

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Procurement Number:	IRI2021CPS02o
Open Date:	April 29, 2021
Questions Deadline:	May 4, 2021
Closing Deadline:	May 20, 2021
Geographical Area Restrictions:	N/A
Point of Contact:	Isabella Mekker, imekker@iri.org

Background

The International Republican Institute (IRI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, organization dedicated to advancing freedom and democracy worldwide. Since 1983, IRI has worked to develop democratic institutions and ideals, carrying out a variety of international programs to promote freedom, self-government and the rule of law worldwide. IRI provides technical assistance in the areas of political party strengthening, developing civic institutions and open elections, promoting democratic governance and advancing the rule of law.

IRI seeks a local research firm to pilot a Conflict and Governance Assessment Framework in Bangladesh using quantitative and qualitative research. This RFP captures the scope of work for the qualitative research; please refer to RFP IRI2021CPS01o for information about the quantitative research. Under this project, IRI will support locally legitimate governance actors to implement community-wide interventions that strengthen governance and thereby prevent the spread of violent conflict and foster pluralism.

Period of Performance

June 2021 – August 2021

Statement of Work

QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN BANGLADESH

OBJECTIVES OF THE RESEARCH

IRI seeks to gather insights into local conflict dynamics, the key actors participating in those dynamics, and the strategies that these actors employ to pursue their interests. This entails assessing the sources of intercommunal conflict and governance of issues that nurture or mitigate conflict.

IRI'S INFORMATIONAL NEEDS

IRI needs to:

- 1. Understand conflict dynamics—as well as avenues for conflict resolution or mitigation—in selected communities.** What are the structural, institutional and individual drivers, as well as the trends in intercommunal conflict, particularly ethnic, religious or identity-based conflict?
- 2. Understand community-level systems of governance.** How do these impede or facilitate conflict resolution?
- 3. Understand locally legitimate actors in conflict-affected settings.** Who are the most trusted/legitimate actors? What are their interests? What are their networks? What strategies do they employ to pursue their interests? What is the best method of engagement with them?

METHODOLOGY

The questions above are best addressed by a combination of in-depth interviews and focus groups. This research will take place in two upazilas of Cox's Bazar district. The contractor is responsible for proposing the target upalizas based on the criteria described under proposal requirements. These communities will be the same as IRI's concurrent quantitative research IRI2021CPS01o.

The qualitative research will include 10-15 in-depth interviews across two communities in Bangladesh, with each interview lasting approximately 60-90 minutes. For in-depth interviews, IRI envisions participants to be context experts, individuals who are exposed to violence and its effects either directly or indirectly, or other stakeholders relevant to conflict and governance in the two communities. Such participants could include but are not limited to local government officials, local tribal or religious leaders, academics, journalists, youth groups, women groups, etc. The final list of participants will need to be discussed with and approved by IRI before conducting any interviews.

For the focus groups, there should be approximately six groups per community, each lasting approximately 90-120 minutes and attended by a maximum of 10 participant, with smaller groups or dyadic interviews being an option for sensitive questions. The exact number of focus group discussions may vary depending on community demographics. The applicant should provide a suggested FGD breakdown to include participants relevant to understanding conflict, such as youth and community members who may be vulnerable to violence. Depending on the proposed research design and community demographics, FGDs may include a combination of mixed or separated groups by religion, ethnic affiliation, or gender.

All FGD participants should be:

- Recruited from different neighborhoods within the research locations.
- Contain a mix of urban and rural participants.
- Participants in the same focus group session may not know one another.

GENERAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE OFFEROR

IRI is recognizant of challenges associated with the Coronavirus. IRI is open to the offeror's recommendations in the proposal to mitigate risks. IRI will accept participant recruitment by phone/online, and online FGDs and IDIs, as long as the bidder is able to demonstrate that online fieldwork has been carefully planned for success.

