Supplier%20Information%20Form.docx)

Please complete the template linked above to provide information about your company. Information will be used during the due diligence stage for eligibility and compliance checks.

* **Modern Slavery Form |** [**ONLINE FORM LINKED HERE**](https://forms.office.com/r/188BmHRMTG)

Please complete the form linked above in as much detail as possible.

* **Service Category Indication Form |** [**TEMPLATE HERE**](https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/6.%20Service%20Category%20Indication%20Form.docx)

Please fill out the template linked above to confirm which service categories your firm is applying for.

### Self-Certification of Supplier Diversity (*if applicable*) | [TEMPLATE HERE](https://www.mercycorps.org/sites/default/files/2023-10/7.%20Self-Certification%20of%20Supplier%20Diversity.docx)

Mercy Corps is commited to supplier diversity. Please fill out the template linked above to self-certify that your business is a diverse-owned business and supply any additional supporting documentation. For the purposes of this Request for Qualification, **we define diverse-owned businesses as those that are small businesses\* *OR* are owned by women, minorities\*, LGBTQ+ individuals, or people with disabilities**. Companies that are deemed to be in any of these categories will receive bonus points on their application per the scoring criteria below.

\*small business is any business with fewer than 100 employees and an annual revenue of less than $8 million USD

\*a minority is anyone who falls within a marginalized group, including racial, ethnicity, or caste minority groups

# 4. Evaluation Criteria

## 4.1 Confidentiality

Information relating to the suppliers, their evaluation and result shall not be disclosed to suppliers or any other persons not officially concerned with the pre-qualification process until the notification of pre-qualification results is made to all suppliers.

## 4.2 Technical Evaluation of Applications

Mercy Corps will use criteria and requirements defined in the table below. Submissions will be evaluated separately for each service category, meaning firms may be pre-qualified for some service categories but not others. Mercy Corps reserves the right to waive minor deviations of compliance from the qualification criteria if they do not materially affect the technical capability and financial resources of a supplier.

The Statement of Qualification shall comply with the criteria established in this Request for Qualification. Each component of the Statement of Qualification as described in Section 3, will be evaluated to determine if it meets the minimum criteria. All submissions which match or exceed the minimum passing scores listed below will be added to the pre-qualified pool of vendors. Statement of Qualification components which do not comply with the requirements of the Request for Qualification, such as but not limited to, minimum qualification, page limits, and content may be disqualified. The supplier must receive a passing score in order to be pre-qualified.

## 4.3 Due Diligence

Firms who pass the technical evaluation will go through due diligence steps including 1) Client reference check and 2) Ineligibility and Compliance Check.

**Evaluation Criteria**

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **GENERAL SCORING SYSTEM** | |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| **Point** | **Description** | **Rationale** | | |
| **1** | Very poor | Has met none of the specified criteria / requirement | | |
| **2** | Poor | Has met few aspects of the specified criteria | | |
| **3** | Sufficient | Acceptable; meets some of the stated requirements | | |
| **4** | Good | Meets all requirements but there is room for improvement | | |
| **5** | Excellent | Exceeds all requirements with little to no room for improvement | | |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **#** | **Criteria** | **Means of Verification** | **Definition / Requirement** | **Min. Required Score** | **Weight** |
| **1** | **Corporate Capability** | Cover Letter | The company's general areas of focus and expertise align with one or more of the services sought via this RFQ; the company has experience working in humanitarian or development contexts and conveys familiarity and experience with the services described in the RFQ; company has experience in two or more countries in which Mercy Corps operates. | n/a | 10% |
| **2** | **Technical Proficiency** | Technical Proposal | The company's technical proposal is clear, detailed, logical, and appropriate for the provided Scope of Work. The company demonstrates technical proficiency in the service category and is well-equipped to provide support to a Mercy Corps team with little to no guidance from Mercy Corps teams. | 2 / 5 | 25% |
| **3** | **Personnel** | Staff CVs | The company has current, deployable, or local staff well-suited to the mock Scope of Work; CVs demonstrate an appropriate level of relevant experience for the provided Scope of Work; staff have appropriate language and technical skills as defined in the SoW as well as experience working in one or more Mercy Corps countries | 2 / 5 | 15% |
| **4** | **Past Performance** | Work Samples | The company is able to provide recent work samples that are relevant to the mock Scope of Work; the work sample demonstrates technical fluency, logical research design, an attention to detail, familiarity with sector-specific best practices, and recognition of limitations or issues in project findings; the sample is well-formatted and appropriately branded | n/a | 10% |
| **5** | **Cost** | Pricing Sheet | The company's budget proposal is reasonable for the project as described in the mock Scope of Work and is in line with market rates; please see 'Cost Scoring System' for details on how to score cost proposals | 5 | 15% |
| **6** | **Efficiency** | LOE Proposal | The firm provides an appropriate and reasonable LOE estimate based on the provided mock SOW; the number, experience level, and estimated LOE in days is proportional to the scope of the project at hand and not excessive. | 5 / 12 | 20% |
| **7** | **Bonus: Small, Minority-owned, or Global-South owned business** | Proof of small, minority-owned, or global-south owned business | The company provided documentation confirming their status as a small, global south-owned, or minority-owned business. | n/a | 5% |
|  |  |  | **MINIMUM OVERALL PASSING SCORE:** |  | **55%** |