



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR A MID TERM EVALUATION

Date: **January 17, 2025**
Subject: Request for Proposals USDA Mauritania McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Childhood Nutrition Project Midterm Evaluation

RFP Number: **FS – MR – 1113 – 0002**
Q&A: Question Submission Deadline: January 24, 2025 5:00PM EST
Answers Posted and Emailed by CI: January 29, 2025 5:00PM EST
Offer Deadline: **February 12, 2025; 5:00 PM EST (Washington, D.C.)**

Counterpart International (hereinafter Counterpart) is soliciting proposals for the supply of **Evaluation Services** as described in this Request for Proposals (RFP). These services are required under the **Mauritania McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Childhood Nutrition *Bridging the Future*** (hereinafter “the Award”) by the issuing **U.S. Department of Agriculture** (hereinafter **USDA**).

Firms invited by Counterpart (hereinafter “bidders or Offerors”) to submit offers (hereinafter “bids” or “offers”) for the services described in the attached supply schedules are under no obligation to do so. The Bidder shall bear all costs associated with the preparation and submission of the Proposal, Counterpart will in no case be responsible or liable for those costs, regardless of the conduct or outcome of the solicitation.

This Request for Proposal includes the following sections:

- I. Instructions to Bidders
- II. Technical Specifications

All correspondence and/or inquiries regarding this RFP should be requested in accordance with the enclosed Instructions to Bidders (Section I, Clause 10, Clarifications).

The Instructions to Bidders (henceforth ITB) shall not form part of the bid or of the **vendor contract**. They are intended to aid bidders in the preparation of bids. For the purposes of interpretation of these ITB, unless otherwise stated, the number of days stated herein shall be consecutive calendar days.

Submission of bids should be completed in accordance with the enclosed instructions to Bidders (Section I, clause 11, Submission of Bids).

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

TABLE OF CONTENTS

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL	1
SECTION I: INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS.....	3
SECTION II TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.

SECTION I: INSTRUCTIONS TO BIDDERS

1. Introduction

- 1.1 **Request for Proposal (RFP) No. FS – MR – 1113 - 0002, dated January 17, 2025:** Counterpart, acting on behalf of the *Bridging the Future*, is hereby soliciting bids for the supply of comprehensive **vendor contract** as described in Section II of the ITB.

2. Eligible Source Countries for Goods and Services

- 2.1 This clause intentionally left blank.

3. Preparation of Bids

- 3.1 Bidders are expected to examine the specifications and all instructions contained in this RFP. Failure to do so shall be at the Bidder's risk.
- 3.2 The Bid prepared by the Bidder and all correspondence related to the Bid and exchanged by the Bidder and Counterpart shall be in English.

4. Contents of Bid

- 4.1 Submitted bids are required to consist of the following documents:

Technical Proposal

1. Organizational background showing evidence of prior performance in supplying **Evaluation Services**;
2. Outline of proposed services, solutions, and team;
3. Plan of action and implementation timetable to address the Specific Tasks under Section II
4. CVs of proposed professional staff;
5. Statement of Qualifications, referenced in Clause 7.

Price Quote

6. Price Quote – in Microsoft Excel, unlocked, and with formulas intact.

5. Format and Signing of Bid

- 5.1 The Bidder shall prepare one bid in two parts (technical and price quote) with all the required sections of the proposal typed or written in legible ink and shall be signed by a person duly authorized to bind the Bidder.

6. Price Quote

- 6.1 Bidders shall prepare a price quote in a workable Microsoft Excel document (unlocked with intact formulas) specifying the detailed cost breakdown and the total price of the services been offered in response to this RFP. The Bid shall clearly indicate that the prices shall be for the services whose technical specifications are described in Section II – Technical Specifications.
- 6.2 The Bidder shall indicate the unit price in USD for each service, the description, the quantity, and the total cost in USD of the Bid, which will comprise the total price of the Bid. If there is any discrepancy between the unit price and the total amount, the unit price shall be considered

as correct and the total amount adjusted accordingly. It shall be assumed that the Bidder is not bidding on any item for which a unit price or total amount is not indicated.

7. Statement of Qualifications

- 7.1 The Bidder shall include in its bid evidence in support of its technical qualifications and ability to perform the **evaluation services** if its bid is accepted. This shall consist of: references to successful prior projects of a similar nature are of key importance. These references should include contact names, e-mail addresses, and telephone numbers of persons who can be contacted regarding the Bidder's prior performance.

8. Bid Validity Period

- 8.1 Bids shall remain valid until **April 13, 2025** which is sixty one (60) days after the offer deadline. A bid valid for a shorter period shall be rejected as non-responsive.

9. Deadline and Late Bids

- 9.1 It is the Bidder's sole responsibility to ensure that bids are received by Counterpart on or before the Offer Deadline of **February 12, 2025 5:00PM EST** Electronic submissions are strongly encouraged. Faxed bids will not be accepted.
- 9.2 A Bid received after the deadline for submission of bids shall be rejected. Bidders will be held responsible for ensuring that their bids are received in accordance with the instructions stated herein and a late bid will not be considered even though it became late as a result of circumstances beyond the Bidder's control. A late bid will be considered only if the sole cause of its becoming a late bid was attributable to Counterpart, its employees or agents.

10. Clarification of Bidding Documents

- 10.1 Clarifications may be requested in writing not later than five (5) business days prior to the Offer Deadline. The contact for requesting clarifications is:

Alette Gilje, Resilient Food Systems Senior Program Officer, and
agilje@counterpart.org

11. Submission of Bids

- 11.1 Only electronic submissions will be accepted. All bids with technical and price schedule must be received by **February 12, 2025 5:00PM EST** by **Alette Gilje, Resilient Food Systems Senior Program Officer, and agilje@counterpart.org**

- 11.2 Ensuring successful transmission and receipt of the bids is the responsibility of the Bidder. It is recommended that no e-mail exceed the size of 10 MB, inclusive of attachments.

12. Amendment of Bidding Documents

- 12.1 Counterpart may at its discretion, for any reason, whether at its own initiative or in response to a clarification by a Bidder, modify bidding documents by amendment. All prospective Bidders that have received bidding documents will be notified of the amendment by e-mail and such amendments will be binding on them.

13. Modification of Bids

- 13.1 Any Bidder has the right to withdraw, modify, or correct its bid after it has been delivered to Counterpart, provided the request for such a withdrawal, modification, or correction together with full details of such modification or correction is received by Counterpart at the submission contact point given above before the time set for opening bids. Counterpart may ask any Bidder for a clarification of its bid; nevertheless, no Bidder will be permitted to alter its Bid Price or make any other material modification after the deadline unless the RFP has been amended or the deadline extended. Clarifications which do not change the Bid Price or other material aspects of the bid may be accepted.

14. Criteria for Award and Evaluation

- 14.1 Subject to Clause 15, Counterpart will award the **contract** to that Bidder whose proposal is deemed acceptable and which offers the best value based upon the evaluation criteria in Section II – Technical Specifications – Evaluation Criteria. In order for a bid to be deemed acceptable, it must comply with all the terms and conditions of the RFP without material modification. A material modification is one which affects the price, quantity, quality, delivery or installation date of the equipment or materials or which limits in any way any responsibilities, duties, or liabilities of the bidders or any rights of Counterpart. In addition, the successful bidder must be determined to be responsible. A responsible bidder is one who has the technical expertise, management capability, workload capacity, and financial resources to perform the work. Counterpart may, at its option, reject all bids.