Offeror will be responsible for managing all logistical aspects of the project and should engage local support staff as necessary to complete the following:

- **Screener.** IRI will provide a draft screening questionnaire within two weeks of contract award based on the aforementioned specifications. The Offeror will review and recommend changes, if any, within three working days of receipt. Following IRI approval, the Offeror will translate the screener into Bengali. and relevant most commonly spoken vernacular of the research communities. IRI reserves the right to review the translation prior to recruitment launch.
- **Recruiting participants.** Offeror will recruit all participants according to the screening criteria listed above. At least one week prior to the start of the first focus group session or in depth interview, the Offeror will provide a brief description of the composition of the groups or the interviewees in terms of age, gender, occupation, and other relevant attributes... Offeror should recruit a maximum of 8-10 participants for each group as well as 2-3 alternates in case any of the participants are unable to participate. All participants will be required to give written informed consent to participate in this study. IRI will provide draft informed consent language which may be adjusted by the bidder in order to conform to any specific legal requirements in the research country.
- **Discussion guide.** IRI will provide the draft discussion within four weeks of contract award. Offeror will be welcome to offer suggestions for improvement and is expected to format and translate the discussion guide into Bengali and the relevant (most commonly spoken) vernacular(s) of the research community. Following IRI approval, the Offeror will translate the screener into Bengali and the relevant most commonly spoken vernacular of the research communities. IRI reserves the right to review the translation(s). At least one week prior to the first planned session, the discussion guide will be piloted with a group of 8-10 pilot participants or 3 in-depth interviewees who fit the recruitment criteria. The FGD pilot will be moderated by the same moderator who will moderate the actual groups, while the pilot in-depth interviews will be conducted by the same qualitative interviewers who will conduct the actual IDIs. The pilot session(s) will be video (preferred) or audio recorded, and the recording will be provided to IRI. The Offeror will prepare a 1-2 page pilot report, based on a template provided by IRI. Once IRI has reviewed the template, some modification of the discussion guide may be required.
- **Focus group moderator and qualitative interview.** Offeror will provide a trained and experienced qualitative interviewer for focus group discussion and in-depth interviews in person or remotely. The moderator or interviewer should familiarize him/herself with the topic of discussion prior to the groups. The moderator or interviewer will participate in a training of up to 2 hours with IRI staff.
- **Recording of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews.** Audio and/or video record all aspects of research necessary for full and accurate data collection, transcript generation and inclusion of illustrative samples in the final analytical report. Offeror will film focus groups and film should be high quality with clear sound. If participants do not consent to videotaping, audio recordings are acceptable.
- **Written summary of focus group discussions and in-depth interviews.** Offeror will provide a 2-3 page written summary of the focus group discussions and in-depth

interviews in idiomatic English within one week after the final focus group session or interview. A template will be provided by IRI.

- **Transcripts.** The Offeror will provide IRI with full verbatim transcripts in English of each group or interview that will identify each participant speaker by number or first name to link each comment to the participant's gender, exact age, education level, city and occupation.

DELIVERABLES

- Finalized discussion guide (incl translation where applicable)
- Proposed Participant Profile
- Written summary as specified above.
- Full transcripts of all discussions and interviews, as described above.
- Video/Audio recordings of the discussions and interviews, with clear audio. Recording should be delivered to IRI electronically (for example via a file transfer service) or delivered to the local IRI office.
- A brief summary outlining the key research findings, no longer than five pages per community.

PROPOSAL CONTENT

Proposals should address the following points:

- List qualitative projects you conducted with similar specifications in technical area in Bangladesh.
- Name and explain the role of subcontractors (if any)
- State if you are to comply with all requirements listed on this SOW without alterations. If any proposed alterations, explain.
- Describe recruitment plan
- Describe fieldwork quality assurance measures (if any)
- Provide proposed moderator and qualitative interviewer(s) CV/Resume
- Describe anticipated challenges if any
- Explain the potential impact of the Coronavirus on your firm's operations, employees, research participants, and how you plan to mitigate risks

Characteristics Considered for Upazila Selection

- **Security Conditions:** While IRI intends to target communities affected by and prone to violent conflict, IRI will select communities that are not experiencing widespread violence in order to guarantee the safety and security of staff and contractors.
- **Type of Conflict:** IRI will select communities that are experiencing inter-ethnic, interreligious or other forms of communal violence. IRI recognizes that violent conflict can be driven simultaneously by a confluence of religious and ethnic grievances, as well as other factors, including resource availability.
- **Perpetrators of Violent Conflict:** In selected communities, IRI will primarily focus on violent conflict perpetrated by non-state or local community members. This includes identifying localized disputes that could morph into violent inter-communal conflicts. It could also involve understanding the factors that create susceptibility to

recruitment by non-state armed actors, such as organizations that incite intercommunal violence.

