

Date: June 14, 2021

From: Procurement and Partnerships Team, INVEST Project; Implemented by DAI Global LLC

Subject: Expressions of Interest (EOI) INVEST-007 in support of USAID India Mission

Due: **1:00pm EDT / 10:30pm IST on July 19, 2021**

Dear All:

Through this Request for Expressions of Interest (EOI), INVEST, on behalf of USAID India, seeks responses from funds, firms, and organizations that can provide strategic, high-impact interventions in the education sector by leveraging USAID catalytic resources and private sector engagement in targeted states.

Expression of Interest Summary

For more details on the Expression of Interest process, submission requirements, and evaluation details, please see corresponding sections in the document below.

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| <p>Objectives</p> | <p>Through this Request for Expressions of Interest, INVEST aims to identify potential partners and innovative approaches that leverage USAID resources and catalyze investments in State level education systems improvement in the areas of Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) in India. In employing a blended finance approach for solutions, USAID aims to mobilize private capital to advance development outcomes.</p> |
| <p>Submission Requirements</p> | <p>Interested firms should provide a PowerPoint presentation of 6-8 slides, that includes the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organization overview, track record and any unique capacities or experience related to mobilizing private sector capital in education. 2. Proposed approach and illustrative set of FLN related interventions and rationale, the finance mechanism, key partners, key stakeholders and anticipated outcomes and development impact in line with USAID/India objectives, and stating the catalytic role of USAID support and why it is critical (i.e. additionality) 3. State(s) impacted (note USAID is targeting 3 states initially in Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, and SDMC in Delhi, but is looking for mechanisms that can be scaled nationally). |

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| | <p>4. Sustainability and scalability plan</p> <p>5. Anticipated budget, timeline and amount of private sector financing to be leveraged</p> |
| Virtual Q&A | <p>To address applicant’s questions and provide clarification on the EOI process, INVEST will offer a live virtual Q&A session on June 22, 2021 at 8:00am EDT / 5:30pm IST. The Q&A session will be held on WebEx. The session will be recorded and shared along with a written summary of the virtual Q&A after the session.</p> <p>If you would like to join the virtual Q&A session, please send your contact information to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com, copying Katherine_Tilahun@dai.com and Carly_Gorelick@dai.com.</p> |
| Deadline for Receipt of Questions | <p>If any questions remain after the virtual Q&A, INVEST will provide additional clarification responses to written questions. Questions must be submitted electronically no later than 1:00pm EDT / 10:30pm IST on June 25, 2021 via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com.</p> |
| Deadline for Receipt of EOIs | <p>EOIs must be submitted no later than 1:00pm EDT / 10:30pm IST on July 19, 2021 via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com, copying Katherine_Tilahun@dai.com and Carly_Gorelick@dai.com. The subject line of the email should be your organization name, followed by “EOI INVEST-007: India Education Deal Support.” Please limit file submissions to 10 megabytes or less.</p> |
| Anticipated Awards | <p>INVEST anticipates releasing an RFP following this EOI and making one or more awards as a result of the RFP (see “Selection Process” section below for more detail). Please note that only those firms that submit an EOI will be considered for support through the RFP stage.</p> |

Purpose and Background

[INVEST](#) is a USAID mechanism managed by DAI to unlock private capital to drive inclusive growth in countries where USAID works. Increasingly, private investors and businesses are looking to emerging and frontier markets for better returns and new market opportunities. However, these investors often face high transaction costs and lack the information they need. In some cases, investors encounter poor risk-reward ratios that make investments unattractive. INVEST addresses these challenges and facilitates work between USAID and the investment community through investment assessments, structuring of financing mechanisms and transaction advisory support.

Private sector engagement (PSE) to leverage needed funding into the education sector is recognized as a global imperative. The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity estimates that \$3 trillion in annual education spending will be necessary in low- and middle-income countries by 2030—a gap of \$1.8 trillion from today’s spending levels. An estimated 97 percent of these funds will need to come from domestic governments, and their commitment to investment and reform will be the most important driver in closing the funding gap. However, international donor funds, philanthropy, and the private sector will continue to play a critical role, especially for low-income countries where these entities cover half of education costs, on average.

