

# Responses to Questions - Tender No. PQ002



Pre-Qualification No: PQ002	
PQ Name: MER	Date Issued: 15 November 2023

This provides answers to queries raised by bidders about the above subject. The responses are posted on website for access by all prospective bidders and does not disclose the source.

No.	Question	Response
1	Is there an anticipated number of assignments to be released for each service category?	We do not have an estimate of the number of assignments that will be released under each category. Under our previous Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Master Service Agreement mechanism (which included many but not all services described in this RFQ), there were an approximate of 80 assignments released from 2021-2023: 36 in 2021, 22 in 2022, and 22 in 2023.
2	Is there an anticipated dollar value per assignment? OR any minimum/ceiling value for each Master Service Agreement?	We do not have an anticipated dollar value per assignment, which can vary greatly depending on the duration and scope of an assignment.  There will be no minimum or ceiling value for assignments stipulated via a Master Service Agreement. Please note that successful firms will not receive Master Service Agreements, but rather will be added to a list of prequalified firms that are eligible to be invited to apply for Mercy Corps assignments. Contracting will be done on a project-by-project basis.
3	Could those companies accepted on to the pre-qualification pool be invited to submit proposals for all Mercy Corps countries, should needs arise?	Companies accepted into the prequalified pool will be eligible to submit proposals for all 40+ countries where Mercy Corps works, not just the countries listed in the LOE proposal section of the mock proposal template. For a full list of countries that Mercy Corps currently operates in, please see <a href="#">this webpage</a> .
4	Is there a number or limit of firms Mercy Corps expects to select?	No, there is no anticipated number or limit for the number of firms that can be

		prequalified. Any firm with a submission that receives a passing score will be added to the prequalified pool.
5	Please describe the contracting process within the mechanism?	Information about the Prequalified Pool and all vendors within the pool will be shared with all Mercy Corps teams. As needs arise, Mercy Corps teams will invite a select number of firms in the pool to apply for an opportunity via the online procurement portal, Ariba. Specific firms will be invited to apply for assignments based on their stated expertise, geographic availability, and various other factors. Should a firm be successful, the Mercy Corps team will draft a service contract (based on a standard template) for the assignment and share it with the successful firm for review and signature. Once the contract is signed, work can begin.
6	What type(s) of contracts (e.g. Firm Fixed Price, Time & Materials, etc.) will be administered under the MER mechanism?	Both Firm Fixed Price and Time & Materials contracts will be possible under the MER prequalification mechanism. The type of contract used will be determined by the nature of the assignment; however, we anticipate that most contracts under this mechanism will be Fixed Price contracts.
7	Will selected firms be procured by/partner with Mercy Corps HQ, Mercy Corps country programs, or specific Mercy Corps activities?	All of the above, though assignments are most often at the project/activity level.
8	How far in advance of assignment kickoffs will assignments be procured under this mechanism?	It's hard to say, as this depends on the requesting team and can vary greatly. In the past we have typically seen very short procurement timelines for many assignments, with teams often looking for a firm to begin work within 1-2 months of an assignment (Scope of Work) being released. We continue to encourage our teams to plan several months in advance for procurement of MER services.
9	Are there any costs associated with registering or staying registered in Ariba?	No, there are no costs associated with firms registering / staying registered in Ariba. Ariba does offer a free profile that allows you to work with Mercy Corps. There is VIP service that has a cost, and it gives you more options and accesses.
10	Is there a page limit to the work sample excerpts to be provided along with mock proposal packages?	No, there is no page limit for work samples.

11	Does Mercy Corps recommend bidders provide the entirety of work samples (i.e., everything including Cover page, intro, methodology, findings, citations, etc.), or only specific sections? If the latter is the case, what sections does Mercy Corps recommend bidders provide?	Yes, bidders should provide complete work samples (all sections except for Annexes).
12	What specific equipment does “Avg. Value of Equipment and Materials on Hand (USD)” in the Supplier Information Form” entail, and should average values be provided for each type of equipment item or only the aggregate value of all equipment and materials on hand?	This section applies to suppliers that provide materials and products. Please ignore if you solely provide a service.  If you do provide a product, then you can provide an average USD value of equipment or material to be sold.
13	To reduce the administrative burden for both Mercy Corps and potential suppliers, will Mercy Corps consider extending the shortlist validity to five years (rather than 24 months)? With a new RFQ re-issued after 12 months (which could be done annually on a longer RFQ), there is an on-ramp for new suppliers - and flexibility for MC to create new pools if needed?	Our internal procurement policies require that we open the pool to new applications every 12 months and re-tender the pool every 24 months. Please note the full RFQ will not be re-issued every 12 months – this is only for new suppliers to apply.
14	Will Mercy Corps clarify if the shortlist time period is for ordering or delivery? Do all task orders have to be contracted in the 24 months or completed in the 24 months?	The 24-month period is for ordering. In other words, all Service Contracts must be contracted in the 24 months, but work can extend past the 24-month.
15	If a Country or Project team uses the shortlist, will all pre-qualified suppliers in the pool receive the scope of work?	No. Mercy Corps will invite select vendors in the pool to apply for an assignment based on their stated expertise, past experience, geographic availability, etc. A minimum of 3 vendors will be invited to apply for each assignment (except in sole-source procurements). There is no maximum number of firms that can be invited for an individual assignment, but we do not expect that teams will invite every firm in the pool.
16	Are there any provisions for sole-sourcing task order/scopes of work to pre-qualified suppliers?	Yes, there will be provisions in place that will allow for sole sourcing for specific assignments as appropriate.
17	Page 1 of the Mock Proposal Template reads: “Proposals should be based on the provided mock Scopes of Work, linked here.” However, there is no hyperlink. Will Mercy Corps please share the hyperlink to the scopes of work?	The mock Scopes of Work have all been uploaded to the tender’s site. You can find them <a href="#">here</a> .
18	Will Mercy Corps please consider holding two rounds of questions (i.e., this initial round and a second round)?	Yes, we are happy to receive a second round of questions should additional questions

