

## Request for Proposal (RFP)

Commodity/Service Required:	Design, Development, and Implementation of AI-based Digital Assistant for DPDC
Type of Procurement:	One-time Procurement
Type of Contract / Purchase order:	Fixed Cost PO
Term of Contract / Purchase order:	One term PO
Contract Funding:	USAID
This Procurement supports:	South Asia Regional Energy Partnership (SAREP)
Submit Proposal to:	SAREP-Procurement@rti.org
Date of Issue of RFP:	February 06, 2024
Date Questions from Supplier Due:	February 12, 2024
Date Proposal Due:	February 17, 2024
Approximate Date Purchase Order Issued to Successful Bidder(s):	February 25, 2024

<b>Method of Submittal:</b>	
Respond via e-mail with attached document in MS Word / pdf format. The Bidder/Seller agrees to hold the prices in its offer firm for <b>90 days</b> from the date specified for the receipt of offers, unless another time is specified in the addendum of the RFP/RFQ.	
Solicitation Number:	SAREP-RFP-2024-004

**Attachments to RFP:**

1. Attachment “A” – Commodity Specifications
2. Attachment “B” – Instructions to Bidders/Sellers
3. All PO Terms and Conditions are listed on our website at:  
<https://www.rti.org/sites/default/files/rti-purchase-order-terms-and-conditions-v1.16.pdf>,  
[http://www.rti.org/files/PO\\_FAR\\_Clauses.pdf](http://www.rti.org/files/PO_FAR_Clauses.pdf) or for commercial items:  
[http://www.rti.org/files/PO\\_FAR\\_Clauses\\_Commercial\\_Items.pdf](http://www.rti.org/files/PO_FAR_Clauses_Commercial_Items.pdf) (hereinafter the “Terms”).  
 Supplier’s delivery of products, performance of services, or issuance of invoices in connection with this purchase order establishes Supplier’s agreement to the Terms. The Terms may only be modified in writing signed by both parties.

All bidders/sellers are responsible to carefully review each attachment and follow any instructions that may be relevant to this procurement.

**By submitting a bid, the bidder is implied to have accepted all the terms and conditions listed in each of the three attachments.**

**RTI International is a trade name of Research Triangle Institute. RTI and the RTI logo are U.S. registered trademarks of Research Triangle Institute.**

## Attachment A Commodity Specifications or Statement of Work

### Statement of Work

Indicate a description of the activity/service that is expected from the supplier. Provide product specifications or service expectations (both if applicable). Include deliverables, timelines, and any special terms and conditions.

Description of Activity/Service:

#### **Introduction**

RTI International is an independent, nonprofit research institute dedicated to improving the human condition. Clients rely on us to answer questions that demand an objective and multidisciplinary approach—one that integrates expertise across the social and laboratory sciences, engineering, and international development. We believe in the promise of science, and we are inspired every day to deliver on that promise for the good of people, communities, and businesses around the world.

RTI International has been working in Asia for more than 35 years, providing technical assistance, institutional strengthening, and program support on behalf of governments, foundations, and private-sector clients. Together with our local partners, we deliver science-based solutions and advisory and technical services to help countries across South and Southeast Asia achieve national, regional, and local goals—in health, education, economic growth, governance and public policy, and environmental management. RTI is implementing 19 projects in the Asia region with its offices located in India, Indonesia, Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Laos, Nepal, and Papua New Guinea.

RTI International is the implementing contractor for a five (5) year USAID project called the USAID South Asia Regional Energy Partnership (SAREP). SAREP will serve as a linchpin of the Asia Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy (EDGE) initiative. To achieve USAID's goal of improving access to affordable, secure, reliable and sustainable energy, SAREP will address two distinct, yet mutually dependent objectives: a. Enabling six countries – Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka—to build systems and processes in line with their respective economic and energy security priorities, and b. Facilitating collaboration among these six countries in a regional energy market that will accelerate economic development, self-reliance, livelihoods, health, and productivity throughout the region.

SAREP's objectives are as follows:

- Workstream 1: Regional Energy Hub
- Workstream 2: Technical Services
  - Objective 1: Enhanced regional energy markets and integration
  - Objective 2: Increased development of advanced energy
  - Objective 3: High-performing modern utilities.
  - Objective 4: Transparent, best-value procurement.