Improvements to FLN are needed in India. Data provided by India’s Annual Status of Education 2019 Report show that, among Standard III (3rd grade) students:

- 49.2% cannot read at a Standard I (1st grade) level text
- 27.8% cannot recognize 2-digit numbers
- 80.1% who received low or zero scores on pre-primary level cognitive tasks (i.e. completing a puzzle, sequencing picture cards, putting physical items in a series by size) were unable to read at the grade one level.

Leading education NGOs in India and the world have been instrumental in making the case in India that the long-term efficacy of the education sector and the continued economic progress of the country depend not only on ensuring that all children can read by the end of grade two, but on providing students with a continuum of play and skills-based instruction from the ages of 4-8 that will ensure that they master not only reading, but also numeracy, cognitive processes like matching, sequencing and sorting, social and emotional behaviors conducive to integrating into school and society, and essential gross and fine motor skills.

In support of India’s new National Education Policy, USAID will work in partnership with multiple stakeholders and funders to provide technical support and leverage financial, human, and material resources to improve foundational learning in targeted states. It is expected that the INVEST activity will complement the new USAID funded India Partnership for Early Learning (IPEL). Information on the IPEL activity can be obtained [here](#). Outcomes obtained through performance-based mechanisms and in partnership with state actors will focus on an increase in students attaining minimum proficiencies in reading, math, and cognitive domains in both public and private schools.

As a basis for this work, USAID India and INVEST have assessed the PSE regulatory environment and market landscape for basic education. The landscape assessment included the following deliverables:

- Market landscape and regulatory environment assessment of PSE in the basic education sector (including criteria and recommendations on state partners)
- Assessment and recommendations on PSE and financial instruments

- State-specific market and regulatory assessment, recommendations for PSE opportunities in three states

In order to receive the reports from this work, please complete and sign the attached non-disclosure agreement (NDA) and send your NDA to the following email address: INVEST_Procurement@dai.com with the email subject line “NDA for EOI INVEST-007 India Education.” Please note that INVEST requires an NDA from each person/email that requires access to the supplemental reports. INVEST will share access to the reports with individuals that submit an NDA via a Google Drive.

Sample mechanisms and illustrative deliverables

INVEST welcomes new ideas and creative approaches from organizations submitting Expressions of Interest that help USAID India achieve development objectives in FLN. The Mission has a preference for projects that engage public schools. Some of the approaches that USAID is seeking are the following:

1. Blended finance vehicles and instruments that attract and leverage private sector financing into FLN
2. Performance based structures such as conditional grants or outcomes-based grants
3. Development Impact or Social Impact bonds (DIBs/SIBs)

These approaches may be tailored to one or more of the target states, and may include the following proposed solutions, among others:

- A blended financing vehicle and/or instruments that de-risk and attract investment in FLN and that may leverage resources and competencies of other actors in the FLN sector
- An outcomes-based or conditional funding mechanism that supports states which have started efforts towards FLN improvement, for example through identifying and addressing 2-3 key gaps in FLN efforts and/or reaches underserved segments of the population, e.g. children with special needs, tribal children, etc.
- An outcomes-based or conditional funding mechanism that supports states which have not yet initiated a focused program on FLN. The may support a single, end-to-end intervention such as holistic teacher capacity development, pedagogy and content, data management and assessment, etc.
- A DIB or SIB that address areas where effective models have not yet reached significant scale, for example parental and community engagement, early-childhood education, underserved populations, etc.

An EOI is expected to address one funding mechanism. The funding mechanism explored may represent one of the examples above, or offer a related innovative approach that addresses the purpose and goals of this activity. A firm may submit more than one EOI if seeking support to address multiple approaches. Each EOI will be evaluated on an individual basis.