15. Counterpart’s Right to Accept Any Bid and to Reject Any or All Bids

- 15.1 Counterpart will reject any bid that is nonresponsive. Further, Counterpart reserves the right to waive any minor informalities in the bids received if it appears in Counterpart’s best interests to do so, to reject the bid of any bidder if, in Counterpart’s judgment, the bidder is not fully qualified to provide the services as specified in the **contract**, or to reject all bids.

16. Notification of Award

- 16.1 Before the expiration of the period of bid validity, Counterpart will notify the successful Bidder in writing that its bid has been accepted.
- 16.2 Upon the successful Bidder acknowledging receipt of the Notification of Award, Counterpart will promptly notify each unsuccessful Bidder, the name of the successful Bidder and that their bids were rejected. If after notification of award, a Bidder wishes to ascertain the grounds on which its bid was not selected, it should address its request to Counterpart in writing.

17. Acceptance of Privacy Policy and Terms and Conditions.

By Submitting quotation/proposal to Counterpart International, The company or the individual consents to Counterpart’s privacy policy terms and conditions (<https://www.counterpart.org/terms-and-conditions/>), and provides Counterpart International permission to process the company’s or individual’s personal data specifically for the performance of, and purposes identified in, this solicitation document and in compliance with Counterpart’s legal obligations under applicable United States and European Union laws, data protection and regulations and any other applicable legal requirements. The company/Individual may withdraw their consent at any time by

contacting privacy@counterpart.org. If consent is withdrawn, Counterpart reserve's the right to accept or reject the offer.

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS

1. Background

Counterpart is seeking a qualified consultant/firm to implement the midterm evaluation for the McGovern-Dole Food for Education and Childhood Nutrition project called *the Bridging the Future “Construire l’Avenir”* in Mauritania.

This program (2022-2027), funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), is implemented by Counterpart International with support from local partners. The program seeks to assist the Government of Mauritania (GOM) to improve food security, reduce the incidence of hunger, and improve literacy and primary education to contribute to more self-reliant and productive communities. Specifically, the objectives of the program are the following:

1. Improve student attendance rates by providing nutritious, daily school meals.
2. Improve health and dietary practices by providing access to deworming medications and increase knowledge of nutrition; water, sanitation, and hygiene; and safe food preparation and storage practices.
3. Improve school infrastructure and increase access to clean water and sanitation by building storerooms, latrines, and water sanitation systems.
4. Improve the literacy of school age children through promotion of bilingual instructional methods and tailored capacity building at the national, regional, and school levels.
5. Increase the capacity of and incentivize local community members and groups including School Management Committees, (Comite de Gestion Scolaire), and Parent-Teacher Associations (Association des Parents d’Elevés) to engage in sustainability-focused activities to improve the quality and self-sufficiency of primary schools, and to lead and maintain a school feeding program.

In FY23, the project carried out a baseline assessment which provided baseline values for its performance indicators. After one year of project implementation, as stipulated in the cooperative agreement, Counterpart is required to carry out a midterm evaluation in FY25. Counterpart expects this midterm evaluation to be fully integrated in the body of information that the project will use for performance monitoring and evaluation, and for learning.

2. Goal of the Evaluation

The midterm evaluation, scheduled for the first half of calendar year 2025, will generate quantitative and qualitative data to measure progress against the project baseline evaluation, then to the end line evaluation, as well as inform performance evaluation priorities and analysis. The anticipated findings from this evaluation will be used to assess and guide the rest of the project implementation.

Counterpart expects the midterm evaluation to provide information on contextual factors that are slowing or accelerating the changes that the project aims to make. This information should enable project staff to validate project implementation and, if needed, recalibrate its activities.

The potential for “graduation” (successfully hand over school meals projects to nationally administered program) of the school feeding program should be a main focus of the midterm study. The evaluation should also pay close attention to gender and social inclusion dynamics to ensure that considerations related to gender and social inclusion are factored into programming. The results of this midterm evaluation should be curated for feedback to project stakeholder groups including school community-level participants, GOM agents, and other pertinent partners.

3. Dissemination

The summary brief of the midterm report will be shared with stakeholders including the Ministry of National Education (Minister, Secretary General), Ministry of Health, Ministry of Agriculture, Waly of implementation regions (Tagant, Gorgol and Brakna), Regional School Inspectors, School Management Committees, and USDA. Per the USDA Monitoring and Evaluation policy, the midterm evaluation report will be made publicly available. The publicly available version of the report will be free from personal identifying information.

4. Program Overview

1. General Background

Counterpart has been awarded USDA funding for the *Bridging the Future* project in the Tagant, Brakna and Gorgol regions of Mauritania. This five-year program (2022 – 2027) will assist the Government of Mauritania (GOM) to improve food security, reduce the incidence of hunger, and improve literacy and primary education to contribute to more self-reliant and productive communities. Counterpart is launching a call for proposals for the recruitment of a firm that will conduct the midterm evaluation. The midterm evaluation report will allow Counterpart and its stakeholders to take appropriate measures that will allow to improve implementation as follow:

- i. Program Improvement and Adaptation
 - a. Identify Strengths and Weaknesses: The evaluation should highlight successful approaches and areas needing improvement. Counterpart Mauritania will use this data to refine project activities and ensure they align better with the program's objectives.
 - b. Addressing Gaps: The evaluation results will help pinpoint gaps in implementation, such as logistical challenges in food distribution, teacher training, or community engagement. So that corrective measures can be adopted to address these issues promptly.
- ii. Informed Decision-Making

- a. Evidence-Based Planning: The midterm evaluation should provide evidence to support strategic decisions for the remainder of the program cycle. For instance, if certain regions are underperforming, more targeted interventions can be planned.
- iii. Sustainability Planning
 - a. Scaling Successful Practices: The evaluation team should propose effective interventions that will be scaled up and integrated into long-term strategies.
 - b. Exit Strategy Development: The evaluation will propose qualitative recommendations that will inform the design of an exit strategy, ensuring that local stakeholders are prepared to sustain the program's benefits after the project ends.

2. Program Overview

On September 16, 2022, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) - Foreign Agricultural Service (FAS) awarded Counterpart International (Counterpart), a cooperative agreement (# FFE-682-2022/014-00) to implement a McGovern-Dole International Food for Education and Child Nutrition (McGovern-Dole) project in Mauritania. The goal of this project, known as “*Bridging the Future*”, is to improve food security, reduce the incidence of hunger, and improve literacy and primary education and thereby contribute to more self-reliant, productive communities in Mauritania. Throughout the next five years (2022-2027), Counterpart will implement the school feeding project by relying on the donated commodities and funds provided by FAS.

3. The key objectives of the project are as follows:

- Improve student attendance rates by providing nutritious daily school meals.
- Improve health and dietary practices by providing access to deworming medications and increasing knowledge of nutrition, Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), safe food preparation and storage practices.
- Improve school infrastructure and increase access to clean water and sanitation by building storerooms, latrines, and water station systems.
- Improve the literacy of school age children through promotion of bilingual instructional methods and tailored capacity building at the national, regional, and school levels; and
- Increase the capacity of and incentivize local community members and groups including School Management Committees (SMCs) or *Comité de Gestion Scolaire* (COGES) and Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or *Association des parents d'élèves* (APE) to engage in sustainability-focused activities to improve the quality and self-sufficiency of primary schools, and to lead and maintain school feeding programs.

The project is being implemented by Counterpart with Ecole du Développement (EcoDev) and regional partner Associates in Research and Education for Development (ARED) as technical advisors and the Government of Mauritania (GOM) through the Ministry of Education (MOE) and the Ministry of Health (MOH) as a strategic partner. The project will be implemented in the regions of Brakna, Gorgol and Tagant.

Bridging the Future aims to serve over 115,563 direct beneficiaries, specifically:

- 111,071 students in the 320 primary schools
- 527 teachers
- 181 administrators
- 12 government officials

- 3,772 Parent Teacher Association participants, School Management Committee members, pregnant mothers, lactating mothers, cooks and Local and Regional Procurement (LRP) producers trained

4. The project main activities are:

- *Training: Management & Supervision for Inspectors and Directors:* The project will deliver training on leadership and management techniques to include more supportive supervision; and develop classroom management guidance for teachers and improve teaching conditions by conducting frequent and random inspection visits at schools to inspectors and school directors.
- *Promote Teacher Attendance & Recognition:* The project will enhance teacher attendance by rewarding teacher with high attendance rate and increase awareness on the importance of teacher's attendance and create a culture of respect and initiative for the responsibilities of teaching.
- *Training: Teacher Professional Development:* The project will strengthen teachers' capacity to utilize bilingual teaching methodologies and improve understanding and implementation of evidence-based reading instruction (EBRI) through five holistic teacher professional development interventions.
- *Extra-Curricular Activities:* The project will establish Girls' Clubs for Grades 4 and 5 in project schools and hygiene kits to participating girls.
- *Professional Development for Data Management, Analysis & Decision Making:* The project will train a corps of government officials in the Education Statistics and Analysis Division to analyze learning data and incorporate data points into their system for documentation to address the lack of data on student performance evaluation at the national level.
- *Provide School Meals and Take-Home Rations:* The project will provide nutritious breakfasts and lunches as well as take home rations (THR) for cooks and Pregnant and lactating women (PLW).
- *National Attendance Database and Operating Procedure:* The project will work with the GoM Division of Planning and Coordination to develop a prototype student attendance registry system and the accompanying operating procedures.
- *Training: SMC/COGES, PTAs/APEs, Civil Society Groups:* The project will strengthen school management committees (SMC/COGES) and parent teacher associations (PTA/APES) to improve the student's experience.
- *Advocacy and Awareness Raising:* The project will collaborate with MoE's Direction de l'Animation Socio-Educative to raise awareness on the benefits of children staying at school beyond Grade 5. The project will also facilitate MoE officials' participation at key international conferences including the Comparative and International Education Society (CIES) conference and Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF) conference.
- *Training: Good Health, Hygiene, and Nutrition Practices:* The project will conduct social, and behavior change communications (SBCC) interventions to improve nutrition, health, and hygiene practices of mothers and their children under five as well as PLW and provide the THR in Maternal and Child Nutrition (MCN) activities and host Health/Nutrition/WASH themed fairs.
- *Training: School Food Management Systems:* The project will establish training capacity within the Division of School Nutrition and Health (DNES) unit to conduct training at the departmental level.
- *Building/Rehabilitation: Pipeline Extensions and Water Storage Systems and Cook Stations, Cafeteria, Food Storage Units:* The project will install or rehabilitate water systems facilities

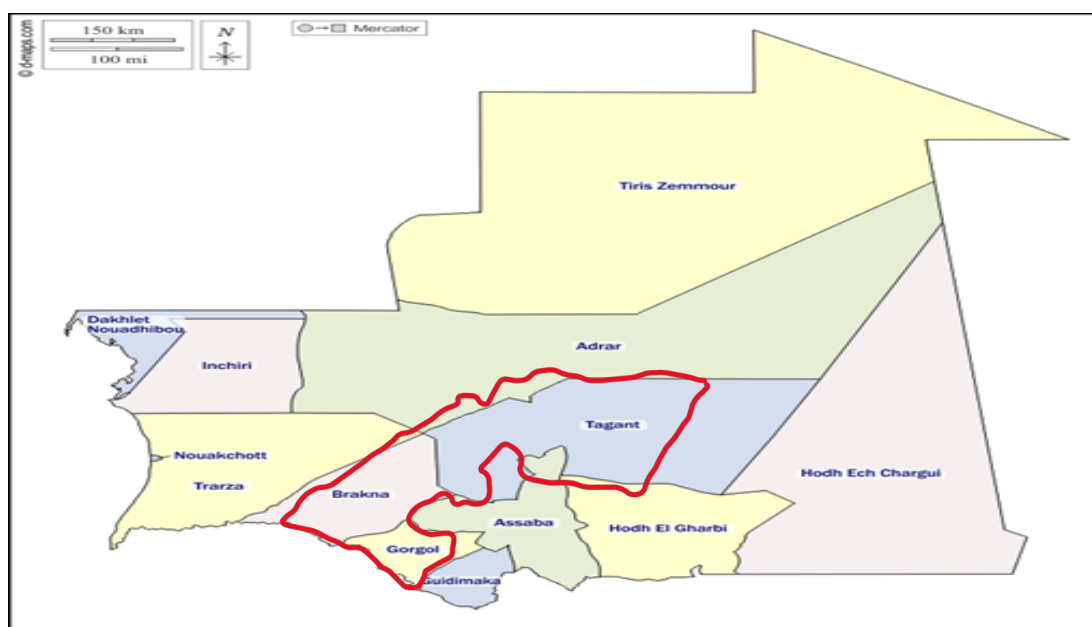
to increase access to clean water, construct or rehabilitate sanitation systems, including handwashing stations with faucets and basins or latrines, install a cook station and provide energy-efficient stoves, and construct eating areas.

- *Campaigns – Distribution of deworming medication, vitamins, and minerals:* The project will reduce schistosomiasis and other parasitic infections by conducting deworming campaigns in all schools.
- *Building Capacity: Local and Regional Procurement:* The project will purchase locally and regionally sourced commodities to school meals in addition to import commodity while strengthening local and regional supply chains and market systems and enhance the GoM’s capacity in LRP management.

From the award date, this project was implemented in parallel with the McGovern-Dole FFE-682-2019/003-00 known as *The Future is Ours (TFIO)*. This project implemented activities in 209 primary schools in the regions of Brakna and Gorgol. *The Future is Ours* was signed on September 23, 2019, and was completed on September 30, 2024. *Bridging the Future* is being implemented in 111 primary schools (in Tagant -86- and Brakna and Gorgol -25- from 2022 to 2024); starting in project year 3, *Bridging the Future* will absorb the 209 schools from *The Future is Ours* project, totaling 320 target primary schools over the life of project.

However, in the graduation strategy of the *Bridging the Future* project, the GOM has taken responsibility for 21 schools that were previously a part of *The Future is Ours* project.

Counterpart and partners ECODEV and ARED, are implementing this five-year McGovern-Dole project with a budget of \$28,500,000 in the regions of Tagant, Gorgol and Brakna in Mauritania (see map lined in red).



Counterpart continues to work towards achieving the two McGovern-Dole strategic objectives of 1) improved literacy of school-age children (MGD SO1), 2) increased use of health, nutrition, and dietary practices (MGD SO2), and 3) improved effectiveness of food assistance through local and regional procurement (LRP 1.1). In addition to continuing to work towards achieving these three objectives, the McGovern-Dole project fosters the capacity of regional and community-level stakeholders in implementing their own graduation and sustainability plans.

