Request for Proposals (RfP)
Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) Services for data.org

Background and Overview

data.org is a platform for partnerships to build the field of data for social impact (DSI). Launched in 2020 by the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth and The Rockefeller Foundation, we work with organizations from all over the world to increase the use of data to improve the lives of millions of people. data.org envisions a world that uses the power of data to tackle society’s greatest challenges and improve lives across the globe.

data.org brings together philanthropy, private sector technology, academia, and social impact organizations (SIOs) to build the field of data for social impact. We do this work in three ways:

1. **Prove the Cases:** data.org, in close collaboration with other funders, invests in use cases to advance the ways data is used in the social sector and show what great looks like to inspire and connect others.

2. **Strengthen Capacity:** data.org supports initiatives to strengthen the human and organizational capacity required to advance the field and develop a data mindset and capability within organizations and the sector as a whole. We commit to training one-million purpose-driven data practitioners by 2032. At the same time, we commit to helping SIOs build their infrastructure, operations, strategy, and culture. Launching to the public in Q1 2024, learning.data.org is expected to be the primary vehicle for realizing these commitments at the envisaged scale.

3. **Transform the Commons:** data.org believes that the field of data has a responsibility to help tackle the most pressing challenges and commits to democratizing and advancing public goods like data sets, tools, resources, and knowledge required to transform the ecosystem.

Learn more about [our Approach and Guiding Principles](#), and [our Initiatives](#).

As part of our commitment to help train or engage one million purpose-driven data practitioners by 2032, we are actively engaged in various projects and initiatives across five geographies (India, Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the United States). We recognize the importance of robust Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) / Monitoring, Evaluation, Accountability, and Learning (MEAL) systems to ensure our programs are effective, transformative, and accountable.

*Through this RfP, we seek a partner (experienced firms or consultants) who can support us in developing and implementing comprehensive MEL/MEAL systems to guide our initiatives in these regions as they scale in scope and impact.*
We are looking for an MEL/MEAL partner to collaborate with us over a multi-year period, extending through 2026. We seek applicants who:

- Specialize in truly transformative, antiracist, equitable, feminist, and/or participatory approaches to MEL/MEAL, in line with our Guiding Principles
- Demonstrate expertise and experience in mixed methods research, creative communication, and most importantly, data-driven insights and visualizations
- Hold a valid W-9 form (if US-based) or W-8 form (if not US-based)

Interested applicants can download a preliminary version of our MEL/MEAL framework using this link: https://data.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/08/1-data.org-Indicators-and-logframe_Final-Draft.xlsx

Scope of Work

The selected MEL/MEAL partner will be responsible for the following activities:

1. **Collaborative MEL/MEAL Framework Design:** Working closely with our team, the partner will co-design an MEL/MEAL framework that aligns with data.org's Mission and Approach. The framework should
   a. Embrace truly transformative, antiracist, equitable, feminist, and/or participatory principles, ensuring the inclusion and empowerment of marginalized groups with whom we collaborate.
   b. Examine all of data.org’s work (historic, present, and future) along with the work of our partners across geographies, given much of our impact relies on the strength of our partnerships and related networks.

2. **Data Collection and Analysis:** Support the Analyze function of data.org’s data value chain (DVC) with data collection, management, analytics, and systems to capture relevant indicators and outcomes. The partner should:
   a. Use both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods (e.g., surveys, interviews, focus groups, and case studies)
   b. Have expertise in sophisticated data, statistical, and text analysis as well as experience with managing and drawing insights from high-volumes of learning analytics data

3. **Global Research and Evaluation:** Conducting MEL/MEAL research in each of the five geographies (India, Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the US) to evaluate the effectiveness, long-term impact and sustainability of our programs. The partner should:
   a. Employ rigorous impact evaluation methodologies that are easy-to-understand by a variety of audiences – especially donors, foundations, governments, and other SIOs
   b. Take a lens of social justice, equity, and gender equality

4. **Learning, Adaptation, and Sustainability:** Facilitating a learning culture within data.org and supporting adaptive management. The partner should assist in translating evaluation findings into actionable recommendations, fostering learning and continuous improvement. The partner is expected to help the Analyze function of data.org set up appropriate processes and mechanisms to embed (e.g., replicate) data collection and evaluation functions in data.org’s
current and future work. This is of utmost importance as data.org intends to manage its data.

5. **Reporting and Communication:** Producing comprehensive reports and presentations that effectively communicate evaluation findings, insights, and recommendations to diverse stakeholders (any experience in communication with donor agencies will be rated favorably). The partner should have strong skills in data visualization and storytelling to ensure the information is accessible and engaging.

An initial set of envisaged activities includes:

1. Support in harmonizing and finalizing the organizational MEL/MEAL framework
2. Collaboratively defining key metrics
3. Development of evaluation methodologies and supporting workflow for tasks like (but not limited to) large scale surveys, feedback forms, year on year data monitoring.
4. Historical data search and documentation for organizational impact made between 2020 and 2023
5. Support in development and maintenance of MEL/MEAL data systems, including learning analytics, with our Senior Data Analyst
6. Preparing reporting templates
7. Review and harmonisation of partner frameworks

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** data.org’s commitment to helping train or engage one million purpose-driven data practitioners is expected to be realized primarily through our digital learning efforts and a “network of network” impact of activities led by our partners. Therefore, it is imperative that the partner is skilled in working with large volumes of data, especially learning analytics, and has expertise in documenting and communicating the importance of indirect reach and impact.

**Suggested MEL/MEAL Collaboration Deliverables**

The proposed multi-year collaboration will cover the period from Q4 2023 to Q4 2026, expected to be a duration of about three years. The following deliverables are anticipated:

1. **Yearly MEL/MEAL Plans:** Submit a detailed MEL/MEAL plan at the beginning of each year outlining the proposed activities, methodologies, timelines, and budgets, with a full review of the agreed plan by July of each year for any course correction.
2. **Research Reports:** Provide comprehensive research reports for each region, summarizing findings, insights, and recommendations disaggregated on pre-defined levels (age, gender, disability etc.).
3. **Evaluation Reports:** Deliver impact evaluation reports at the end of significant program cycles or initiatives, highlighting the long-term effects and sustainability of our programs.
4. **Data-driven Insights and Visualizations**: Develop visually appealing and informative data-driven insights and visualizations (consistent with data.org’s communication guidelines) to aid in communicating evaluation findings.

5. **Presentations**: Conduct presentations to share evaluation results, facilitate learning, and engage key data.org stakeholders.

6. **Annual Progress Reports**: Provide annual progress reports summarizing achievements, challenges, and lessons learned.

Applicants are welcome to modify and make suggestions to the deliverables list based on their experience and expertise.

**Selection Criteria**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

1. **Experience and Expertise**:
   a. Experience in MEL/MEAL system design and execution, with a focus on transformative, antiracist, equitable, feminist, and/or participatory approaches.
   b. Experience in mixed methods research, including quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis, visualization and interpretation (including large volumes of learning analytics data).
   c. Experience in impact evaluation and communicating evaluation findings to diverse stakeholders.
   d. Experience in global research, working with multilingual and diverse teams, preferably from some or all of the specified regions (India, Southeast Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the US)
   e. Positive references from previous clients or partners and work examples indicating the quality and impact of work.

2. **Methodological Rigor**: Detail orientation of the Technical Approach and demonstration of a clear understanding of the deliverables expected as well as time and resources required while working with a global organization with several geographically dispersed partners.

3. **Team Structure & Activity Timelines**: Availability of a qualified consultant or diverse team with the necessary skills and expertise till the conclusion of the partnership period (2026 Q4).

4. **Core Values, Philosophical Alignment, IDEA & Intersectionality**: Strong alignment with our Approach and Guiding Principles, as demonstrated in the Technical Approach.

5. **Budget (in USD)**: A well-reasoned and competitive financial proposal that aligns with the scope of work and deliverables outlined in this RfP. Budget proposals should incorporate an “all activity” budget as well as cost breakdowns of different components. Alongside the organization level MEL, some of data.org’s programs require program-level evaluation. Please add some indication of the cost of such ‘add-on’ evaluations listing out the key activities covered in those.

**Submission Details**
Interested applicants should submit their proposals electronically to info@data.org (with ronda@data.org in CC) by September 1, 2023. The proposal should include the following:

1. **Executive Summary**: A brief overview of the applicant’s qualifications and relevant experience.
2. **Technical Approach**: A detailed description of the proposed methodology, including how the firm will incorporate truly transformative, antiracist, equitable, feminist, and participatory principles into their MEL/MEAL approach.
3. **Work Plan**: A comprehensive work plan outlining the proposed activities, timelines, and milestones for each year of the collaboration.
4. **Team Composition**: Provide detailed information about the team member(s), their roles, qualifications, and relevant experience.
5. **Financial Proposal (in USD)**: A detailed financial proposal specifying the costs associated with each activity, including any anticipated expenses such as travel, data collection, analysis, and reporting.
6. **References**: Contact information for at least three references from previous clients or organizations.
7. **W-9 form (if US-based) or W-8 form (if non-US based)**: For initial due diligence. *If selected, the applicant will be requested to share detailed scope of work (as collaboratively finalized), contractor proposal form, and wire forms.*

The technical and financial proposal will be evaluated based on the following key criteria:

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<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Weightage</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Technical proposal</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Experience and Expertise</td>
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<td>Methodological Rigor</td>
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<td>Team Structure &amp; Activity Timelines</td>
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<td>Core Values, Philosophical Alignment, IDEA &amp; Intersectionality</td>
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<td><strong>Financial proposal</strong></td>
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<td>Budget &amp; Financials</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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**Timeline**

The timeline for the proposed collaboration is as follows:

- Online Q&A session: **August 17, 2023, 9:00 AM EST**
• Submission of proposals in response to this RfP: September 1, 2023, 11:59 PM EST
• Evaluation of proposals and shortlisting of applicants: September 14, 2023
• Notification of shortlisted applicants: September 15, 2023
• Contract negotiation and finalization: September 30, 2023
• Commencement of collaboration: October 2, 2023
• Annual MEL/MEAL plans and subsequent deliverables: As per agreed-upon timelines within the contract period.

Please note that data.org reserves the right to modify the RfP process at its discretion.

Contact Information

For any queries or clarifications regarding this RfP, please contact:

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ronda@data.org

Thank you for your interest in collaborating with data.org on this important work.