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	That way offerors can have the chance to ask additional clarifying questions once we have the chance to read the mock SOWs?	arise. Please submit any additional clarifying questions by 4pm PST November 10. Questions can be sent to <a href="mailto:gsuarez@mercy Corps.org">gsuarez@mercy Corps.org</a> .
19	How will Mercy Corps utilize the past performance scores of suppliers that were generated during the previous MSA contract?	Past performance scores of suppliers contracted via the Monitoring, Evaluation, and Research Master Service Agreement (MER-MSA) will not be used in this Request for Qualification process or in the new prequalified pool.
20	In Section 3.5.2, Pricing Sheet, the table does not include the work experience or education criteria for the labor categories or seniority levels. Will Mercy Corps kindly provide criteria to allow suppliers to propose similar staff?	Please see the newly uploaded Pricing Sheet Labor Category & Role Level Descriptions for this information.
21	In Section 3.5.2, Mercy Corps has defined Supplier Diversity. Will MC consider adding Veteran or Service-Disabled Veteran Owned Small Business (VOSB or SDVOSB) to this list?	Yes
22	Will Mercy Corps provide feedback on unsuccessful suppliers, including their scores and the scores of pre-qualified firms?	Mercy Corps will share a response of pass or fail as well as the final score of all submissions.
23	How will the General Scoring System (Rubric) be applied to Evaluation Criteria #7?	Firms will either receive 0 or 5 points for Criteria #7. Firms who qualify and complete the self-certification of diversity form will receive 5 points, weighted at 5%. Firms who do not will receive 0 points.
24	On Document "5.Supplier Information Form" Mercy Corps requests the "# of Staff." Can Mercy Corps please provide a definition or criteria for this indicator/field to ensure comparability between firms? For example, does this include Full-Time Employees, Part-Time Employees, Consultants, and affiliated experts/networks?	The Supplier Information form is meant to capture the basic characteristics of each firm. When asking for the number of staff, its for us to understand the scale – workforce the firm has access too. The definition of Staff includes all types.
25	Can companies from outside the USA apply for this?	Yes, companies from outside the USA are eligible and encouraged to apply.
26	Can we perform the tasks (related to RFP) outside USA? Do staff need to come to the United States for meetings?	Yes, tasks can be performed outside of the United States. Most if not all assignments under this mechanism will be conducted either remotely or in a Mercy Corps Country, which span across Africa, Southeast Asia, Central Asia / Europe, South America, and the Middle East.
27	Can we submit the proposals via email?	Yes, all submissions to the Request for Qualification should be submitted via email to <a href="mailto:tenders@mercy Corps.org">tenders@mercy Corps.org</a> .
28	Do we understand it correct that the final countries of conducting monitoring & evaluation (in case of	No, the limited list of countries provided in the LOE proposal section of the Mock

	successful submission) would be proposed countries in Mock proposal template?	Proposal Template was <i>only for the purposes of that exercise</i> . Companies accepted into the prequalified pool will be eligible to submit proposals for all 40+ countries where Mercy Corps works, not just the countries listed in the LOE proposal section of the mock proposal template. For a full list of countries that Mercy Corps currently operates in, please see <a href="#">this webpage</a> .
29	For the CVs, should “Country Experience” include any country where the staff member conducted work (including remotely), or do they need to have been physically present in that country?	CVs may include countries for which the staff member conducted work remotely. If possible, please differentiate between remote and in-person support for each country listed.
30	Reference to the Impact Evaluation Mock SOW  What contents is Mercy Corps expecting to see in the Inception Report (that would not be included in the Impact Evaluation protocol)?	The inception report may contain information that ultimately becomes included/expanded upon in an impact evaluation protocol. It is an interim output between when the agreement is signed and the protocol is finalized. The inception report should directly inform the impact evaluation protocol by summarizing new insights based on program document review and initial meetings between the firm and Mercy Corps. The inception report should facilitate shared agreement between Mercy Corps and the firm on the impact evaluation objectives, document any revisions to the initial impact evaluation design as a result of preliminary meetings, outline roles and responsibilities, timelines and deliverables.
31	Reference to the Performance Evaluation Mock SOW  Clarification on leveraging endline survey/quantitative analysis - While the SoW refers to an endline data collection period and a quantitative survey to be rolled out, the deliverables described do not make a direct reference to where the quantitative analysis will be used. Apart from the completion of IPTT tables, is there another specific place that quantitative analysis is meant to be captured or can it be rolled into the Performance Evaluation at the research firm’s discretion?	In addition to the completion of the IPTT, the quantitative survey used for the endline data collection can be used to collect additional data if the firm feels it is needed to complete one or more of the evaluation objectives listed in section 2.2.

All other terms and conditions in the tender remain unchanged.