**Product or Service Expectations (both if applicable):****Design, Development, and Implementation of AI-based Digital Assistant for Dhaka Power Distribution Company Ltd. (DPDC), Bangladesh****I. Background**

The South Asia Regional Energy Partnership (SAREP) is the flagship regional energy program of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) mission to India (USAID/India). This five-year initiative (2021-26) will improve access to affordable, secure, reliable, and sustainable energy in six countries—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka—in line with these countries' climate and clean energy priorities. The program is a key activity under the U.S. Government's Asia Enhancing Development and Growth through Energy (EDGE) initiative and aligns with USAID's climate change priorities to advance equitable and ambitious actions to confront the climate crisis. The program helps the United States Government's Indo-Pacific Vision and facilitates collaboration among the six countries in South Asia to accelerate the transition to clean energy, mitigate climate change, and promote energy security.

DPDC is an eminent power distribution company serving the southern areas of Dhaka city in Bangladesh. DPDC's vision is to build data-centric infrastructure through IT and innovative activities, develop the renewable power sector, increase institutional efficiency and capacity, and achieve customer satisfaction by providing reliable, competitive power and becoming the best power company in the country. DPDC is working to ensure transparency and accountability to all stakeholders by building data-centric infrastructure and building manpower through maximum use of information technology. DPDC's current subscriber base is around 15 lakhs which was around 6.5 lakhs at the time of operation began in 2008 and the subscriber growth rate is around 7%-8% every year. If the number of customers increases at this rate, it will exceed 21 lakhs by 2025. DPDC is working considering the electricity demand and customer satisfaction of this large number of customers. In 2008, the system loss was about 14% which is reduced to around 6% now.

The Bangladesh government has made 100% electrification by establishing electricity network across the country through six electricity distribution companies. However, the importance of DPDC is a little different due to its geographical location, because DPDC officers and employees have to be more careful in the power distribution and supply system like a night watchman. The reason is that DPDC supplies electricity to large parts of Dhaka and Narayanganj City Corporation.

DPDC is actively enhancing customer service through digital initiatives, such as online bill collection, prepaid meter vending, and GPS-based complaint management apps. The organization is on a path to becoming paperless, providing comprehensive customer information on its website. Noteworthy projects include the implementation of Smart Grid, GIS, SCADA, and Advanced Metering Infrastructure to bolster the reliability of the distribution system. The conversion of overhead lines to underground networks is also in progress under the G2G project.

Despite the challenge of adapting to new technologies, DPDC prioritizes efficient customer service. Operational services address electricity supply concerns, while Commercial services handle billing discrepancies and new connection requests. The company employs a Complaint Management Software to systematically address issues originating from

various channels, such as the website, apps, call center, and Network Operations.

Under the ongoing technical assistance of SAREP this AI-based Digital assistant will be developed/deployed to support DPDC to deliver an AI-based Digital Assistant to provide prompt and convenient support to customers, automate repetitive tasks, and enhance the overall user experience.

## **II. Objective**

To design, develop and implement a comprehensive AI-based Digital Assistant for DPDC to respond to customer queries.

## **III. Tasks**

The major activities envisaged for the development of roadmap for Assam power sector are listed as below:

The consultant/firm will conduct the following activities:

### **1. Kick-off and Workplan**

- Development of workplan and Software Requirements Specification (SRS).
- Presenting the approach and methodology during the Kick-off meeting with stakeholders.
- Share the data prerequisites with DPDC.
- Obtain approval on success indicators from stakeholders.
- Obtain approval from stakeholders on workplan and Software Requirements Specification (SRS).

### **2. Content Development (Define and Design):**

- Collaborate with DPDC advisors on content creation, focusing on answers, information, and services related to customer information.
- Based on findings, define the strategic role and scope of the Digital Assistant in addressing customer queries and service-related information.
- Conduct desk research to determine the most suitable platform for Digital Assistant development.
- Design and build pre-defined rules in a decision tree for effective problem-solving.
- Create an integrated Digital Assistant user journey, including explanations, periodic reminders, and advice.
- Utilize DPDC protocols to base assessments and responses related to customer queries.
- Categorize messages into types of content and build templates for each aspect.

### **3. Development of AI Digital Assistant on DPDC's Customer Service Portal:**

- Develop an AI-powered Digital Assistant integrated into DPDC's own customer service portal.
- Ensure compatibility and seamless interaction within the DPDC portal environment.
- Provide advice on privacy and data protection in the context of DPDC, ensuring users' data is handled securely.
- Support in official demonstration of solution and take approval from stakeholders.