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR)

The midterm evaluation is anticipated to be carried out in April 2025 with completion of field data collection before the end of May 2025. The evaluation will assist Counterpart and its partners to objectively assess project implementation against the project's objectives. Through the evaluation Counterpart will be able to objectively examine project outputs, impact and results using the project's performance monitoring plan. The aim is to have a set of data-based recommendations to guide program implementation for the final 1.5 years of the project.

With reference to the baseline evaluation, the midterm should address the following elements:

1. Assess performance to-date with respect to relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability according to the definitions below and likelihood of reaching targets and achieving objectives.
2. Assess the level of performance of stakeholders Ministry of Education (at departmental and regional levels) GOM Agency in Charge of Early Childhood Development, School Management Committees, etc.
3. Assess the literacy outcomes of participating students
4. Assess student knowledge and practices in health and nutrition
5. Provide a clear picture of project strengths and weaknesses to-date
6. Examine the links between program activities and results
7. Assess the pertinence of project design to the problems the project is aiming to solve
8. Document lessons learnt and strategies for performance improvement
9. Provide a quality check of the M&E system and monitoring activities
10. Assess sustainability of efforts to date; and discuss and recommendations for graduation
11. Assess the reach of radio programming and the impact of that messaging (health, nutrition, SAP, literacy, etc.)

Relevance: the extent to which the project interventions met the needs of the project beneficiaries and is aligned with Mauritania's and US Government's development goals, objectives, and strategies. Relevance should also address the extent to which the project was designed taking into account the economic, cultural, and political context and existing relevant program activities.

Effectiveness: the extent to which the project is likely to achieve its objectives. Effectiveness should also assess the extent to which the interventions are contributing to the expected results or objectives.

Efficiency: the extent to which the project resources (inputs) have led to the results achieved. An assessment of efficiency should also consider whether the same results could have been achieved with fewer resources or whether alternative approaches could have been adopted to achieve the same results.

Impact: assessment of the medium and long-term effects, both intended and unintended, of a project intervention. Effects can be both direct or indirect and positive or negative.

As this is a midterm evaluation, attribution of effects to project interventions is not required, but attempts should be made to prove any contribution.

Sustainability: assessment of likelihood that the benefits of the project will endure over time, after the completion of the project. Sustainability should also assess the extent to which the project has planned for the continuation of project activities, developed local ownership for the project, and developed sustainable partnerships.

Do No Harm

Counterpart International works on the assumption that ethics comes before evidence, in line with the principles of 'Do No Harm': ensuring that any kind of intervention does not inadvertently or in any way do harm or worsen the situation. It is essential that any interaction and work carried out as part of this evaluation does not in any way negatively impact the individuals or communities involved. It is critical that during data collection the psychological impact of the research on participants is considered, as well as their physical security.

5. Research Questions

The following list of illustrative research questions will be answered cumulatively by the midterm, final, and any special study aiming to showcase evolution of the project impact during the implementation.

- a) Effectiveness and performance at the McGovern-Dole project level
 - Were the program implementation and expected results achieved according to plan or are there obstacles attributable to Counterpart or USDA, the Government or other partners which have limited the success of the program?
 - Were program products and outcome targets achieved? (see the table "McGovern-Dole result indicators" below)
 - In relation to the resources made available and the actual activities, what are the signs and evidence that the program has achieved or will be able to achieve its objectives and thus will have contributed to the objective to Improve Literacy of School-Age Children?
 - What added values or consequences can be attributed to the program at this stage?
 - What is the level of satisfaction of the various stakeholders with the program and the results achieved?
- b) School feeding and nutrition
 - What is the effect of school feeding on attendance, enrollment and attention?
 - How effective are take-home rations in increasing attendance for boys in grades 5 and 6?
 - What percentage of recommended daily allowance of nutrients per student are covered by school feeding, disaggregated by sexes and disaggregated by USG and non-USG sources (community and/or GOM contribution)?
 - What is the level of student knowledge about hygiene and nutrition (based on what the project has promoted/trained participants in)?
 - What demands on directors and teachers time does school feeding make? Do these added responsibilities compromise their ability to fulfil their other responsibilities?
 - What impact has COVID-19 had on school feeding?
- c) Education and Literacy
 - To what extent have girls' extracurricular activities improved their knowledge of health and hygiene best practices? (separate students in schools with girls' Clubs and those without)
 - How do the girls' club activities influence parents' positive response to allow their children to attend sexual and reproductive health education?

- What is the Midwives' perception of the girls' clubs activities? (to what extent did the girls' clubs equipped materials and Information, Education and Communication materials (IEC materials) and have created expected outcomes)?
- How sustainable are the girls' clubs? (What is the likelihood that the community (school management and/or parents, with support from the Mayor's office, for example) will adopt this activity at the end of the project?)
- How does the development of student reading skills vary by learner background and community literacy activities?
- What is the effect of teacher training on teacher skill/capacity level to teach literacy?
- What is the effect of the techniques and tools made available to teachers by the project on student performance in literacy?
- What is the ability of students to read and understand the meaning of a text at school level?
- How well integrated is the teacher training activity in the GOM MOE system?
- How sustainable is the teacher training approach (What is the likelihood that the MOE might use this approach beyond the LOP?)

d) Health

- What is the effect of deworming medication and Vitamin A on student attendance?
- What is the effect of the accessibility of useable/clean latrines on student attendance, especially for girls?
- How well are students following handwashing recommendations? Do they also practice them at home?
- To what extent do the cooks follow the appropriate food preparation learned skills?

e) LRP

- How does the project take into account the dietary needs of the beneficiary community (students, families, pregnant and lactating women -PLW-, volunteer cooks, etc.) using LRP commodities
- What are the eligibility criteria for local suppliers, producers, processors, cooperatives, associations?
- How does the project ensure compliance with food safety regulations as directed by I L'Institut National de Recherches en Santé Publique (INRSP – National Public Health Research Institute) and Office Nationale d'Inspection Sanitaire des Produits de la Pêche et de l'Aquaculture (ONISPA – National Sanitation Inspection Office for Fish and Aquaculture Products)?
- Did the project implement any specific activities to help local producers improve their productivity and comply with food security regulations standards?

f) Methodology

- How effective is the project methodology (transition to community-led school feeding approach) given the current situation in Mauritania where there are few public and private resources for school feeding?
- How appropriate are/were Counterpart's criteria for transitioning schools (categorization matrix)? Do they accurately predict schools' ability to sustainably manage school feeding?

g) Sustainability of school feeding

The mission will assess the possibilities of sustaining project achievements of the project on aspects such as school canteens, and at which level (local and/or national):

- What is the government's capacity to manage school feeding at local, regional and national levels?
- What commitment has the local, regional, and national government shown in school feeding? (e.g. do they have a school feeding policy, clearly defined roles for school feeding management, plans to increase the school feeding budget?)
- What steps/actions/ inputs are required to realize full sustainability of activities beyond the life of project?
- What are the challenges and successes of the program activities and what lessons can be drawn for the future sustainability of the program?
- Schools have sustainability action plans (SAPs): how effective does this tool/approach appear to be in its objective to foster school feeding beyond the life of the project (LOP)? Can this approach be better linked with local government (mayor's office) and the private sector?



6. MGD Outcome Indicators that Require Midterm Values (see annex for disaggregated data)

Result	Performance Indicator	Standard/ Custom	Baseline	Midline	Observations
MGD SO1	Percent of students who, by the end of two grades of primary schooling, demonstrate they can read and understand the meaning of grade level text	Standard #1	<u>Arabic</u> Overall = 3% Brakna = 0% Gorgol = 3.5% Tagant = 3.6% Male = 0% Female = 5.2% <u>French</u> Overall = 2% Brakna = 0% Gorgol = 3.6% Tagant = 1.6% Male = 0% Female = 2.9%		
	Percentage of students who, by the end of two grades, can read 20 correct letters per minute in Arabic	Custom	Overall = 60.4% Brakna = 42.1% Gorgol = 52.6% Tagant = 65.5% Male = 54.8% Female = 60.3%		

	Percentage of students who, by the end of two grades, can read 20 correct letters per minute in French	Custom	Overall = 37.4% Brakna = 22.7% Gorgol = 78.6% Tagant = 30.7% Male = 33.3% Female = 41.2%		
MGD 1.3	Average student attendance rate in USDA supported classrooms/schools	Standard #2	Overall = 91.2% Brakna = 91.5% Gorgol = 91.3% Tagant = 91.1% Male = 91.3% Female = 93.7% G1 = 91.1% G2 = 91.2% G3 = 90.7% G4 = 91.9% G5 = 92.4% G6 = 91.9%		
MGD 1.3	Number of schools utilizing National Attendance Database	Custom	0		
MGD 1.3.5	Percentage of community and parents surveyed who received information on the importance of education from events and broadcasts	Custom	0%		
MGD 1.1.2	Number of teaching and learning materials provided as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #3	0		
MGD 1.1.4	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants in target schools who demonstrate use of new and quality teaching techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #4	0		

	Number of teachers/educators/teaching assistants trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #5	0		
MGD 1.1.5	Number of school administrators and officials in target schools who demonstrate use of new techniques or tools as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #6	0		
	Number of school administrators and officials trained or certified as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #7	0		
MGD 1.3.3 and 2.4	Number of educational facilities (i.e., school buildings, classrooms, improved water sources, and latrines) rehabilitated/constructed as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #8	0		
MGD 1.3.3 and 2.4	Number of refurbished school refectories (eating + cooking) constructed/rehabilitated with USDA assistance	Custom	0		
MGD 1.3.4	Number of students enrolled in schools receiving USDA assistance	Standard #9	<p>Overall = 17,068 Brakna = 1,616 Gorgol = 3,130 Tagant = 12,322</p> <p>Male = 8,372 Female = 8,696</p> <p>G1 = 3778 G2 = 3212 G3 = 3400 G4 = 2553 G5 = 2153 G6 = 2193</p>		
MGD 1.4.1 and 1.4.3	Number of government officials receiving technical trained to support EGR activities	Custom	0		

MGD 1.4.4	Number of public-private partnerships formed as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #12	0		
	Number of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) or similar “school” governance structures supported as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #13	0		
MGD 1.2.1, 1.3.1, 1.2.1.1/1.3.1.1	Quantity of take-home rations provided (in metric tons) as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #14	0		
	Number of individuals receiving take-home rations as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #15	0		
	Number of daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) provided to school-age children as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #16	0		
	Number of school-age children receiving daily school meals (breakfast, snack, lunch) as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #17	0		
MGD 2.0	Number of individuals who demonstrate use of new child health and nutrition practices as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #19	0		
MGD 2.1	Percentage of beneficiaries who can demonstrate knowledge of effective health and hygiene practices as a result of USDA assistance	Custom	0		
MGD 2.2	Number of individuals trained in safe food preparation and storage as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #22	0		
MGD 2.3	Number of individuals trained in child health and nutrition as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #23	0		
MGD 1.3.5., 1.4.4	Percentage of targeted parents participating in community behavior change activities	Custom	0		
MGD 2.4	Number of schools using an improved water source	Standard #27			

	Number of schools with improved sanitation facilities	Standard #28			
	Number of girls' hygiene kits delivered	Custom	0		
MGD 2.1., 2.4	Percentage of students washing hands before eating and after using the latrine (at school)	Custom	Overall = 52.6% Brakna = 39.6% Gorgol = 38.3% Tagant = 57.7% Male = 53.6% Female = 51.9%		
MGD 2.4	Number of students receiving deworming medication(s)	Standard #29	0		
MGD SO1, SO2	Number of individuals participating in USDA food security programs	Standard #30	0		
	Number of individuals benefiting indirectly from USDA-funded interventions	Standard #31	0		
	Number of schools reached as a result of USDA assistance	Standard #32	0		
LRP 1.1.1	Cost of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity and source country)	LRP Standard #5	0		
LRP 1.3.2	Quantity of commodity procured as a result of USDA assistance (by commodity and source country)	LRP Standard #6	0		
LRP SO1	Number of schools reached as a result of USDA assistance	LRP #16	0		
LRP	Number of people trained to improve delivery and commodity management as a result of USDA assistance	Custom	0		
LRP 1.4.3	Number of individuals in the agriculture system who have applied improved management practices or technologies with USDA assistance	LRP 12	0		



7. Approach and Methodology

Counterpart is looking for innovative suggestions regarding the methodology design of this evaluation. Generally, Counterpart anticipates that this evaluation will take a mixed-methods approach, utilizing quantitative and qualitative methods and tools appropriate to the evaluation's research questions. The qualitative methods will help address some of the limitations of the quantitative methods and provide contextual understanding and interpretation of the quantitative results.

The consultant/firm will detail in the inception report the methodological approach that will be followed to carry out the evaluation; however, it should include the following two components:

(1) Consultation of existing data: use of all the documentation produced within the framework of the implementation of the project. During this phase, the consultant will carry out a documentary review which will consist, among other things, in collecting the available information on the approaches, tools, and mechanisms for planning, implementation and monitoring of the project as well as the documentation generated in the process of implementing the project. For this purpose, a list of mandatory documents will be agreed upon by the consultant and Counterpart. On this basis, the consultant will provide a methodological note.

(2) Participatory approach: This involves the organization of working meetings with the main actors and beneficiaries on the results of the project. The evaluation should use participatory approaches to involve key stakeholders, including implementing partners, subcontractors, program participants, and USDA. In this context, the consultant will meet regional and local officials, as well as direct and indirect beneficiaries of project interventions. It is expected that the evaluator will conduct multiple rounds of focus group discussions with local government staff, school administrators, teachers, parents, school cooks, relevant local partners staff, Counterpart relevant staff, and the community (Ministry of National Education, Departmental Inspector of Education and Training, Government Agency in Charge of Early Childhood Development).

a. Design overview

The midterm performance evaluation will have both a quantitative and qualitative focus, while also collecting limited data from a comparison group that was included in the baseline evaluation. This evaluation will assess progress to date as well as make recommendations for improvement in the second half of the project. The midterm will use a mixed method approach including a quantitative survey of project indicators in McGovern-Dole schools and extensive qualitative research about the questions above. The survey for this midterm evaluation will include the 111 schools targeted by the baseline for this project, in addition to a small sampling of health posts and local governments (mayor's office). All 111 schools from the baseline survey must be visited given the nature of the project's indicators (most of which are in absolute number versus percentage). Stakeholders and beneficiaries will be sampled according to the methodology which the evaluators will propose (and approved by Counterpart prior to planning fieldwork.) Counterpart will ensure that the sample size will provide an acceptable margin of error (<5%) and will be clustered for gender representation.

To assess the literacy outcomes of beneficiary students two methods will be used:

- Method #1: A longitudinal study that will compare student performance at the baseline and the midterm for the same cluster (students in project schools). This methodology measures

the improvement (change) over time of beneficiaries at a later point in time compared to the initial state before the start of this project.

- **Method #2:** A cross-sectional study that will compare student performance between students in project schools and students in comparison schools (the same cluster of schools that was used at baseline as a comparison group.) This will require a sampling of students in those schools (same grades) that have already been identified, and therefore maintain the same control group (same schools, same grades, but not necessarily the same students) for all three evaluations (baseline, midterm, and final).

In the school/community sample, interviews will be conducted with students, SMCs, cooks, directors, teachers, health post nurses, MOE agents at the district level. Interviews with students will take place only in elementary schools, while interviews with teachers and principals will also take place in primary schools. There are 111 primary schools.

b. Document review

The documents to be reviewed as part of the midterm evaluation include the USDA-approved Attachment A: Plan of Operation and Attachment D: Performance Indicators from the cooperative agreement, the baseline evaluation final report, the semi-annual reports submitted to USDA, the project activity reports, annual workplan data collection tools, the Project Monitoring and Performance plan, the Monitoring & Evaluation policy and the Food Assistance Division (FAD) indicator handbook.

c. Enumerator recruitment and data collection training

The evaluation firm will identify and recruit local enumerators for data collection who should have a bachelor's degree and experience conducting applied research, surveys and evaluations. Given the nature of the research, Counterpart has a preference for both female and male enumerators. During the data collection training, supervisors can be identified.

The evaluation firm will be responsible for developing a Data Collection Manual for review by the Counterpart team prior to training. The firm will be responsible for printing all data collection instruments for training, incorporating (and translating) and revisions to instruments following the training and pilots, and printing all instruments for data collection.

d. Pilot survey

The awardee is required to conduct a pilot survey to test all questionnaires. The pilot is especially important because question phrasing will be used for the subsequent evaluations and must elicit accurate responses. Sufficient time must be allocated for updating all instruments based on pilot findings.

e. Survey

All 111 primary schools will be surveyed. The sampling for the student surveys will use a two-step cluster design, the first being class selection and the second student selection (stratified by gender). The total size of the sample of students for the schools should be at least 1,052 (which represents 5% of primary school student beneficiaries from the 111 schools surveyed at the baseline). The same sample will be used for two comparison groups with and without extracurricular reading activities. As part of the methodology to be proposed, the following stakeholder groups (which are in every school) must be sampled using pertinent surveys based on their participation in the project: parents, reading-club volunteers, cooks, school directors, school committee members, and school farm

participants, in addition to students and teachers. Government representatives, including academic inspectors, district and regional actors, and local government officials will also be sampled but they are not located at every school. All sampling will meet the 95% confidence level, the 5% margin of error standard.

f. Reading & Survey Tools

This evaluation will use the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) to measure students' literacy skills. The selected tool will be adapted to the grades being tested. Please note that the project literacy interventions focus on grades 4, 5 and 6. EGRA is a simplified reading test that scores a child's ability to read on surveyed students reading levels. EGRA starts with a grade-appropriate reading task and based on the student's ability to complete that task is then given progressively easier or more difficult reading tasks until their reading level is determined.

For the interviews targeting the actors listed in the section above, a questionnaire will be developed for each type of actor to gather the necessary data so that progress on meeting objectives can be assessed and indicators can be evaluated.

g. Data entry, cleaning and analysis

The local data collection firm is responsible for entering all data collected under this evaluation. The data collection firm will also prepare and deliver a codebook to accompany the final dataset. Analysis of survey data will be conducted using appropriate statistical software such as SPSS or Stata. The analysis will include comparisons by type of beneficiary and by sex, class and department, as well as tests of statistical significance. For EGRA reading scores, this includes average reading scores by grade as well as the proportion of students reading at or above their grade level.

*** Firms with the capacity to collect data using tablets or smart phones are encouraged to propose conducting electronic data entry using tools such as ODK, KoboToolbox, or others. The firm must explain the methodology of programming/testing surveys, cleaning, and submitting electronic data. Data collection will be done electronically by tablet.*

8. Assignment Timeline, Place of Performance, and Other Conditions

Counterpart anticipates the preparatory work and review of relevant reports and documents to be completed and the *Midterm Evaluation Workplan* submitted prior to field work. The evaluator will conduct field data collection and this must be completed before the end of May 2025.

The first draft of the evaluation report is due to Counterpart in early June 2025. Once the draft is submitted, Counterpart will have seven business days to review the report, raise concerns, provide comments, and send it back to the evaluator. The evaluator will then address Counterpart's comments and concerns and submit a revised report to Counterpart for Counterpart and the donor's review. The final version of the report is due no later than mid-June 2025. Should Counterpart still not be satisfied with the quality of the final report, then both Counterpart and the evaluator will negotiate a no-cost extension to ensure both parties are satisfied with the final result.

Throughout the midterm evaluation, there must be open communication between the evaluator and Counterpart through phone calls, emails, text messages, Microsoft teams, or face-to-face meetings for effective coordination between both parties and to ensure that potential issues are resolved in a timely manner. Any anticipated changes to the plan during the evaluation must be submitted in writing and be approved by Counterpart.

Please note that all final versions of international food assistance evaluation reports will be made publicly available. Evaluators shall provide a copy of the evaluation reports that is free of personally identifiable information (PII) and proprietary information. Final versions of evaluation reports ready for publication should be accessible to persons with disabilities. For guidance on creating documents accessible to persons with disabilities, please see the following resources:
<https://www.section508.gov/create/documents>
<https://www.section508.gov/create/pdfs>

a. Timeline

Task	Deadline
Selection of consultant/firm and signing of contract	February 28, 2025
Submission of midterm Evaluation Workplan: (Literature review, evaluation design including data collection and analysis methodology; draft sampling strategy, and intended respondents /key informants; quality assurance plan; Draft Evaluation Schedule; and Draft Data Collection Tools)	March 17, 2025
Finalize data collection tools and evaluation schedule	March 28, 2025
Field work: travel and training of data collectors	April 2-9, 2025
Field Work: testing data collection tools, calibration, and data collection	April 10-May 10, 2025
Data analysis	May 11 - 25, 2025
Debriefing on preliminary findings at CPI Field Office and/or CPI HQ	May 26-30, 2025
Submission of first draft report	June 10, 2025
Review and comment of first draft (and subsequent drafts as necessary) by Counterpart International,	June 19, 2025
First draft submission to USDA by Counterpart International	June 20, 2025
Responses to USDA review with support from Counterpart International	July 18, 2025
Second draft submission to USDA by Counterpart International	August 1, 2025
Responses to second USDA review with support from Counterpart International	August 8, 2025
Submission of final report, datasets and tools	August 15, 2025

b. Staff Structure

The evaluation team will comprise one program evaluator (Team Leader), data collection person and three or more local or international consultants or members of a consulting firm selected for their technical expertise. To the extent possible, the evaluation team will be gender balanced. For full qualifications, see ITB, Section I, 4. Content of Bid, I. Qualifications.

c. Deliverables

The awardee will be responsible for the seven deliverables below. All deliverables must be approved by Counterpart.

1. Inception report

Before starting fieldwork, the awardee will submit an inception report for approval by Counterpart. The inception report will contain (1) a description of the methods used to determine the sample; (2) a work plan for fieldwork with a description and schedule for all activities; (3) a quality assurance plan; and (4) all tools to be used for data collection, including questionnaires.

2. In-country debrief

Before the fieldwork is completed, the awardee will complete a debrief with the MGD team in Mauritania. The debrief presentation will cover what changes were made to questions based on the pilot, if there were any survey challenges and preliminary findings.

3. Draft evaluation report

The report shall contain the following sections: 1) Introduction, 2) Methodology, 3) Results and 4) Recommendations. The Results section will include both summary midterm values as well as a description of qualitative results. The Recommendations will be both a) programmatic based on relevant results and b) methodological for subsequent evaluations. The report should detail and justify how key indicators and research questions were operationalized and measured. The draft report will include a table of the performance indicators with clean data gathered from the midterm evaluation (as an annex.)

4. Presentation to field and HQ staff and to USDA

The awardee will prepare a PowerPoint presentation of the draft evaluation report and present it to Counterpart HQ and MGD field staff. Another presentation will be prepared for the intention of USDA.

5. Datasets, tools, and survey manual

All datasets and tools will be shared with Counterpart. The final report will include all clean data sets, and the information must be clearly presented so that it can be easily understood by a variety of readers (project staff, donor, Government of Mauritania, and other participants.) Additionally, a survey manual explaining how the survey(s) were carried out will be provided.

6. Summary brief

The midterm evaluation summary, not to exceed 4 pages, will summarize the main findings of the report. It should include charts, graphs, etc. to visualize the data in a clear, easy to read format, accessible to stakeholders from the community level to the government level. It should also include succinct information on the evaluation design and other relevant methodological considerations. French and English versions are required.

7. Final report

The final report (in English) will incorporate written feedback and comments from the presentation. It should not exceed 40 pages, exclusive of annexes. The final version of

international food assistance evaluation report will be made publicly available. Evaluators shall provide a copy of the evaluation reports that is free of personally identifiable information (PII) and proprietary information. Final versions of evaluation reports ready for publication should be accessible to persons with disabilities. For guidance on creating documents accessible to persons with disabilities, please see the following resources: <https://www.section508.gov/create/documents> and <https://www.section508.gov/create/pdfs>

The following table outlines requirements for the Final Midterm Report:

Report Length	Maximum of 40 pages, excluding the Table of Contents, Acronym List, and Annexes and should be written in Times New Roman font size 12.
Illustrative Report Outline	<p>Acknowledgement Table of Contents Table of Exhibits Acronym List Executive Summary (in English and French) Chapter 1. Evaluation Purpose and Research Questions Chapter 2. Project Background Chapter 3. Evaluation Method 3.1 Methodologies 3.2 Sampling Framework 3.3 Data Sources and Data Collection Methods 3.4 Field Work 3.5 Analysis Plan 3.6 Strengths and Limitations Chapter 4. Results of indicators (by table and disaggregation) Findings Chapter 5. Conclusion and Recommendations 5.1 Summary of Key Findings 5.2 Lessons Learned 5.3 Recommendations Chapter 6. References Annexes</p>
Executive Summary	Include an Executive Summary that provides a brief overview of the evaluation purpose, project background, evaluation questions, methods, findings, and conclusions.
Questions	Address all evaluation questions in the SOW.
Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain evaluation methodology in detail. • Disclose evaluation limitations, especially those associated with the evaluation methodology (e.g., selection bias, recall bias, etc.). <p>NOTE: A summary of methodology can be included in the body of the report, with the full description provided as an annex.</p>
Findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tables with indicator results and disaggregation based on PMP • Brief description of each table, including any context or explanation necessary to aid the reader in interpreting and understanding.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed description of findings for methodological research questions and operationalizing of key indicators as described in the scope of work
Recommendations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support recommendations with specific findings. Provide recommendations that are action-oriented, practical, and specific.
Annexes	<p>Include the following, as annexes, at a minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Terms of Reference All evaluation tools (questionnaires, checklists, discussion guides, surveys, etc.). A list of sources of information (key informants, documents reviewed, other data sources) <p>Only if applicable, include as an annex Statement(s) of Differences regarding any significant unresolved differences of opinion on the part of funders, implementers, and/or members of the evaluation.</p>
Quality Control	Assess reports for quality by including an in-house peer technical review with comments provided to the evaluator.
Transparency	An English report should be submitted in an electronic version to Counterpart for approval.

d. Method of payment

Payment will be based on the following milestones:

Milestone	Payment
Inception Report: Midterm Evaluation Workplan and Methodology Plan Submission	20 % of the total
Completion of Data Collection and Field Work; Debriefing	20 % of the total
Draft Evaluation Report Submission	25% of the total
Final report submitted and approved; all data handed over to Counterpart	35 % of the total

e. Roles and Responsibilities

The evaluator will be responsible for all the deliverables listed in the TOR and will be free to draw its own conclusions free from political or organizational pressure. Counterpart will be responsible for communication with evaluation participants when necessary for planning purposes. Logistical support for participation in the evaluation (by project beneficiaries) will be provided by Counterpart, but this is expected to be minimal as the evaluator will be traveling to sites where beneficiaries are located, in addition to online interviews and information gathering. Evaluating team will be responsible for all its own logistical planning and expenses.

Post awarding of the contract, the point of contact for this evaluation will be the Chief of Party, MEAL Director, Counterpart HQ's MEAL and Project Delivery support will take part regarding the overall

scope, direction, and completion of this assignment. USDA will provide guidance as needed along with feedback on the initial draft, to be included in the final report. USDA will also be consulted as a key informant prior to evaluation fieldwork. Counterpart Chief of Party is responsible for the final approval of evaluation deliverables.

Counterpart HQ staff including Associate Director, Senior Program Officer, MEAL Officer, Chief of Party, and Mauritania MEAL Director will provide all relevant reports, data and related information necessary to prepare the evaluator for the assignment. The HQ point of contact will be the Senior Program Officer. The in-country point of contact will be the Chief of Party and MEAL Director.

f. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals for this midterm evaluation will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

Evaluation Criteria	Score
Firm (team leader) prior experience in similar work; Firm should include draft of comparable study that they have completed. This will be used to review quality. Qualifications for Associate will be reviewed.	25 points
Proposed overall methodology and Proposed sampling method	20 points
References	10 points
Quality of data-collection and data-entry procedures	10 points
Timeframe for delivery of Evaluation deliverables	5 points
Methods of quality control	10 points
Budget	20 points
Total Score:	100 points

When drafting the proposal, the Consultant/Firm should be careful to include all the information requested above. Failure to submit a complete application will result in rejection of the proposal.