- Existing Initiatives: Applicants should demonstrate an understanding of existing initiatives – including those related to governance and conflict prevention – and select communities that are under-served or where there may be gaps in ongoing community-level initiatives.
- The two communities that reflect different geographical characteristics:
 - o Urban: urban centers/capital
 - o Urban-periphery: areas that border urban centers and thus share characteristics of both urban and rural areas
 - o Rural: areas that are remote from the urban centers and are characterized by limited presence of the state

Technical Proposals

All proposals submitted to IRI must include:

1. Information addressing Bidder's experience in providing each of the services identified in the above Statement of Work and Bidder's proposed specific approach for providing those services to IRI under this contract, including sufficient information to determine a clear definition of services as it relates to other providers that may be involved.
2. The name, address, and telephone and facsimile numbers of the Bidder (and electronic address if available). If the Bidder is a firm, name(s) should be provided for individuals authorized to conduct business on behalf of the firm.
3. Bidders may provide a list of up to three references for work performed of a similar nature during the last three years, along with contact details. IRI may contact the references to evaluate past performance.
4. If the Bidder is a U.S. organization/resident, or a foreign organization/resident which has income effectively connected with the conduct of activities in the U.S. or has an office or a place of business or a fiscal paying agent in the U.S., the information submitted must contain Bidder's Taxpayer Identification Number.
5. Proposals will not exceed 5 pages (not including cover page), Times New Roman, 1" margins.
6. Attachment requirements:
 - a. CVs/resumes of the lead researcher and proposed research team. Each CV/resume should provide a concise overview of credentials and be no longer than two pages.
 - b. Names and contact information of three references.
 - c. Previous example of qualitative survey research in Bangladesh.

Price Proposals

Bidders must propose a firm-fixed Unit Price for each of the deliverables identified below and in the format of the table below. The Bidder's pricing must be valid for at least 60 (sixty) calendar days after the due date for proposal submission. The proposed Unit Price should be fixed and inclusive of all costs to perform, including inspection services, transportation, taxes, import duties (if any), and other levies. To the extent that a Bidder proposed to include any pricing not reflected in the table below, such pricing must be fully described in the proposal. Proposals must be submitted in US Dollars (USD), payments under any resulting contract will be made in this currency.

Unit/Deliverable	Unit Price	Number of Units	Total
Finalized Discussion Guide		1	
Proposed Participant Profile		1	
Final Written Summary		1	
In-depth interviews (10-15)			
Full transcripts of all discussions and interviews		1	
Video/Audio recordings of the discussions and interviews		10-15	
A brief summary outlining the key research findings		1	
Focus Group Discussions (6 groups per ward)			
Full transcripts of all discussions and interviews		1	
Video/Audio recordings of the discussions and interviews		12	
A brief summary outlining the key research findings		1	

Evaluation and Award Process

1. IRI may contact any Bidder for clarification or additional information, but Bidders are advised that IRI intends to evaluate the offers based on the written proposals, without discussions, and reserves the right to make decisions based solely on the information provided with the initial proposals. IRI may but is not obligated to conduct additional negotiations with the most highly rated Bidders prior to award of a contract, and may at its sole discretion elect to issue contracts to one or more Bidders.
2. Mathematical errors will be corrected in the following manner: If a discrepancy exists between the total price proposed and the total price resulting from multiplying the unit price by the corresponding amounts, then the unit price will prevail and the total price will be corrected. If there is a discrepancy between the numbers written out in words and the amounts in numbers, then the amount expressed in words will prevail. If the Bidder does not accept the correction, the offer will be rejected.
3. IRI may determine that a proposal is unacceptable if the prices proposed are materially unbalanced between line items or sub-line items. Unbalanced pricing exists when, despite an acceptable total evaluated price, the price of one or more contract line items is significantly overstated or understated as indicated by the application of cost or price analysis techniques. A proposal may be rejected if IRI determines that the lack of balance poses an unacceptable risk.