**4. Test, Learn, and Iterate:**

- Conduct tests on a limited number of users within DPDC's customer service portal to explore user experience and overall demand.
- Run multiple tests, analyze user feedback, and update the Digital Assistant to enhance outcomes.
- Share collected data with DPDC by providing necessary information to tailor the Digital Assistant to the specific needs of customers.

**5. UAT- documentation and demonstration of pilot**

- Prepare documentation of User Acceptance Testing (UAT).
- Develop a pilot of the Digital Assistant which is capable of responding to customer basic queries (such as: NOCS related information, some basic information about DPDC, etc.).
- Ensure chatbot responds to New Connection queries, Outage queries, Billing & Payment related queries and respond to common complaints, such as zonal power outages.
- Once developed, the Digital Assistant is expected to go-live.
- The Digital Assistant pilot must be demonstrated to DPDC and other key stakeholders of the sector.

**6. Launch of the Digital Assistant:**

- Integrate the Digital Assistant into DPDC's customer service portal.
- Conduct frequent monitoring and checks during the implementation phase.
- Provide reports with the collected data and analyze lessons learned.
- Resolve any technical challenges or bugs in the process of integrating the Digital Assistant into DPDC's customer service portal.

**7. Maintenance and Updates:**

- The service provider shall provide 1 (One) year of full support for maintenance and update of the Digital Assistant as part of the Purchase order.
- Subsequently, DPDC will determine the course of action for maintenance.

**8. Post-Handover Training:**

- The vendor will conduct handover of the chatbot to DPDC. To ensure seamless transfer, the vendor is expected provide training to DPDC to operate the Digital Assistant. Specifically, the vendor will, among others:
  - Provide a comprehensive overview of the Chatbot architecture and system components.
  - Conduct hands-on technical training on the programming language, framework, and AI model.
  - Instruct on seamless API integration with DPDC's backend systems for real-time data access.
  - Guide DPDC's team on security features, encryption, OTP authentication, and maintenance.
  - Cover testing methodologies, analytics implementation, and report generation for performance monitoring.
  - Deliver practical training on deploying the Chatbot on DPDC's website and integrating it with the CMS.

**A. Digital Assistant Specifications**

The Digital Assistant Specifications are given below.

The proposed Digital Assistant will allow customers to read all standard relevant queries using the predefined decision trees. It will provide relevant content in the available database and provide multiple FAQs to the user, relevant to his query in a meaningful manner. The FAQ will cover the all-valuable questions related to the power sector domain that can be expected from consumers. These FAQs will be designed in such a way that they will cover the information related to DPDC, NOCS location, contact info, how to attain specific services, etc. The AI-powered Digital Assistant is designed to provide a quick and efficient response regarding power services, billing, outage reports, and more.

Note: The hardware for hosting the Digital Assistant will be procured by DPDC within 6 months after the deployment of the solution. Once the hardware is procured, the engaged firm will complete the migration of Digital Assistant.

**i. Virtual Personality**

Design a responsive, and user-friendly Digital Assistant with a focus on Wireframes & Flow for Digital Assistant Conversation UI.

**ii. Two-Way Speech**

Support speech-to-text (S2T) and text-to-speech (T2S) capabilities for effective communication. The proposed AI-based Digital Assistant shall have the “Speech to text” capability. The user should be able to deliver voice commands. Speech Recognition technology of the Digital Assistant will convert voice commands and translate them into text. Once translated, that information will go through the same processing that a written text message would have in a Digital Assistant.

**iii. User Interaction:****a. User Registration and Interaction:**

It will decide whether user accounts are required to interact with the Digital Assistant. A user registration system is required for collecting essential information for personalization and security.

**b. Authentication and Authorization:**

The system shall implement user authentication mechanisms and also determine the level of authorization required for different users, especially if accessing sensitive information from DPDC systems.

**c. User Input Handling:**

The System shall train the Digital Assistant to handle various user inputs effectively. Consider implementing fallback mechanisms for handling ambiguous or unexpected queries. It will also implement robust error handling to gracefully manage unexpected situations. Provide clear and helpful error messages to guide users.

**d. Multi-lingual Support (Bangla, English & Banglish)**

The proposed Digital Assistant shall support local languages such as Bangla and English to interact with the Consumers.