Illustrative interventions that may be proposed include, but are not limited to:

- Specific intervention areas in FLN based on identified gaps, consultation with state governments and USAID partners
- Identification and onboarding of investors including CSR players, risk investors, program managers and service providers
- A well-defined and executed M&E plan for DIB / SIB / outcome-based funding mechanisms including baseline data, target outcomes
- Structuring, technical assistance, investor outreach and legal services for transaction advisory, outcome-based models and DIBs / SIBs
- Financial modeling for the proposed instrument including payment flows and timing in case of outcomes being met
- Technical assistance and transaction advisory services to attract investment

Who May Apply

INVEST and USAID hope to work with stakeholders from different parts of the investing ecosystem including investors, program managers, intermediaries, and technical assistance providers to develop inclusive finance solutions in the education sector. Respondents may not be individuals or government organizations. Projects must be located in India.

Submission and Formatting Instructions

Expressions of Interest should illustrate the submitting organization's background, relevant competencies and services to be delivered. Submissions should align with the USAID/India objectives above and clearly note the state/states of intervention, illustrative set of FLN related interventions and rationale (e.g. rough theory of change), choice of financial instrument and rationale, and use of USAID funds that include timeframe/key milestones for the engagement, sustainability and scalability plan, program management plan, working capital for the funding mechanism, etc.

Anticipated Awards: We anticipate future awards to one or more approaches as a result of an RFP following this EOI. Should EOI respondents be willing to cost-share the cost of advisory services and/or cover success-based payments (e.g. a fee paid upon certain capital-raising milestones), please note this and the corresponding available budget parameters. Offerors must submit an EOI to be considered for the subsequent RFP phase of this award.

Budget: EOI submissions should include a total budget estimate needed to accomplish the proposed concept, as well as an expected leverage ratio. Offerors may propose solutions with a budget of up to \$3 million, while recognizing that INVEST may make one or more awards with a combined value not exceeding \$3 million.

Timeframe. EOI submissions should note the anticipated implementation timeframe and the timing of critical milestones and deliverables. Please indicate in your submission an estimated timeline for completing the proposed activities. INVEST expects the work on this project to run from September 2021 to March 2024. All activities must be completed within this period.

Expressions of Interest must be submitted no later than **1:00pm EDT / 10:30pm IST on July 19, 2021**. Submissions should:

- Be in English;
- Be submitted electronically to the following e-mail addresses:
- INVEST_Procurement@dai.com copying Katherine_Tilahun@dai.com and Carly_Gorelick@dai.com.
- Be no more than eight (8) PowerPoint slides in length;
- Include a title slide (not counted against slide limit) with the following information: Respondent Name/Group; Contact Information; and Response Title.
- Include two submission attachments in email, one in .ppt and one in .pdf format.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be applied to all Expressions of Interest. Submissions are not evaluated against other submissions, but solely against the evaluation criteria outlined below:

- Alignment of Approach with USAID/India Objectives: The respondent's organization and the proposed support align with the Mission's priorities in terms of tackling development challenges and increasing access to quality education in India.
- Track Record: The approach includes the strengths of your organization as a partner, including your ability and relevant experience to make a unique contribution to achieving the objectives of this activity.
- Transaction Viability: The response should clearly indicate the viability of the transaction noting the feasibility of success, anticipated leverage ratio, and any associated risks. Please note any existing market traction and investor interest.

Selection Process:

INVEST will review and select Expressions of Interest submitted in accordance with the guidelines and criteria set forth in this solicitation. INVEST reserves the right not to review any Expressions of Interest that do not meet the guidelines. Please note that due to the expected large number of Expressions of Interest INVEST is unable to provide detailed information to those EOIs that are not selected to move forward.

Stage 1: INVEST and USAID/India will review and evaluate submitted EOIs based on the guidelines and criteria set forth in this solicitation. From this evaluation, INVEST will develop a shortlist of firms from the submitted offers.

Stage 2: INVEST and the selected applicant(s) will develop Scopes of Work that will detail the specific type of transaction advisory services INVEST will support, detailing the timeline, and expected deliverables.

Step 3: INVEST will release individual Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for the specific Scopes of Work each selected EOI requires, evaluate the proposal responses, and subcontract with the service providers on the EOI applicant's behalf.

