Terms of Reference

Final Evaluation of a 5-year McGovern-Dole International
Food for Education and Child Nutrition Project in Cameroon

Implementer: Nascent Solutions Inc. (Nascent)

Funder: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)

Location: Adamawa, East, and North regions of Cameroon

Duration: Around January-July 2023. A mix of home-based and field-based work required.

Purpose of this ToR: To solicit bids for a final evaluation for Nascent's McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Project in Cameroon. This will continue a quasi-experimental evaluation setup at baseline (2019) - and continued at midterm (2021) - by an external evaluation firm.

Project Description

This is a five-year project funded under USDA's McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition Program. Implemented by Nascent, the project is designed to improve the literacy of school-age children through improved literacy instruction, student attentiveness, and student attendance. Secondarily, the project intends to increase the use of positive health and dietary practices. The project runs from October 2018 to September 2023.

While the primary objective is improving literacy, the staple activity is the provision of a daily lunch using food commodities provided by USDA. Nascent seeks to improve:

- Quality of literacy instruction, through more consistent teacher attendance, provision of better teaching and learning materials, and training of teachers and school administrators;
- Student attentiveness, through the daily lunch program and extracurricular activities;
- Student attendance, through school infrastructure improvements, enrollment outreaches, an increased community understanding of education benefits, and reducing health related absences;
- Use of positive health and dietary practices, through increased knowledge of hygiene, safe food preparation, and nutrition, as well as increased access to clean water and sanitation and preventative health interventions;
- Education systems, through enhancing the capacity of government and civil society and improving local education- and nutrition-related policies.

The project benefits 180,000 primary-level pupils, family members, teachers, administrators, civil servants, parent-teacher association members, and others associated with 240 primary schools in Cameroon.
The 240 schools have more than 90,000 enrolled students and more than 1,000 teachers. Approximately 62% of the schools are in three French-speaking regions of Cameroon, with the remainder in one English-speaking

region. <u>Due to ongoing socio-political unrest in the English-speaking North West region, this final evaluation will focus largely on the French-speaking Adamawa, East, and North regions, which contain 148 project schools. Evaluation of activities in the North West region will be limited to remote key informant interviews.</u>

Partners include the Ministry of Basic Education, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, Ministry of Water and Energy, Ministry of Social Affairs, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (AgReach program).

Purpose and Use
The final evaluation will inform Nascent, USDA, and implementation partners of the project's impact and progress. We will use its content to 1) assess impact of project implementation; 2) provide a signal of the effectiveness of interventions; 3) document lessons learned; and 4) emphasize the most viable sustainability paths to stakeholders; 5) reassess our theory of change for future projects in Cameroon.

Research Questions
Nascent is primarily interested in understanding its impact based on the following Key Questions. Which changes are attributable to the project? What is the magnitude of those changes?

Key Questions
MGD SO1: What is the percentage of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text?
MGD 1.1: What is the percentage of teachers engaged in "active instruction" for 50%+ of classroom time?
MGD 1.2: What is the percentage of classroom time in which >5 students are "off-task"?
MGD 1.3: What is the average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools?
MGD SO2: What is the percentage of school-age children observed correctly washing their hands?
MGD SO2: What is the prevalence of women of reproductive age consuming a diet of minimum diversity?
MGD SO2: Ranked reasons for student absences

Several of these Key Questions require disaggregation by sex and/or age.

Additionally, evaluators will address two additional KAP questions via surveys:

1. What are the nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and practices of women of reproductive age (15-49 years)?
2. What are the students' knowledge, attitudes and practices in terms of hygiene?

Figures for student enrollment and teacher attendance will be reached via secondary data analysis.

In addition to the impact questions above, the final evaluation will also investigate effectiveness, relevance, efficiency, and sustainability:

Question	Suggested Methodology, pending evaluator advice
For a sample of approximately 10 randomly selected indicators, what level of progress has been made against the baseline and against targets?	Conduct a desk review of baseline report, target figures, and semi-annual reports as of March 2023.
Is the project's results framework consistent with stakeholder and beneficiary views? Is implementation consistent with the	1. Conduct key informant interviews and semi-structured focus group discussions among teachers, school administrators, parents, trainers from local teacher training

government's priorities at the local, regional, and national levels? Is the project causing any unintended effects?	colleges, and education and school feeding officials in local and national government. 2. Conduct key informant interviews among Nascent staff and partners.
Which outputs were obtained most cost-efficiently? Which were obtained least cost-efficiently? Should the project allocate resources differently in the future?	Conduct key informant interviews among Nascent staff.
Are efforts at sustainability likely to succeed? Which activities are likely to continue as the project closes? How are PTAs contributing to sustain project activities, especially school feeding? Has the government (at any level) increased its financial support for school feeding?	Conduct key informant interviews and semi-structured focus group discussions among teachers, school administrators, parents, trainers from local teacher training colleges, and education and school feeding officials in local and national government. Employ typical case sampling and critical case sampling.
Did the support provided by Nascent during the COVID-19 pandemic address the needs of beneficiaries? Which performance indicators did COVID-19 impact most?	1. Conduct key informant interviews and semi-structured focus group discussions among teachers, school administrators, PTA members, trainers from local teacher training colleges, and education and school feeding officials in local and national government. 2. Conduct key informant interviews among Nascent staff and partners.