**iv. Integration:**

The Digital Assistant shall be seamlessly integrated with DPDC's backend systems (Such as : CMS, Billing, Payment, Prepaid, AMI etc.) through APIs (Application Programming Interfaces). This integration will allow the Digital Assistant to access real-time data, submit service requests, and interact with the DPDC databases securely. AI- Digital Assistant should be designed to provide a quick and efficient information regarding power services, billing, outage reports, and more.

**a. Billing Information:**

Users can inquire about their current billing statement. The Digital Assistant fetches real-time data from the DPDC systems to provide accurate billing information.

**b. Payment Assistance:**

Users can get guidance on different payment methods, due dates, and outstanding balances. The Digital Assistant integrates with payment gateways to facilitate secure transactions.

**c. Outage Information:**

Users can report power outages directly through the Digital Assistant. The Digital Assistant utilizes DPDC systems to verify and log outage information, providing users with updates on restoration progress.

**d. Service Requests:**

Users can submit service requests, such as new connections or maintenance issues. The Digital Assistant generates tickets and forwards them to the DPDC systems for further processing.

**e. Power Saving Tips:**

The Digital Assistant offers tips and suggestions on how users can conserve energy and reduce their power consumption.

**f. Omni-Channel Platform:**

The proposed Digital Assistant shall have the ability to be implemented in multiple channels like a website, Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, etc, to enable smooth interaction with customers.

**g. Complaint Management:**

The chat function will be tightly integrated with DPDC's complaint resolution systems. This ensures that complaint data is accurately recorded, and the resolution process aligns with DPDC's established procedures.

**h. NLP T&C:**

The proposed Chabot shall be based on an applied AI Program & right NLP mechanism to perceive and response to the proposed languages and also will have proper scope to accommodate any languages in the future if necessary. The chosen framework or NLP Toolkit should be capable enough to perform tasks related to sentence segmentation, word tokenization, stemming, lemmatization, POS tagging, chunking as well as other

preprocessing tasks. Proper customization for multiple language support should be in consideration.

Post processing part will be apposite enough to be integrated, with multiple databases or APIs or with both, to respond including up-to-date information from the system.

**v. AI Model**

The Neural Network Model Architecture summary shall be described with a proper background that will be scalable for future changes. Model accuracy will be acceptable enough to avoid under fitting and high variance problems both in training and in evaluation. The model should pass the usability and beta test satisfactorily before deployment of the very first version.

The model will have the ability to respond more personalize answer the client's query not only based on the current statement he/she is asking rather it will analyze and include the context from his/her previous conversations.

**vi. Allow handover to the agent with chat history:**

The proposed Digital Assistant program will divert the client to an agent with client's chat history if there are any highly weighted query or random but pertinent queries unable to response by Digital Assistant. So, the Digital Assistant should be smart enough to measure weight of the questions or to count its failure to response.

Handover based on client's demand should be programmatically flagged in the Digital Assistant system to ON or OFF feature by the administrator. If the flag is ON, then on demand by client Digital Assistant may handover the session to an agent with proper chat history. During handover in UI console the queue number and average wait-time for a client will be displayed.

**a. Platforms**

The proposed Digital Assistant shall be deployed in DPDC website and also integrated with its CMS and Facebook page.

**b. Programming Languages, Frameworks and Source code:**

The proposed Digital Assistant could be developed in any AI-based programming language and framework in collaboration with the DPDC AI team. The owner of the Source Code of the system shall be DPDC.

**c. Archiving the chat history:**

The DPDC AI Digital Assistant must archive the last 2 (two) month's chat history. Archiving will give DPDC real-time insight into every bot interaction and user input. Archiving will also provide us with valuable data about the visitors and guide us on what adjustments we need to make to increase the efficiency of the proposed Digital Assistant.

**d. Location Tracking:**

DPDC AI Digital Assistant shall be able to track user's location with user consent. The location of the user is important for DPDC because it has a defined operational area, and every customer is associated with a NOCS.



**e. Response Generation and Customer Feedback:**

Once a complaint is resolved, the proposed Digital Assistant shall prompt users for feedback on their satisfaction with the resolution process.

**f. Testing and Quality Assurance:**

The service provider shall provide Outline the testing process and quality assurance measures for the Digital Assistant.