ANNEX 1: RESULTS FRAMEWORK

Figure 1: Results Framework #1 - Improved literacy of school aged children

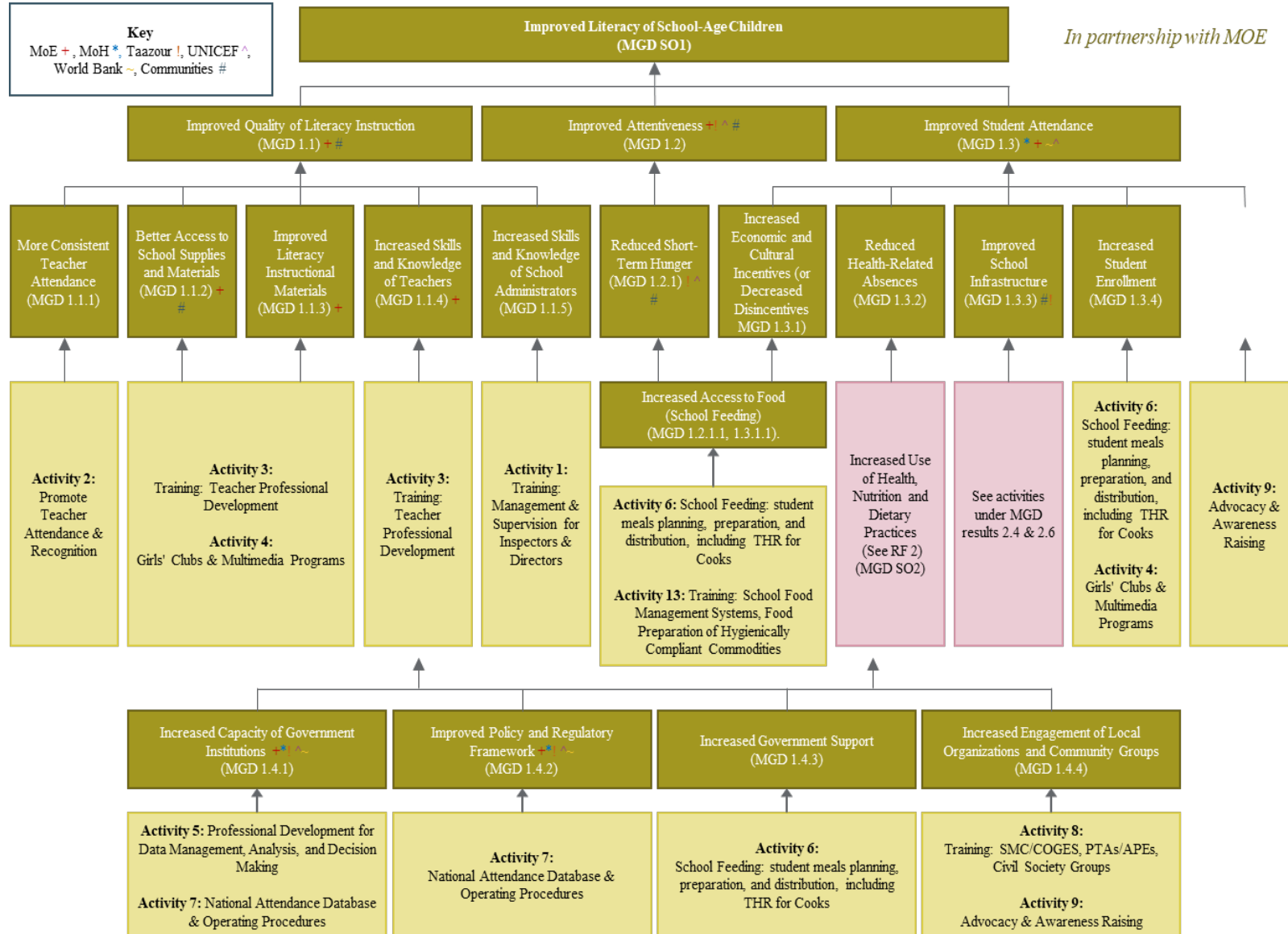


Figure 2: Results Framework #2 - Increased use of health, nutrition, and dietary practices

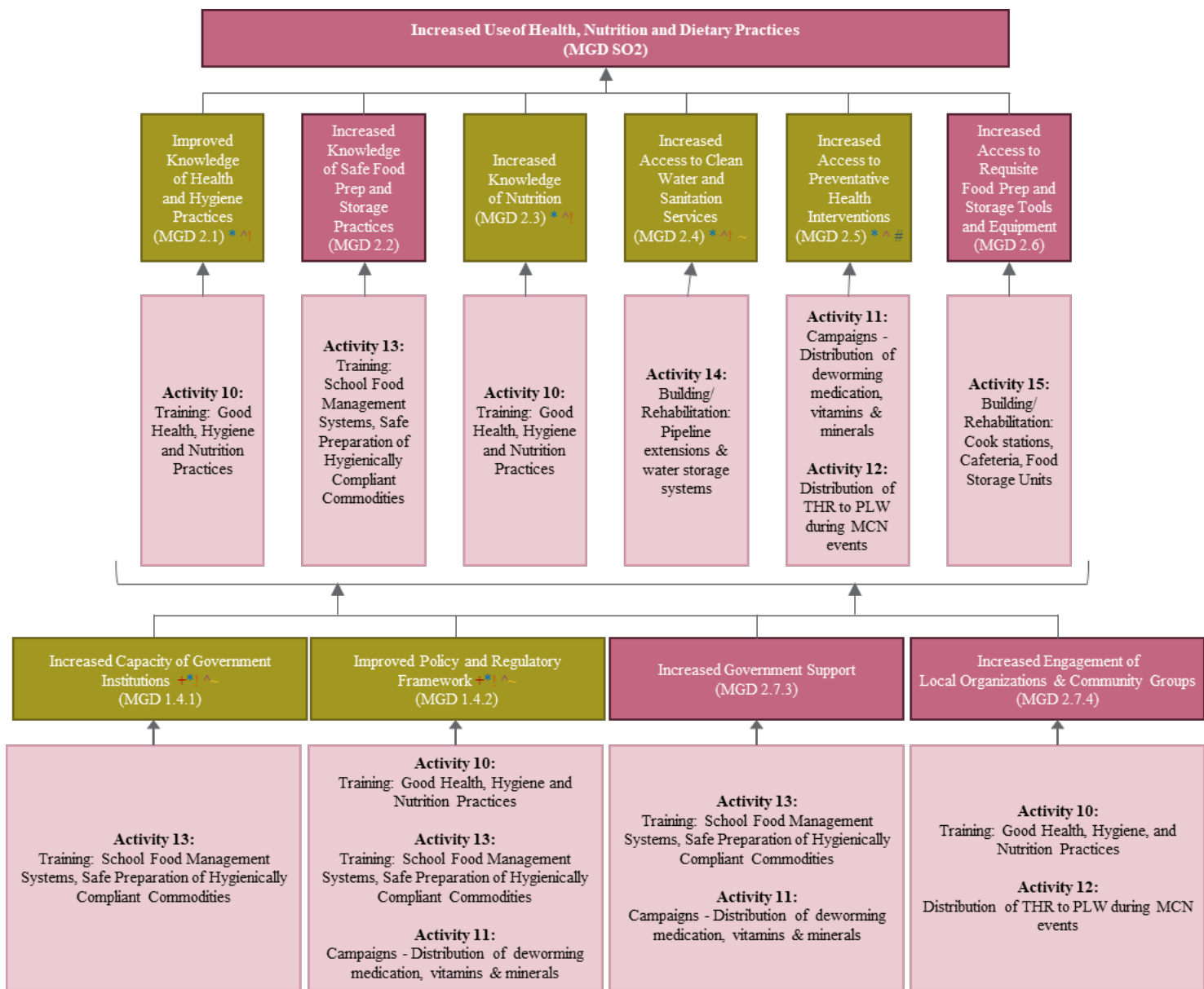


Figure 3: Results Framework #3 - Improved effectiveness of food assistance through local and regional procurement