INVEST reserves the right to check the past performance, references, and other pertinent offeror information in making award decisions. Previous experience with USAID is not required.

Please see the [INVEST Data Protection Policy](#), section "Safeguarding of Technical Contributions from Partners," for information regarding how the EOI responses will be protected in line with our policy concerning technical proposals.

Issuance of this solicitation does not constitute a commitment, award, or engagement on the part of DAI nor does it commit DAI to any future commitment, award, or engagement.

Thank you,

DAI INVEST Procurement and Partnerships Team

INVEST_Procurement@dai.com

To: Offerors

Date: August 23, 2021

From: Procurement and Partnerships Team, INVEST Project; Implemented by DAI Global LLC

Subject: Request for Proposals (RFP) INVEST: USAID India Private Sector Engagement in Education, Phase 2

Due: **1:00PM EDT / 10:30PM IST on September 13, 2021**

Dear Offerors:

Enclosed is a Request for Proposals (RFP) to support the implementation of DAI's INVEST project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). DAI invites firms to submit a proposal for work as part of the USAID India Mission buy-in. **The offeror is expected to submit a proposal that further expands upon the submitted and approved concept in response to the Expressions of Interest (EOI) INVEST-007. The offeror is *not* permitted to submit a new concept.**

- I. RFP Process and deadlines:** This solicitation will result in the award of a Firm Fixed Price subcontract. We anticipate issuing a subcontract with an award value aligned with your firm's EOI budget amount resulting from the implementation of this agreement. INVEST recommends that RFP submissions remain at or under \$3,000,000 in value. Offerors are encouraged to propose a range that best fits their technical approach, recognizing that INVEST expects to make one award.
 - a. Submission of Questions – Questions must be submitted no later than **1:00PM EDT / 10:30PM IST on August 30, 2021** via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com.
 - b. Submission of Proposals – Proposals must be submitted no later than **1:00PM EDT / 10:30PM IST on September 13, 2021** via email to INVEST_Procurement@dai.com, copying Katherine_Tilahun@dai.com and Carly_Gorelick@dai.com. The subject line of the email should be your organization name, followed by "Submission under RFP INVEST-USAID India Education." Please certify in your submission email a validity period of 60 days for the price(s) provided and include your organization's DUNS number. Please limit file submissions to 10 megabytes or less.
- II. Composition of Proposal:** Your organization's proposal should comprise the following submission documents. The Technical Proposal and Cost Proposal should be prepared as separate files for independent evaluation, as follows below. Technical proposals should be submitted as a slide deck presentation of no more than ten (10) slides with a minimum font size of 12, and graphics with a minimum font size of 10. Submissions in PowerPoint or in PDF are acceptable, although PDF is preferred along with an accompanying PowerPoint document. For submission of Part 1 – Technical Proposal, please submit a single combined PDF that includes the cover page, technical proposal, case studies, and CVs. Please provide a copy of your cost proposal in Excel format.

Part 1 – Technical Proposal

Please limit your technical proposal to no more than ten (10) slides. The technical proposal is composed of the following three (3) sections:

1. **Technical Approach** – Offerors will detail their approach to fulfilling the accompanying Statement of Objectives (SOO). The technical approach will present how the proposed approach will enable USAID to leverage its resources to catalyze investment in State-level education systems improvement in foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) in India. The technical approach should include a clear description of an agile and flexible financing mechanism/Fund that improves FLN, including a proposed leverage ratio, what types of investors and stakeholders will be targeted and how the Offeror will approach investor/stakeholder engagement, as well as the anticipated activities that will be implemented overall or in each State in order to implement the proposed technical approach. Activity descriptions should incorporate the need for flexibility around the specifics of the approach to be further defined during implementation, including through initial meetings with other USAID/India projects that will help to refine and coordinate activities across projects to ensure a systemic approach to FLN once implementation begins. Offerors should identify potential risks to implementation and success of the activity, along with a mitigation strategy to ensure success. The approach will include an illustrative workplan and deliverables schedule and indicate how the proposed activities will result in the successful completion of deliverables and milestones within the stated timeframe. The technical approach should also address the sustainability and scalability plan for how (and when) the work will scale beyond the initial intervention and continue past the lifetime of the INVEST project and the anticipated development impact for this work.
2. **Institutional Capacity** - Offerors should provide details about the experience, expertise, and/or capacity of their firm to recommend the proposed approach and complete the work as described. This should also include past performance information for India or similar contexts. Physical presence and organizational experience of one or more firms in India is required. Offerors should demonstrate their experience in performing similar work in India, as well as demonstrate experience and understanding of financial instruments that are applicable in the India education sector context.
3. **Management Plan/Staffing Structure** – Offerors should include details of personnel who will be assigned to the activities described in the technical approach, as well as a clear management plan in narrative form for the development, review, and submission of all associated deliverables, including a milestone schedule. Offerors are permitted to engage in partnering/consortium arrangements if it will aid in providing best value to USAID. If a partnering arrangement is being proposed, please describe the nature of the arrangement, the specific technical value being contributed by each member of the team, and the appropriate management controls to ensure successful delivery.

In addition to the above, please include the following. These inputs will not be counted as part of the 10-slide limit and the format may be PDF or Word:

- One (1) to two (2) examples of past performance relevant to this activity (limited to two (2) pages per example)

- CV(s) of any individuals proposed in the staffing plan to conduct this activity (limited to two (2) pages per individual).

A cover slide will be considered a non-counting slide, should offerors choose to include one. No additional annexes or documentation are requested at this time.

Part 2 – Price Proposal

The contract type for the presumptive contract will be Fixed Price, awarded by DAI Global, LLC. Please include your total proposed fixed price along with details for specific deliverable pricing. Offerors should also include a cost breakdown of the hourly rates for proposed personnel, if applicable, with a build-up to their total proposed price or include substantiating price reasonableness documentation/justification. Cost breakdowns included will be utilized to determine price reasonableness. Offerors can use the attached cost/budget template for guidance, but are not required to use it, as long as the cost proposal captures the necessary elements (i.e. deliverables table with breakdown of how the deliverable totals were calculated). Please limit file submissions to 10 megabytes or less.

III. Evaluation of Proposal: DAI will use best value determination for the award of this Request for Proposals. A best value determination means that, in DAI's estimation, the selected offeror will provide the greatest overall benefit to USAID in response to the requirements stated in this RFP. DAI may also exclude an offer from consideration if it determines that an Offeror is "not responsible", i.e., that it does not have the management and financial capabilities required to perform the work required. Proposals will be evaluated against a stated number of factors, including the overall proposed approach, past performance, specific qualifications in the education and education finance sectors and other evidence substantiating the bidder's ability to deliver, including budget and time frame considerations.

1. Technical Proposal: The Technical Proposal will be scored and evaluated separately from the price proposal. Technical panel reviewers will evaluate offerors on the following factors, consistent with the offerors' technical proposal.

- a. Technical Approach (40 points)** - Points for this section will be awarded based on the information presented in the technical approach that addresses the Statement of Objectives (SOO). The offeror will be scored based on its presentation of a clear approach that reflects the requirements set forth in the SOO and incorporates the offeror's competencies. The technical approach should present how the proposed approach will enable USAID to leverage its resources to catalyze investment in State-level education systems improvement in foundational literacy and numeracy (FLN) in India, and how the Offeror will approach investor/stakeholder engagement. The technical approach should include a description of the agile and flexible financing mechanism with a proposed leverage ratio, as well as a description of the anticipated activities under the proposed technical approach, incorporating the need for flexibility around the specifics of the approach to be further defined during implementation. Offerors should identify potential risks to implementation and success of the activity, along with a mitigation strategy to ensure success. The technical approach should also address the sustainability and scalability plan for how (and when) the work will scale beyond the initial intervention and continue past the

lifetime of the INVEST project and the anticipated development impact for this work. The approach will provide an illustrative workplan and delivery schedule and estimate the development impact, as well as explain the rationale behind how the expected impact was determined.