**g. Security and Privacy:**

The service provider shall provide proper security measures and privacy considerations in handling users' data.

**h. Scalability:**

The proposed Digital Assistant shall be capable of handling the DPDC user's load. This must be based on data collected from DPDC call centers regarding incoming call volumes, as well as volumes of social media messages and visits to DPDC's customer portal.

**i. Training and Documentation:**

The service provider shall arrange proper training for the DPDC AI team to develop AI and ML-based projects. Again, there shall be also training for the Customer Support team.

**j. Analytics and Reporting**

Implementing analytics and reporting features for AI-based Digital Assistant integrated with DPDC systems is crucial for monitoring its performance, understanding user interactions, and making informed decisions for continuous improvement.

- Include parameters such as total users, active users, engaged users, etc.
- Provide analytics on conversation starter messages, bot messages, user messages, failed messages, response time, fallback rate, Digital Assistant availability, and total conversations.

**k. Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and Rating System**

The vendor is required to include a Rating System for users after each session to gauge user satisfaction. At the end of the purchase order, the vendor is required to provide data on the reported user satisfaction levels, to act as a Key Performance Indicator (KPI). The target will be set in consultation with DPDC.

**vii. User/Operator Management for Digital Assistant**

- Ability to manage user accounts (add/delete/update).
- Admin monitoring of operator conversations with citizens.

**viii. Case Management**

- Create and assign cases using rule-based criteria.
- View, edit, auto-escalate, and integrate workflow with case management.
- Multichannel communication for case management (email, mobile, self-service, social media).

- Authentication of citizens through OTP (SMS).

**ix. Seamless Transfer to Live Agent**

Implement transfer to a live agent based on specific parameters, with a knowledge database containing articles, documents, and images.

**x. User Authentication**

Verify user credentials through registered mobile numbers with OTP.

**xi. Ongoing Training**

Proactive analysis and training of the Digital Assistant, with a dashboard for real-time monitoring.

**xii. Storage of Chat/User History**

Capture and store relevant user information and provide real-time usage statistics.

**xiii. Digital Assistant Maintenance and Support**

Provide technical and functional support, deploy resources for knowledgebase updates, UI requirements, and regular maintenance.

**xiv. Security & Confidentiality**

Ensure security features, encryption, OTP authentication, and comply with regulatory guidelines.

**xv. Data Backup Plan**

Implement a scheduled backup plan as per DPDC's policy.

**xvi. Testing**

Submit comprehensive test plans, methodologies, and test reports for functional, system, and integration testing.

**xvii. Other Scope of Work**

Include various functionalities, flexibility for new services, knowledge transfer, WhatsApp message support, deployment on various projects, and proper training for DPDC's team.

The vendor **must include** in the methodology section of the proposal the proposed design, architecture, and method of integrating DPDC's various systems (CMS, Billing, Payment, Prepaid, AMI etc.) into the Digital Assistant.

**IV. Reporting**

The successful firm will report to SAREP.

**V. Performance period**

The period of performance period shall be three (24) months from the date of award of the Purchase order. These tentative assignment dates are provided solely for information purposes and the benefit of bidders. Modification of these assignment dates will not constitute a change in scope. The activities may run in parallel or sequential depending on the stakeholder requirement.

**VI. Payment**

Payments shall be processed upon satisfactory completion of the deliverables and in accordance Delivery Schedule below. For additional information, please refer to Section 8 of Attachment B.

**Advance payments are not authorized.**

**Deliverables, Timelines, Special Terms and Conditions:**

S.No.	Deliverable	Estimated Deliverable due date (T = date of issue of Purchase Order)
1.	Kick-off Meeting Presentation	T + 1 week
2.	Digital Assistant Documentation Report	T + 4 weeks
3.	Approval on Go-Live from DPDC and Presentation of Digital Assistant in Innovation Award	T + 12 weeks
4.	Pre-Handover Training Session / Workshop	T + 31 weeks
5.	Source Code of Digital Assistant	T + 41 weeks
6.	AMC for 1 year from date of Go-Live: Quarterly O&M Update Report	T + 93 weeks