4. IRI will conduct a source selection based as follows:

IRI intends to make an award to the responsible Bidder based on the following evaluation factors:

- a) Technical evaluation, (including technical capabilities, proposed technical approach, and personnel qualifications) – 40 percent**
 - *Proposed technical approach (20 percent)*
 - *Proposed risk mitigation plan (10 percent)*
 - *English capabilities (10 percent)*
- b) Past performance and experience in performing similar projects – 35 percent**
- c) Price – 25 percent**

IRI intends to evaluate Bidders' proposals in accordance with these factors and make an award to the responsible Bidder whose proposal is most advantageous to the program.

5. If a cost realism analysis is performed, cost realism may be considered in evaluating performance or price.

Submission Instructions

Bids must be submitted via email to Isabella Mekker, at imekker@iri.org with the subject line "IRI2021CPS02o" by the deadline listed above.

RFP Terms and Conditions

1. Prospective Bidders are requested to review clauses incorporated by reference in the section "Notice Listing Contract Clauses Incorporated by Reference".
2. IRI may reject any or all proposals if such is within IRI's interest.
3. Proof of costs incurred, such as but not limited to receipts, pictures and financial documents, may be requested during and for up to three years after the end of the contract period.
4. The Bidder's initial proposal should contain the Bidder's best offer.
5. Payment will be made upon receipt of invoices and deliverables/services.
6. Discussions with Bidders following the receipt of a proposal do not constitute a rejection or counteroffer by IRI.
7. IRI will hold all submissions as confidential and submissions shall not be disclosed to third parties. IRI reserves the right to share proposals internally, across divisions, for the purposes of evaluating the proposals.
8. For any currency conversion, the exchange rate to US Dollars listed on oanda.com on the closing date of this solicitation shall be used.
9. Every contract will contain provisions governing termination for cause and termination for convenience.
10. By submitting a proposal, offeror agrees to comply with all terms, conditions, and provisions included in the solicitation and agreement to the services identified above, and will specifically identify any disagreement with or exceptions to the terms, conditions, and provisions.
11. Offerors confirm that the prices in the proposal/proposal/application/quote have been arrived at independently, without any consultation, communication, or

agreement with any other Bidder or competitor for the purpose of restricting competition.

12. By applying to this RFP, applicant is certifying that if it is awarded a contract, none of funds payable under the resulting contract will be used to (1) procure or obtain, extend or renew a contract to procure or obtain; (2) enter into a contract (or extend or renew a contract) to procure; or (3) obtain the equipment, services, or systems that uses covered telecommunications equipment or services as a substantial or essential component of any system, or as critical technology as part of any system in compliance with the National Defense Authorization Act. Covered telecommunications equipment and services mean any of the following:
- i. Telecommunications equipment produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).
 - ii. For the purpose of public safety, security of government facilities, physical security surveillance of critical infrastructure, and other national security purposes, video surveillance and telecommunications equipment produced by Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, or Dahua Technology Company (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities).
 - iii. Telecommunications or video surveillance services provided by such entities or using such equipment.
 - iv. Telecommunications or video surveillance equipment or services produced or provided by an entity that the Secretary of Defense, in consultation with the Director of the National Intelligence or the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation, reasonably believes to be an entity owned or controlled by, or otherwise connected to, the government of a covered foreign country. ([2 CFR 200.216](#)).
13. Bidders agree to disclose as part of the proposal submission:
- Any close, familial, or financial relationships with IRI staff and agents. For example, the Bidder must disclose if a Bidder's mother conducts volunteer trainings for IRI.
 - Any family or financial relationship with other Bidders submitting proposals. For example, if the Bidder's father owns a company that is submitting another proposal, the Bidder must state this.
 - Any other action that might be interpreted as potential conflict of interest.