Study Design

An external evaluation firm setup a quasi-experimental impact study during the baseline survey, which they continued during the midterm evaluation. It utilized school-level propensity score matching and a difference-in-differences analysis method. The final evaluation company should continue using this design and methods.

The evaluators will mimic the cluster sampling strategy and size of the baseline and midterm evaluations (see "How to Apply" section below), with schools as the primary sampling unit, and students/classrooms/parents as the secondary sampling unit, depending on the key indicator. Stratification must occur at the regional level.

The final evaluation will utilize data collection tools in the same manner as the baseline and midterm evaluations. Qualitative data will be collected at project schools only, in a continuation of data collection from baseline and midterm.

Qualitative sampling will be purposive, seeking a broad representation of viewpoints. Data will be collected using focus groups and/or key informant interviews targeting local stakeholders such as parents, head teachers, teachers, older students, and education and other government officers.

Tools

MGD SO1 – Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA)

The Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) is a collection of highly valid literacy assessments developed by RTI in 2006 with financial support from USAID and the World Bank. EGRA is a comprehensive measure of literacy, with tools spanning phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension, all of which

are considered to be essential components of effective reading instruction.[1] The evaluator will collect data through Android tablets.

MGD 1.1 and 1.2 – Stallings Observation System

The Stallings Observation System (Stallings) provides a quantitative measure of key classroom variables influencing the efficacy of teaching and learning, including use of instructional time, use of materials, core pedagogical practices, and student engagement.[2] Stallings includes a classroom observation composed of a series of ten 15-second snapshots spread evenly throughout a class period. During each snapshot, the teacher and pupils are placed on a matrix indicating the activities in which they are engaged, and any materials being used. Stallings assessments will be collected through Android tablets.

MGD SO2 – Handwashing observations and dietary diversity surveys

UNICEF's WASH in Schools Monitoring Package includes a hygiene survey module - a set of questions, observations, and focus group discussion guidelines for use in national WASH in Schools surveys.[3] The module also includes questions on water sources and sanitation facilities.

The Feed the Future (FtF) indicator handbook provides guidance on measuring minimum dietary diversity for women of reproductive age (MDD-W).[4] A woman of reproductive age is considered to consume a diet of minimum diversity if she consumed at least 5 of 10 specific food groups during the previous day and night.

Estimated timeline (to be discussed with evaluation team)

Item	Started	Completed
Design	November 2022	January 2023
Logistical arrangements	December 2022	February 2023
Training tools	February 2023	February 2023
Data collection	February 2023	March 2023
Data cleaning	March 2023	April 2023
Data analysis and visualization	April 2023	May 2023
Report writing	June 2023	June 2023
Reviews of drafts by Nascent	June 2023	July 2023
Submit report to USDA	July 2023	July 2023

Deliverables

Deliverable	Deadline (negotiable)
Evaluation work plan / inception report, explaining how evaluators will operationalize the evaluation in question (design, methodology, ethics plan, quality assurance plan, training agendas, etc.), to be submitted after a desk	January 2023

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[1] Early Grade Reading Assessment Toolkit: Second Edition, RTI International, Mar 2016.
[2] Conducting classroom observations: analyzing classrooms dynamics and instructional time - using the Stallings 'classroom snapshot' observation system: user guide. World Bank Group, 2015.
[3] UNICEF WASH in Schools Monitoring Package, April 2011.
[4] Feed the Future Indicator Handbook, updated Sept 2019.

review and consultations with Nascent. This inception report will include the survey tools, focus group discussion protocols and/or key informant interview questions.	
Report: A concise written narrative, in **English only**.	July 2023
Stand-alone 3-page briefing on the evaluation in question. This is viewed as a polished and widely accessible executive summary. It will allow Nascent and USDA to easily disseminate content. This should be in **English and French.**	July 2023
Presentation: Maximum of 30 PowerPoint slides highlighting key themes of the report. This should be in **English and French**. No oral presentation required; slide deck only.	July 2023

Outline for Reports

1. Cover Page
2. Table of Contents
3. List of Acronyms
4. Executive summary including the background, key findings, conclusions, and recommendations
5. Introduction and objectives of the evaluation
6. Research design including key indicators
7. Methodology including data sources, data limitations, and timeline of evaluation implementation
8. Study findings
9. Conclusion based on the findings
10. Limitations includes any constraints of the evaluation
11. Recommendations based on the conclusions
12. References
13. Annexes (list of data sources including interviews, data collection tools etc.)