**Pricing**

Item #	Quantity to be Purchased	Description of Preferred Commodity or Services Specifications	Unit of Measure	Unit Fixed Price (Each)	Total Fixed Price (Each)
1	1	Kick-off Meeting Presentation (should not exceed 10% of the total firm fixed price excluding reimbursable travel)			
2	1	Digital Assistant Documentation Report (should not exceed 10% of the total firm fixed price excluding reimbursable travel)			
3	1	Approval on Go-Live from DPDC and Presentation of Digital Assistant in Innovation Award (should not exceed 15% of the total firm fixed price excluding reimbursable travel)			
4	1	Pre-Handover Training Session / Workshop (should not exceed 15% of the total firm fixed price excluding reimbursable travel)			
5	1	Source Code of Digital Assistant (should not exceed 25% of the total firm fixed price excluding reimbursable travel)			
6	4	AMC for 1 year from date of Go-Live: Quarterly O&M Update Report (each quarterly payment should not exceed 6.25% of the total firm fixed price per report excluding reimbursable travel)			

Total Firm Fixed Price	
Add: Local GST if applicable* (mention %)	
Total Firm Fixed Price including GST (if GST is applicable)	
Estimated reimbursable for travel (Bidder to provide detailed breakdown with supporting narrative)	
Estimated GST on intercity travel (Bidder to propose if applicable*)	
Total Ceiling Value	

***\*If the bidder’s organization is subject to local GST, please provide proof of registration along with the bid submission.***

By signing this attachment, the bidder confirms he has a complete understanding of the specifications and fully intends to deliver items that comply with the above listed specifications.

Signature:

Title:

Date:


## Attachment “B” Instructions to Bidders/Sellers

1. **Procurement Narrative Description:** The Buyer (RTI) intends to purchase commodities and/or services identified in Attachment A. The Buyer intends to purchase the quantities (for commodities) and/or services (based on deliverables identified in a Statement of Work). The term of the Ordering Agreement shall be from Award Date to the Delivery date of the Offeror unless extended by mutual agreement of the parties. The Buyer intends to award to a single “approved” supplier based on conformance to the listed specifications, the ability to service this contract, and selling price. We reserve the right to award to more than one bidder. If an Ordering Agreement is established as a result of this RFQ/RFP, supplier understands that quantities indicated in the specifications (Attachment A) are an estimate only and RTI does not guarantee the purchase quantity of any item listed.
2. **Procuring Activity:** This procurement will be made by **Research Triangle Institute (RTI International)**, located at

3040 Cornwallis Road  
Research Triangle Park, NC 27709

*(insert full address of the office)*

who has a purchase requirement in support of a project funded by

U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)

*(insert client’s name)*

RTI shall award the initial quantities and/or services and any option quantities (if exercised by RTI) to Seller by a properly executed Purchase Order as set forth within the terms of this properly executed agreement.

3. **Proposal Requirements.** All Sellers will submit a quote/proposal which contains offers for all items and options included in this RFQ/RFP. All information presented in the Sellers quote/proposal will be considered during RTI’s evaluation. Failure to submit the information required in this RFQ/RFP may result in Seller’s offer being deemed non-responsive. Sellers are responsible for submitting offers, and any modifications, revisions, or withdrawals, so as to reach RTI’s office designated in the RFQ/RFP by the time and date specified in the RFQ/RFP. Any offer, modification, revision, or withdrawal of an offer received at the RTI office designated in the RFQ/RFP after the exact time specified for receipt of offers is “late” and may not be considered at the discretion of the RTI Procurement Officer. The Seller’s proposal shall include the following:
  - (a) The solicitation number:
  - (b) The date and time submitted:
  - (c) The name, address, and telephone number of the seller (bidder) and authorized signature of same:
  - (d) Validity period of Quote:
  - (e) A technical description of the items being offered in sufficient detail to evaluate compliance with the requirements in the solicitation. This may include product literature, or other documents, if necessary. The technical proposal must include the following:

- 1) Approach and Methodology (A&M) (Not to exceed 10 pages): This section shall provide details about the firm’s understanding of the objectives of the engagement and its management approach to accomplish the targets. The extent to which the consultant’s proposed A&M responds to the objectives indicated above shall be used for evaluation. In addition, the completeness and responsiveness of the proposed A&M and to the extent to which it responds exhaustively to all the requirements of all the scope shall also be considered for evaluation.  
A workplan shall detail out all the activities required to be undertaken along with the timelines. The dependencies and activities requiring intervention/support of SAREP, USAID shall be clearly highlighted.
- 2) Subject matter expertise: Please include organizational chart, CVs (not to exceed 1 page per person - ½ page for the summary of work to be assigned, followed by ½ page for bio sketch that highlights the individual’s direct experience with the subject matter). The ½ page bio sketch must include the education and professional expertise/experience of the individuals. Bidders should propose the best team suited for the work. At a minimum, the bidder must propose

#	Post	Nos	Tasks
1	Team Leader	1	All
2	Developer	1	All
3	Analyst	1	All

The proposed team members should be engaged with the bidder either as an existing employee or as an advisor/consultant. No subcontracting in part or full shall be allowed. All the proposed team members should have direct working experience as mentioned in scope of work.