- b. Institutional Capacity (30 points)** – Points for this section will be based on information presented in the corresponding section and submitted past performance examples. The proposal should provide details about the experience, networks, expertise, and/or capacity of their firm (or firms if a partnering arrangement is proposed) to recommend the proposed approach and complete the work as described. Points will be awarded to firms who demonstrate their unique and deep knowledge, experience, and capabilities in blended finance and education in India, with clear understanding and experience supporting or working with public schools in the target States.
- c. Management Plan/Staffing Structure (30 points)** - Points for this section will be based on the qualifications of proposed staff, clear delineation of the roles and responsibilities of each proposed staff and each proposed firm (if firms are partnering), and the demonstrated efficacy and clarity of the management plan. Proposals should provide a clear management plan in narrative form for the development, review, and submission of all associated deliverables, including a proposed milestone schedule. If the offeror is submitting a proposal along with partners, the proposal should describe the nature of the arrangement (i.e. added technical value), the division of labor among the partners, and the appropriate management controls to ensure successful delivery. It is required that the offeror (or one of its partners) be based in India in order to ensure continuity of project operations during periods of travel restrictions due to COVID-19.

IV. Offeror’s Agreement with Terms and Conditions: Please visit the [INVEST Procurement Forecast](#) website for RFP Terms and Conditions.

The completion of all RFP requirements in accordance with the instructions in this RFP and submission to DAI of the technical and price proposals will constitute an offer and indicate the Offeror’s agreement to the terms and conditions in this RFP and any attachments hereto. DAI is not required to accept and/or evaluate proposals that do not conform to the instructions of the RFP, and additionally, DAI may reject all proposals and not award a subcontract for this RFP. DAI reserves the right to award a subcontract without discussion and/or negotiation; however, DAI also reserves the right to conduct discussions and/or negotiations, which among other things may require an Offeror(s) to revise its proposal (technical and/or price). By submitting an offer, Offerors agree to comply with the general terms and conditions for an award, including Representations and Certifications compliance. Offerors must provide full, accurate, and complete information in response to this solicitation. By submitting an offer, Offerors certify that they have not/will not attempt to bribe or make any payment to DAI employees in return for preference. Issuance of this RFP in no way obligates DAI to award a subcontract, nor does it commit DAI to pay any costs incurred by the Offeror in preparing and submitting the proposal. DAI reserves the right to award a subcontract to one organization or to issue multiple awards to different organizations based on the results of our evaluation.

Thank you,
DAI INVEST Procurement and Partnerships Team
INVEST_Procurement@dai.com

Statement of Objectives for RFP INVEST:

USAID India Private Sector Engagement in Education, Phase 2

Introduction

INVEST is a USAID mechanism managed by DAI to unlock private capital to drive inclusive growth in countries where USAID works. Increasingly, private investors and businesses are looking to emerging and frontier markets for better returns and new market opportunities. However, these investors often face high transaction costs and lack the information they need. In some cases, investors encounter poor risk-reward ratios that make investments unattractive. INVEST addresses these challenges and facilitates work between USAID and the investment community through investment assessments, structuring of financing mechanisms and transaction advisory support.

USAID India Background

Private sector engagement (PSE) to leverage needed funding into the education sector is recognized as a global imperative. The International Commission on Financing Global Education Opportunity estimates that \$3 trillion in annual education spending will be necessary in low- and middle-income countries by 2030—a gap of \$1.8 trillion from today’s spending levels¹. An estimated 97 percent of these funds will need to come from domestic governments, and their commitment to investment and reform will be the most important driver in closing the funding gap. However, international donor funds, philanthropy, and the private sector will continue to play a critical role, especially for low-income countries where these entities cover half of education costs, on average.

Improvements to Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) are needed in India. Data provided by India’s Annual Status of Education 2019 Report² show that, among Standard III (3rd grade) students:

- 49.2% cannot read at a Standard I (1st grade) level text
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- 80.1% who received low or zero scores on pre-primary level cognitive tasks (i.e. completing a puzzle, sequencing picture cards, putting physical items in a series by size) were unable to read at the grade one level.

Leading education NGOs in India and the world have been instrumental in making the case in India that the long-term efficacy of the education sector and the continued economic progress of the country depend not only on ensuring that all children can read by the end of grade two, but on providing students with a continuum of play and skills-based instruction from the ages of 4-8 that will ensure that they master not only reading, but also numeracy, cognitive processes like

¹ https://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1865/USG-Education-Strategy_FY2019-2023_Final_Web.pdf

² <http://img.asercentre.org/docs/ASER%202019/ASER2019%20report%20/aserreport2019earlyyearsfinal.p df>

matching, sequencing and sorting, social and emotional behaviors conducive to integrating into school and society, and essential gross and fine motor skills.

In support of India's new National Education Policy, USAID will work in partnership with multiple stakeholders and funders to provide technical support and leverage financial, human, and material resources to improve foundational learning in targeted states. Outcomes obtained through performance-based mechanisms and in partnership with state actors will focus on an increase in students attaining minimum proficiencies in reading, math, and cognitive domains in both public and private schools.

As a basis for this work, USAID India and INVEST have assessed the PSE regulatory environment and market landscape for basic education. The landscape assessment included the following deliverables:

- Market landscape and regulatory environment assessment of PSE in the basic education sector (including criteria and recommendations on state partners)
- Assessment and recommendations on PSE and financial instruments
- State-specific market and regulatory assessment, recommendations for PSE opportunities in three states

Subsequent to this landscape assessment, INVEST released a call for Expressions of Interest (EOI) to identify potential partners and innovative approaches that leverage USAID resources to catalyze investment in State-level education systems improvement in FLN in India. This RFP is being shared with the organizations that submitted EoIs and were short-listed by the Technical Evaluation Committee to participate in Phase 2 of the procurement (with the EOI serving as Phase 1).

As noted in the EoI, it is expected that the INVEST activity will complement the new USAID funded India Partnership for Early Learning (IPEL). Information on the IPEL activity can be obtained [here](#). The selected Offeror will be expected to coordinate and complement activities with IPEL in a flexible and agile manner that ensures that this work is responsive to Government of India (GoI), state governments and USAID priorities, reflects state-level interest and conditions on the ground, and supports efforts toward systemic change in FLN. The IPEL activity is scheduled to commence in September/October 2021. USAID/India will help convene meetings to bring together IPEL, INVEST, and any other relevant projects to refine and coordinate activities, work plans, deliverables and geographic priorities to ensure a systemic approach to FLN. These meetings will be planned once the IPEL and INVEST awards are finalized, likely in September/October 2021.

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Through this Request for Proposals (RFP), INVEST aims to identify partners and innovative approaches that leverage USAID resources to catalyze commercial investment in line with USAID/India objectives to improve Foundational Literacy and Numeracy in the education sector. To achieve this, USAID is looking for a systemic solution that engages both state governments and the private sector to sustainably improve FLN outcomes. Approaches should

also look to engage the private sector where appropriate to address the gap in education provided because of the Covid-19 pandemic effects on school closures and disruptions. USAID has a strong preference for proposals that provide geographic and technical flexibility to engage public schools and that coordinate efforts with other USAID projects due to the desire for systemic and scalable impact. At this RFP stage, proposals should present a technical approach that includes anticipated activities but maintains flexibility in design and implementation in order to ensure coordination and complementarity between USAID/India projects in the education sector.