Notice Listing Contract Clauses Incorporated by Reference

IRI is required to make the contractor subject to certain flowdown clauses of the prime award. This awarded contract will incorporate one or more clauses by reference, with the same force and effect as if they were given in full text. Where "flow-down" to the contractor is applicable, references to "USAID/Department of State" shall be interpreted to mean "IRI", "Recipient" to mean "Contractor", and "Subrecipient" to mean "lower-tier subcontractor." Included by reference are the applicable provisions contained in Appendix II to 2 CFR Part 200 and USAID Standard Provisions for Non-US Non-governmental Organizations/US Department of State Standard Terms and Conditions.

IRI Obligations

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute an award commitment on the part of IRI, nor does it commit IRI to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of a proposal or quotation.

Required Certifications

The following certificates need to be signed by all Bidders. These certifications are an integral part of the quotation/proposal. Please print them off and send back to us with your proposal after signature on each certificate. They are:

- Certification regarding debarment, suspension, ineligibility and voluntary exclusion lower tier covered transactions
- Authorized Individuals

CERTIFICATION REGARDING DEBARMENT, SUSPENSION, INELIGIBILITY AND VOLUNTARY EXCLUSION LOWER TIER COVERED TRANSACTIONS

This certification implements Executive Order 12549, Debarment and Suspension and the requirements set forth in 2.C.F.R. 180, Subpart C.”

Copies of the regulations may be obtained by contacting the person to which this proposal is submitted.

1. By signing and submitting this proposal/application/quote, the prospective lower tier participant is providing the certification set out below.
2. The certification in this clause is a material representation of fact upon which reliance was placed when this transaction was entered into. If it is later determined that the prospective lower tier participant knowingly rendered an erroneous certification, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.
3. The prospective lower tier participant shall provide immediate written notice to the person to which this proposal/application/quote is submitted if at any time the prospective lower tier participant learns that its certification was erroneous when submitted or has become erroneous by reason of changed circumstances.
4. The terms "covered transaction," "debarred," "suspended," "ineligible," "lower tier covered transaction," "participant," "person," "primary covered transaction," "principal," "proposal," and "voluntarily excluded," as used in this clause, have the meanings set out in the Definitions and Coverage sections of the rules implementing Executive Order 12549.
5. The prospective lower tier participant agrees by submitting this proposal/application/quote that, should the proposed covered transaction be entered into, it shall not knowingly enter into any lower tier covered transaction with a person who is debarred, suspended, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this covered transaction, unless authorized by the IRI.
6. The prospective lower tier participant further agrees by submitting this proposal/application/quote that it will include the clause titled "Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion--Lower Tier Covered Transactions," without modification, in all lower tier covered transactions and in all solicitations for lower tier covered transactions.
7. A participant in a covered transaction may rely upon a certification of a prospective participant in a lower tier covered transaction that it is not debarred, suspended, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from the covered transaction, unless it knows that the certification is erroneous. A participant may decide the method and frequency by which it determines the eligibility of its principals.
8. Nothing contained in the foregoing shall be construed to require establishment of a system of records in order to render in good faith the certification required by this clause. The knowledge and information of a participant is not required to exceed that which is normally possessed by a prudent person in the ordinary course of business dealings.
9. Except for transactions authorized under paragraph 5 above, if a participant in a covered transaction knowingly enters into a lower tier covered transaction with a

person who is suspended, debarred, ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction, in addition to other remedies available to the Federal Government, the department or agency with which this transaction originated may pursue available remedies, including suspension and/or debarment.

1. The prospective lower tier participant certifies, by submission of this proposal, that neither it nor its principals are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for disbarment, declared ineligible, or voluntarily excluded from participation in this transaction by any Federal department or agency.
2. Where the prospective lower tier participant is unable to certify to any of the statements in this certification, such prospective participant shall attach an explanation to this proposal.

Signature: _____
Date: _____
Name: _____
Title/Position: _____
Entity Name: _____
Address: _____

Authorized Individuals

The offeror/bidder/applicant represents that the following persons are authorized to negotiate on its behalf with IRI and to bind the recipient in connection with this procurement:

Name	Title	Telephone	Email

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Name: _____

Title/Position: _____

Entity Name: _____