- 3) Specific experience in similar or related work: Experience of the bidder in the areas mentioned in the SOW, i.e., power sector improvement plan, transmission and distribution network planning, long-term planning, advanced technologies in power sector, utility experience. Relevant experience, not prior to 2012, highlighting the scope, budget, nature of engagement, feedback from the client, etc. must be submitted.
  - 4) Past performance in similar or related work: Past performance information that must include recent and relevant contracts for the same or similar items and other references (including points of contact with telephone numbers, and other relevant information)
- (f) If RTI informs Seller that the Commodity is intended for export and the Commodity is not classified for export under Export Classification Control Number (ECCN) “EAR99” of the U.S. Department of Commerce Export Administration Regulations (EAR), then Seller must provide RTI the correct ECCN and the name of Seller’s representative responsible for Trade Compliance who can confirm the export classification.
- (g) Lead Time Availability of the Commodity/Service.

- (h) Terms of warranty describing what and how the warranties will be serviced.
  - (i) Special pricing instructions: Price and any discount terms or special requirements or terms (special note: pricing must include guaranteed firm fixed prices for items requested.
  - (j) Payment address or instructions (if different from mailing address)
  - (k) Acknowledgment of solicitation amendments (if any)
  - (l) Past performance information, when included as an evaluation factor, to include recent and relevant contracts for the same or similar items and other references (including points of contact with telephone numbers, and other relevant information)
  - (m) **Special Note:** *The Seller, by his response to this RFQ/RFP and accompanying signatures, confirms that the terms and conditions associated with this RFQ/RFP document have been agreed to and all of its attachments have been carefully read and understood and all related questions answered.*
4. **Forms:** Sellers (potential bidders or suppliers) must record their pricing utilizing the format found on Attachment “A”. Sellers must sign the single hardcopy submitted and send to address listed on the cover page of this RFQ/RFP.
5. **Questions Concerning the Procurement.** All questions in regards to this RFQ/RFP to be directed to
- Praveesh Sharma (Procurement Manager)
- (insert name of procurement officer)
- at this email address:
- SAREP-Procurement@rti.org; and praveeshsharma@sarep-southasia.org
- (insert email address of the procurement officer).
- The cut-off date for questions is (insert date).
- February 23, 2024, 1700 hours Indian Standard Time
6. **Notifications and Deliveries:** Time is of the essence for this procurement. Seller shall deliver the items or services no later than the dates set forth in the contract that will be agreed by both parties as a result of this RFQ/RFP. The Seller shall immediately contact the Buyer’s Procurement Officer if the specifications, availability, or the delivery schedule(s) changes. Exceptional delays will result in financial penalties being imposed of Seller.
7. **Documentation:** The following documents will be required for payment for each item:
- (a) A detailed invoice listing Purchase Order Number, Bank information with wiring instructions (when applicable)
  - (b) Packing List
  - (c) All relevant product/service documentation (manuals, warranty doc, certificate of analysis, etc.)