USAID has not pre-identified solutions to this challenge and recognizes that conditions on the ground may influence the geographic focus, however, there are a number of promising blended finance approaches USAID and INVEST are interested in further exploring including:

- A blended financing vehicle and/or instruments that de-risk and attract investment in FLN and that may leverage resources and competencies of other actors in the FLN sector
- An outcomes-based or conditional funding mechanism that supports states which have started efforts towards FLN improvement, for example through identifying and addressing 2-3 key gaps in FLN efforts and/or reaching underserved segments of the population, e.g. children with special needs, tribal children, etc.
- An outcomes-based or conditional funding mechanism that supports states which have not yet initiated a focused program on FLN. The mechanism may support a single, end-to-end intervention such as holistic teacher capacity development, pedagogy and content, data management and assessment, etc.
- A DIB or SIB that address areas where effective models have not yet reached significant scale, for example parental and community engagement, early-childhood education, underserved populations, etc.

Offerors should ensure their proposals address the following key elements, as applicable to the proposed technical approach:

- A description of an agile and flexible financing mechanism/ Fund that improves FLN, including what types of investors and stakeholders will be targeted and how the Offeror will approach investor/stakeholder engagement.
- A workshop with other USAID projects (participants to be defined with USAID India) to refine and coordinate activities, work plans, deliverables and geographic priorities to ensure a systemic approach to FLN.
- A description of the anticipated activities under the proposed technical approach, incorporating the need for flexibility around the specifics of the approach to be further defined during implementation.
- An illustrative workplan and delivery schedule, including illustrative deliverables.
- Identification of potential risks to implementation and a thorough discussion of mitigation strategies that your organization would implement to ensure the success of the activity.
- Sustainability and scalability plan for how (and when) this work will scale beyond the initial intervention and continue past the lifetime of the INVEST project

- Proposed leverage ratio for the use of USAID/INVEST funds, and a discussion of why that leverage ratio is appropriate for the proposed technical approach in the context of India.
- Estimated development impact and your rationale behind how the expected impact was determined. Please note that INVEST expects projects to be scaling up within the period of performance of this contract rather than simply laying the groundwork for scale.

ILLUSTRATIVE INTERVENTIONS AND TIMEFRAME

Illustrative interventions that may be proposed include, but are not limited to:

- Interventions in FLN based on gaps identified in consultation with USAID India, GoI, state governments and other USAID partners
- Identification and onboarding of investors including CSR players, risk investors, program managers and service providers
- A well-defined and executed M&E plan for DIB / SIB and/or outcome-based funding mechanism including baseline data, target outcomes
- Structuring, technical assistance, investor outreach and legal services for flexible and agile transaction advisory services, outcome-based models, and/or DIBs / SIBs
- Financial modeling for the proposed instrument including payment flows and timing in case of outcomes being met
- Technical assistance and transaction advisory services to attract investment

Timeframe

Proposals should note the anticipated implementation timeframe and the timing of critical milestones and illustrative deliverables. Please indicate in your submission an estimated timeline for completing the proposed activities. INVEST expects the work on this project to run from September/October 2021 to March 2024. All activities must be completed within this period. If the proposed approach will go beyond this date, the Offeror should provide detail and explanation for how the remaining work will be funded and what results are ultimately expected to be achieved during the INVEST period of performance and afterward.

General Implementation Structure

Onboarding and Work-Planning

1. The Subcontractor, USAID India, and DAI INVEST teams will meet for an implementation kickoff meeting. The purpose and goal of this meeting is to align expectations and contexts and plan for the activities listed below.
2. Partner Onboarding: DAI will work closely with USAID India to provide the selected partner(s) with all necessary context, as well as to develop the work plan(s) for the determined countries.
3. USAID/India will convene meetings to bring together IPEL, INVEST, and any other relevant projects to refine and coordinate activities, work plans, deliverables and geographic priorities to ensure a systemic approach to FLN. These meetings will be

planned once the IPEL and INVEST awards are finalized, likely in September/October 2021.

Implementation

1. **Project Implementation:** The selected partner(s) will implement the work as prescribed by the work plan. DAI INVEST will provide management support and technical oversight throughout all activities and anticipates working closely with the subcontractor(s) and maintaining ongoing communications through periodic (e.g. weekly and monthly) check-ins/reporting as well as possible onsite meetings. USAID staff will be engaged throughout implementation, supporting the initial identification of challenges and root causes, and providing guidance and feedback as appropriate throughout the activity.