Existing Data and Performance Information

Nascent will make the following available to the evaluators:

- Baseline survey report and datasets
- Midterm evaluation report and datasets
- Evaluation Plan
- Performance Monitoring Plan
- Results Framework
- Work plans
- Semi-annual reports

Profile of Evaluation Team
Evaluators are welcome to assemble a team as they see fit (not including field level data collectors, who will be recruited separately). Their skills should be complementary, with one identified as the Team Lead, who will bear responsibility for all work products and processes. Firms and groups of independent consultants are welcome to apply. Combined, the team should have the following skills and attributes:

- Demonstrated experience leading complex impact evaluations.
- Demonstrated expertise in study design and sampling.

- Demonstrated experience in the development of quantitative data collection tools and managing field data collection (including mobile).
- Demonstrated experience in using qualitative methods such as focus group discussions and key informant interviews.
- Demonstrated experience in data management and analysis using statistical software, including analyzing complex (multi-stage cluster samples) surveys.
- Demonstrated experience using propensity score matching, principal component analysis, and difference-in-differences analysis techniques.
- Demonstrated experience in concise, illuminating report writing, including data visualization.
- Demonstrated experience in training and managing field data collectors and complex logistics.
- Subject matter expertise in literacy and education.
- Subject matter expertise in maternal nutrition, child nutrition, and hygiene.
- Strong teamwork ability across cultures and time zones.
- Demonstrated ability to effectively communicate with a variety of stakeholders, ranging from young students to government officials.
- Experience with EGRA.
- Experience with the Stallings Classroom Observation system.
- Experience with dietary diversity surveys.
- Experience with USDA McGovern-Dole projects.
- Experience in Cameroon. If other criteria are met, preference is given to Cameroon-based teams.
- High proficiency in written and verbal French and English.

How to Apply

Interested evaluators should apply by submitting the following documents in a single PDF no later than 14 November 2022. Submissions must be made via e-mail to admin@nascents.org with the subject line "Cameroon final evaluation bid".

1. Organizational/team capacity statement outlining relevant evaluation experience and ability to perform the evaluation with methodological rigor. This should be a maximum of 5 pages.
2. CV of each proposed evaluator with his/her role clearly identified. Please limit CVs to no more than 4 pages per person.
3. Financial proposal that includes (in US dollars only):
   1. Daily fee and days required for each team member
   2. Estimated expenses attributable to each team member (as noted below, several expenses are paid for directly by Nascent. Do not include them in this financial proposal). This might include, for example, airfare for team members travelling to Cameroon.

   These parameters may be useful when constructing your financial proposal:
   - The baseline reached 61 intervention schools and 60 comparison schools. The midterm evaluation reached 60 intervention schools and 60 comparison schools.
   - See below the sample sizes achieved during the baseline and midterm.

Key Questions	Baseline total sample (intervention + comparison, divided evenly)	Midterm total sample (intervention + comparison, divided evenly)
MGD SO1: What is the percentage of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate that they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text?	1,880 grade 2 students	1,809 grade 2 students

MGD 1.1: What is the percentage of teachers engaged in "active instruction" for 50%+ of classroom time?	290 grade 1-3 classrooms	582 grade 1-3 classrooms
MGD 1.2: What is the percentage of classroom time in which >5 students are "off-task"?	290 grade 1-3 classrooms	582 grade 1-3 classrooms
MGD 1.3: What is the average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools?	121 schools (grade 1-6)	120 schools (grade 1-6)
MGD SO2: What is the percentage of school-age children observed correctly washing their hands?	720 students	2,400 students
MGD SO2: What is the prevalence of women of reproductive age consuming a diet of minimum diversity?	1,230 women	1,198 women
MGD SO2: Ranked reasons for student absences	290 grade 1-3 classrooms; 53 focus group participants (parents and teachers)	582 grade 1-3 classrooms; 62 focus group participants (parents and teachers)

- The baseline conducted 141 key informant and focus group interviews of parents, teachers, government officials, Nascent staff, USDA staff, and other stakeholders.
- Nascent requires the sampling strategy to allow for comparisons between male and female students, as well as two age categories for some Key Questions.
- Data collection will occur in French and some local languages when necessary. Deliverables are in English, except for a 4-page briefing, which should be in English and French.
- Nascent will arrange and directly pay for the items below. These should not be included in the proposed budget.

  - Ground transport during evaluation activities
  - Printing, copying, and routine office supplies
  - Internet and other communications during evaluation activities
  - Field-level data collectors/enumerators and supervisors (to be discussed further with evaluators)
  - Venues and food at trainings/meetings
  - Nascent possesses 50 Android tablets which can be used for data collection (and mostly eliminate the need for data entry)
  - Mobile data collection subscriptions (Tangerine, SurveyCTO)