8. **Payment Terms:** Refer to RTI purchase order terms and conditions found in <https://www.rti.org/sites/default/files/rti-purchase-order-terms-and-conditions-v1.16.pdf> , <http://www.rti.org/files/PO FAR Clauses.pdf>, or <http://www.rti.org/files/PO FAR Clauses Commercial Items.pdf>. Payment can be made via wire transfer or other acceptable form. Sellers may propose alternative payment terms and they will be considered in the evaluation process.
9. **Alternative Proposals:** Sellers are permitted to offer “alternatives” should they not be able to meet the listed requirements. Any alternative proposals shall still satisfy the minimum requirements set forth in Attachment A Specifications.
10. **Inspection Process:** Each item shall be inspected prior to final acceptance of the item. All significant discrepancies, shortages, and/or faults must be satisfactorily corrected and satisfactorily documented prior to delivery and release of payment.
11. **Evaluation and Award Process:** The RTI Procurement Officer will award an agreement contract resulting from this solicitation to the responsible Seller (bidder) whose offer conforms to the RFQ/RFP will be most advantageous to RTI, price and other factors considered. The award will be made to the Seller representing the **best value** to the project and to RTI. For the purpose of this RFQ/RFP, price, delivery, technical and past performance are of equal importance for the purposes of evaluating, and selecting the “best value” awardee. RTI intends to evaluate offers and award an Agreement without discussions with Sellers. Therefore, the Seller’s initial offer should contain the Seller’s best terms from a price and technical standpoint. However, RTI reserves the right to conduct discussions if later determined by the RTI Procurement Officer to be necessary.

The evaluation factors will be comprised of the following criteria:

- (a) **PRICE.** Lowest evaluated ceiling price (inclusive of option quantities) .
- (b) **DELIVERY.** Seller provides the most advantageous delivery schedule.
- (c) **TECHNICAL.** Items/Services shall satisfy or exceed the specifications described in RFQ/RFP Attachment A.
- (d) **PAST PERFORMANCE** - Seller can demonstrate his/her capability and resources to provide the items/services requested in this solicitation in a timely and responsive manner.
- (e) **OTHER EVALUATION CRITERIA.**

<b>1. Technical Proposal</b>		
The scoring shall be undertaken using the following approach:		
Nos	Criteria	Points
1	Approach and Methodology (A&M): Adequacy and quality <i>(The SAREP Technical Evaluation Committee will assess whether the proposed methodology is clear, responds to the Scope of Work, Schedule of deliverables timeline.)</i>	30
2	Subject matter expertise	25
3	Specific experience in similar or related work	30
4	Past performance in similar or related work	15
Total points		100



**Financial Proposal scoring**

The consultancy firm with lowest qualifying financial bid (L1) will be awarded 100% score. Financial Scores for other than L1 will be evaluated using the following formula:  
Financial Score (Fn) =  $\{(Commercial\ Bid\ of\ L1 / Commercial\ Bid\ of\ the\ Bidder) \times 100\}\%$

**Overall Score**

The selection of the consultancy firm shall be based upon the methodology of Quality and cost-based selection (QCBS) with technical and financial weightage as decided by the SAREP Technical Evaluation committee.

12. **Award Notice.** A written notice of award or acceptance of an offer, mailed or otherwise furnished to the successful supplier within the time acceptance specified in the offer, shall result in a binding contract without further action by either party.
13. **Validity of Offer.** This RFP in no way obligates RTI to make an award, nor does it commit RTI to pay any costs incurred by the Seller in the preparation and submission of a proposal or amendments to a proposal. Your proposal shall be considered valid for 90 days after submission.
14. **Representations and Certifications.** Winning suppliers under a US Federal Contract are required to complete and sign as part of your offer RTI Representations and Certifications for values over \$10,000.
15. **Anti- Kick Back Act of 1986.** Anti-Kickback Act of 1986 as referenced in FAR 52.203-7 is hereby incorporated into this Request for Proposal as a condition of acceptance. If you have reasonable grounds to believe that a violation, as described in Paragraph (b) of FAR 52.203-7 may have occurred, you should report this suspected violation to the RTI's Ethics Hotline at 1-877-212-7220 or by sending an e-mail to [ethics@rti.org](mailto:ethics@rti.org). You may report a suspected violation anonymously.
16. **The John S. McCain National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2019 - section 889.** RTI cannot use any equipment or services from specific companies, or their subsidiaries and affiliates, including Huawei Technologies Company, ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, and Dahua Technology Company ("Covered Technology"). In response to this request for proposal, please do not provide a quote which includes any Covered Technology. Any quote which includes Covered Technology will be deemed non-responsive. Additionally, if the United States Government is the source of funds for this RFP, the resulting Supplier shall not provide any equipment, system, or service that uses Covered Technology as a substantial or essential component

**Acceptance:**

Seller agrees, as evidenced by signature below, that the seller's completed and signed solicitation, seller's proposal including all required submissions and the negotiated terms contained herein, constitute the entire agreement for the services described herein.



**SAREP-RFP-2024-004**

By: *(Seller Company Name)*

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Title:

Date: