



RISE: Research on Improving Systems of Education

# Terms of Reference for Country Research

12 June 2015

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## Acronyms

BSG – Blavatnik School of Government

CGD – Center for Global Development

CRT – Country Research Team

DHS – Demographic and Health Surveys

DFID – United Kingdom Department for International Development

EoI – Expression of Interest

IRB – Institutional Review Board

OPM – Oxford Policy Management Ltd.

RISE – Research on Improving Systems of Education

SABER – Systems Approach for Better Education Results

RfP – Request for Proposals

# 1 SUMMARY

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The Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) programme is soliciting proposals from teams interested in producing high-quality research on how education systems can be transformed to address the current learning crisis in developing countries. RISE is a six-year research programme that will make long-term research investments of up to £21 million in key countries where we see the greatest opportunity for learning about system reforms.

There is an urgent need for more research on education solutions beyond business-as-usual, incremental increases in materials, infrastructure or other inputs. RISE seeks comprehensive, practical answers about how education *systems* innovate, improve learning outcomes, and better serve children and communities. Research questions under RISE centre around the capabilities of education systems to catalyse innovation and improvement. The ultimate goal of RISE is to accelerate progress in learning for all children globally.

The countries preferred for the research are Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Vietnam. Proposals from countries outside of this list yet on the DFID priority list (see [here](#)) are also welcome.

Country research programmes will last for five or six years, depending on the timing of award. Up to three country research programmes successful in this first round will last for six years. At minimum, a further two programmes will be added in a second round in 2016 that will likely last for five years.

RISE anticipates that research teams will be led by local organizations embedded in a domestic policy dialogue, with support from leading researchers from around the world.

## **Timeline and administrative parameters for expressions of interest and proposals**

In July 2015, the RISE Directorate is soliciting expressions of interest (EoIs) from qualified teams that will carry out country research programmes. The request for EoIs will be issued 1 July and EoIs are due 23 August 2015. Based on the EoIs, the RISE Directorate will select a pool of bidders to submit responses to the request for proposals (RfPs), i.e., only those shortlisted after an EoI submission will be invited by mid-September to submit a response to the RfP by mid-November 2015.

This document is the terms of reference (ToR) that will be inserted into the RfP and shared with bidders in September. There may be slight changes to this ToR by September, if warranted after clarifications are sought during the request for EoI window (more below).

Also based on the EoIs, the RISE Directorate may communicate with teams that have submitted EoIs and suggest ways to strengthen a full proposal/response to the RfP or country team.

**Details about request for EoIs to be issued 1 July and due 23 August**

EoIs should not exceed seven pages (11 point Arial font, single spacing), and should include:

- Proposed country of interest
- Proposed system reform(s) to be studied
- Capacity statement of prime research organization and partners, and designated roles of prime and partners
- Illustrative bios of up to three key staff. Potential bidders may include CVs of key personnel in an annex but this is not required.

**Details about RfP to be issued mid-September 2015**

Responses to RfP page limit to be decided, likely approx. 20 pages, 11 point Arial font, single spacing. The contract is fixed price/ lump sum payments.

**How to find out more**

For more details on the programme, including events, please visit [www.rise.ox.ac.uk](http://www.rise.ox.ac.uk).

RISE is holding two pre-solicitation information sessions in June 2015. They will take place at the Center for Global Development (CGD) in Washington DC on 18<sup>th</sup> June and at CGD Europe in London on 24<sup>th</sup> June. See [here](#) for more details and registration information. The DC event will be live web streamed and recorded, and the video will be uploaded to the RISE website.

In addition, RISE is holding five regional meetings in Africa and Asia to discuss this research opportunity and disseminate the ToR. These will be in Dar es Salaam on 8 July, Abuja on 13 July, Delhi on 31 July, Islamabad on 3 August and Jakarta on 6 August. Limited funds will be available to cover travel costs for interested researchers. Please see [here](#) for more details.

Finally, there will also be an open question and answer period, dates to be determined.

## 2 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

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### 2.1 MOTIVATION FOR RESEARCH

#### *The pivot to learning*

The push toward universal primary schooling has been one of the most successful movements of our time. Significant pockets of exclusion remain—access remains stratified by gender, wealth, ethnicity, and rurality; and inequalities are sustained if not exacerbated throughout school careers. Yet there has been amazing progress, e.g., the ratio of girls to boys in primary school rose from 53 for every hundred boys in 1990 to 87 for every hundred boys by 2012. There are significantly more children in schools, trained teachers, and teaching and learning materials than ever before. Enrolment in basic schooling is at or near universal in many developing countries.

Building on this success, the global education movement is shifting focus, looking beyond expansion of enrolment quantity to improvement in the quality of learning. This shift reflects the widespread realization that even those who complete primary schooling often lack basic numeracy and literacy skills. It is now widely acknowledged that there is a [‘learning crisis.’](#)

#### *What we know*

The Research on Improving Systems of Education (RISE) initiative ([www.rise.ox.ac.uk](http://www.rise.ox.ac.uk)) seeks to understand how education systems in the developing world have and can overcome this crisis and dramatically improve learning levels for all children, including the most marginalised.

At one level, we already know the answer. Unlike producing controlled nuclear fusion or a viable vaccine for Ebola, we already know how to teach children to read or do basic mathematics. Researchers have carefully calibrated the learning gains from specific interventions, like school feeding programs, computer-assisted learning, and remedial education. And all countries have pockets of success where these tools are deployed effectively, with excellent schools and teachers delivering quality education.

But these successes often do not happen at scale. High-performing schools are restricted to a narrow set of affluent families. Innovative pilot projects demonstrate potential, but often fail to translate into far-reaching policy reform. In the meantime, cohort after cohort of children gets left behind with little accountability.

A typical developing country would need to [quadruple learning progress](#) to close the learning gap between developed and developing countries in a generation. In order to close this gap, the world needs audacious goals that will inspire substantial acceleration and progress towards true “education for all,” including for the most marginalised. However, the existing evidence base is short on answers for how these goals can be achieved.

### *Toward a system-wide research agenda*

There is an urgent need for more research on solutions beyond business-as-usual, incremental increases in materials, infrastructure or other inputs. Instead, RISE seeks comprehensive, practical answers about how education *systems* can innovate, improve learning outcomes, and better serve children and communities. RISE is a six-year research programme that will make long-term research investments of £21 million in key countries (listed below) where we see the greatest opportunity for learning about system reforms.

A system describes actors and the interactions among actors. Systems often produce consequences for good and ill, not intended by any of the actors. The set of actors involved in education includes parents and children, educators and teachers, schools and schooling organizations – both public and private, formal and non-formal – as well as governments and their relevant ministries, and ancillary actors like producers of textbooks and teaching materials. These actors and the relationships among these actors are structured by complex and overlapping types of relationships of accountability. For example, in democratic societies, governments are held accountable for student outcomes. Inside many public sector systems, teachers are in a relationship of accountability to a ministry. Systemic aspects of education are those that affect the relationships of accountability.

RISE will fund research that goes beyond the proximate causes of test score performance to understand the underlying ingredients of a well-functioning system—for example, the way in which goals are set, progress is assessed and measured, the teaching career is structured, schools are financed and managed, and innovations produced, evaluated and disseminated. RISE will investigate *how and why education systems succeed or fail in attempts to promote learning* for all children.

The RISE approach to system research will include traditional policy evaluation, measuring the impact of policy *X* on outcome *Y*. But RISE is also concerned with understanding how political and bureaucratic systems decide to pursue *X*, and their capacity to implement *X*. System-level research will look beyond a narrow intervention to identify other system level changes required to make *X* successful and sustained.

Most of all, RISE is committed to funding research that examines ambitious education initiatives, which are hypothesized to have had – or show clear potential to have – a meaningful impact on learning for substantial proportions of national or state-level populations in a developing country.

## 2.2 AUDIENCE FOR THE RESEARCH

There are three main overlapping audiences for RISE-generated research:

First, the education policy and practice community in the countries being studied. We hope that through studying system innovations, RISE country research teams will be able to generate research that will inform education policy and practice locally.

Second, global education policymakers and thought leaders concerned with improving learning in poor countries. One primary goal of the RISE initiative is to cultivate an international community of practice around education systems research that can concentrate resources and efforts to accelerate the rate of learning in developing countries.

Finally, researchers worldwide who will contribute to the community of practice and engage in systems research beyond the RISE-supported countries.

### 2.3 RISE DIRECTORATE PARTNERS

The RISE Directorate is the central research and management hub responsible for coordination of research teams, and synthesis and uptake of research outputs across the RISE programme.

Staff from Oxford Policy Management (OPM), the Blavatnik School of Government (BSG) at Oxford University, and the Center for Global Development (CGD) make up the RISE Directorate. Lant Pritchett (Harvard University and CGD) is the Research Director. Mark Henstridge (OPM) and Calum Miller (BSG) are programme directors responsible for programme and financial management, communications, and guidance to teams on how to maximise the impact of the research.

Overall responsibility for the content and direction of the RISE programme lies with the Intellectual Leadership Team (ILT), comprised of 16 globally prominent researchers and practitioners, led by Lant Pritchett (see [here](#) for details about the ILT).

- Lant Pritchett (chair), Harvard University and Center for Global Development
- Rukmini Banerji, Pratham, India
- Moussa P. Blimpo, University of Oklahoma, College of International Studies
- Newman Burdett, National Foundation for Educational Research, UK
- Barbara Bruns, World Bank
- Claudia Maria Costin, World Bank
- Luis Crouch, RTI International, USA
- Paul Glewwe, University of Minnesota, Department of Applied Economics
- Kara Hanson, London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine
- Mark Moore, Harvard Kennedy School of Government
- Karthik Muralidharan, University of California at San Diego
- Caine Rolleston, Institute of Education, University of London
- Justin Sandefur, Center for Global Development
- Emiliana Vegas, Inter-American Development Bank
- Susan Watkins, University of California Los Angeles



- Ludger Woessmann, Ifo Center for the Economics of Education and Innovation, University of Munich

The ILT will provide intellectual guidance and advice to the research teams through the RISE Directorate, offering a diverse set of skills and perspectives to support and strengthen the programme's knowledge base. ILT members are bound by conflict of interest requirements; any ILT member involved in a bid has been asked to declare this interest in writing and will not in any way be involved in the selection of country research teams.

Over the course of the procurement process, including the request for EoIs and proposal stages, RISE is holding a series of open meetings in seven countries around the world, with the goal of reaching as many potential bidders as possible and ensuring a competitive, transparent process. Some meetings will also be streamed live on the Internet and all will be recorded, with collected questions and answers on the TORs made publicly available on the RISE website (see 'Summary' section above for more details).

The contracts for research awarded as a result of this commissioning process will be managed by OPM, i.e. research teams will be paid by and will report to OPM. However, research teams will also interact with various members of the RISE Directorate and ILT regarding technical and research-related issues. Members of the RISE Directorate and the UK Department for International Development (see below) will conduct visits to observe research progress and provide comments on research team outputs throughout the course of the programme.

## 2.4 DFID

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) funds this research programme. The investment in this unprecedented, ambitious and large-scale programme reflects a key pillar of DFID's approach, which involves underpinning policy and country-based practice with a strong evidence base.

DFID invests heavily in education, with the core aim of improving learning and equity. DFID has committed to supporting 9 million children in primary school, 2 million in secondary school and training 190,000 teachers with £2.7 billion allocated to education programmes in partner countries between 2010/11 and 2014/15. A majority of these programmes, representing £1.9 billion, work closely with education systems and partner governments to improve the quality of education. DFID works at the systems level because how these systems function determines whether they will be able to deliver quality education for all.

DFID's Education Research Team holds responsibility for the delivery of this programme. This team, part of the Research and Evidence Division, will review all key programme deliverables and drive emerging research findings through into wider DFID policy debate. DFID country offices and regional research hubs, in Delhi and Nairobi, will play an important role in brokering and sustaining necessary relationships between the research teams and policy process.

While the DFID Education Research Team will review deliverables and potentially observe research implementation, any feedback from DFID will be channelled through the RISE Directorate. The research teams have no direct reporting or contractual relationship to DFID.

## 2.5 TIMELINE AND BUDGET FOR COUNTRY RESEARCH

The RISE Directorate plans to issue two calls for country research, in which it will make up to five awards total. Under the first call, awards will be made for work starting in March 2016 for up to three country research teams. Under the second call, issued around September 2016, the RISE Directorate will make two or three awards. (The expected number of awards is five total; the number of awards per call will depend on the quality of the proposals). Applicants whose proposals are not awarded funding in the first round are eligible for consideration for the second round of funding.

The RISE Directorate expects that country research programmes funded under the first call will last for six years. The awards funded in the second call will last for a minimum of five, maximum six, years. The RISE Directorate will seek to allocate the £21 million of funding directly to the five selected country research teams, recognizing that costs may vary by context. There is no budget ceiling for proposals, but proposals will be scored according to value for money criteria (as below in Annex 2). RISE will not review proposals under £3 million. Awards will be made in pound sterling.

## 3 RESEARCH SCOPE AND REQUIRED COMPETENCIES

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The RISE Directorate is soliciting proposals from qualified organizations and consortia that will carry out country research programmes that will address the full range of objectives discussed below.

This section of the ToR outlines the anticipated scope of the research, expected competencies of the individuals and organizations carrying out the country research programme, and what bidders should highlight in their proposals to the RISE Directorate. Detailed guidance on the proposal structure is provided in Annex 1, but here we provide the main sections we expect to see in proposals.

1. Background (country and system context, reform or innovation to be studied)
2. Research plans (questions, methods, data collection, analysis)
3. Dissemination and country engagement plans
4. Organizational and individual capabilities
5. Logistics (workplan, deliverables)
6. Appendices (staff CVs)
7. Budget (to be submitted separately)

This structure largely mirrors the order and content of this section (3). Note that proposals must include all sub-sections 1-7 shown above and discussed in this section (3). Guidance on what to include in proposals is clearly marked under each sub-section entitled 'Proposals to include.'

This section should be useful in technical proposal preparation, while section 4 below discusses further details of expectations for implementation of the country research, and is thus most useful to potential bidders in preparing budgets and workplans.

### 3.1 OBJECTIVE

The RISE programme aims to:

- **Provide an analytical framework to describe and understand how education systems function.** For example, the relationship between how the teaching profession is structured, students are assessed, schools are financed and managed, and innovations produced, evaluated, and disseminated. An overall analytical framework is being developed by the RISE Directorate, and will be available to applicants when the RfP is issued in mid-September.

This framework will be available to research teams to apply, test and debate throughout the lifetime of the programme, and will be revised based on the body of research generated by research teams funded under RISE. As part of the country research work, described in section 4, we expect each research team to elaborate on the current RISE framework to the degree it is relevant to its research programme. The RISE Directorate and the ILT will continue to refine and adapt this in conjunction with research teams, on the basis of emerging evidence.

- **Generate research that evaluates – experimentally and non-experimentally – large-scale system reform efforts on the basis of its impact on student learning and equity in learning across genders and socio-economic classes.** Evaluations should go beyond the immediate determinants of what works in the classroom, to examine for example bureaucratic incentives for innovation and uptake of new practices, and the political accountability systems that make reforms happen and succeed. Research products will discuss *how* reform happens in a given country. While RISE seeks to offer generalizable, rigorous evidence, we are not looking to establish international 'best practices' in education or discover silver bullet solutions.
- **Generate explanations for why reforms succeed or fail.** Some system innovations succeed in the face of a paralyzed system and others fail in more robust systems. The goal of RISE is to better understand why. Building on how reforms happen, research should look at causes for success and failure.

- **Collect and disseminate new quantitative and qualitative data** on education generally, especially on student learning, teacher performance, and school management, that contribute to a public dialogue about education system successes and failures, and provide a platform for other researchers to build on. Qualitative data may come from interviews with students, parents, teachers, bureaucrats, and leaders at every level of the political system.
- **Build a community of practice of local and international researchers, teachers and other education practitioners**, both within focus countries and internationally, working within the RISE programme's analytical framework, drawing on and extending the evidence base built by RISE.
- **Produce academically publishable research**. We expect research methods deployed to be consistent with the highest standards of evidence in relevant academic disciplines.

## 3.2 COUNTRIES OF FOCUS

### 3.2.1 Background

The motivation, objectives and scope of this research programme helped to set criteria for country selection that helped the RISE Directorate choose locations where RISE might be most successful. The country selection criteria developed by the RISE Directorate can be found [here](#). These criteria were used by the RISE Directorate to determine a list of countries of interest and, following an extensive process involving country visits, in-person and telephone interviews, and background research, this list was narrowed down to seven key countries prioritized for this research programme.

This programme will have breadth across three types of countries: (1) countries of central importance in the medium-term to DFID programmes and policy (see DFID's priority list [here](#)); (2) fragile and conflict-afflicted states, also on DFID's priority list; and (3) one additional country that may not be on DFID's priority list but that will offer strong lessons on reforms at scale to improve learning.

The seven countries prioritized for this research are:

- Ethiopia
- Ghana
- India
- Indonesia
- Nigeria
- Pakistan

- Vietnam

Additionally, bidders are welcome to propose research programmes in any other country on the DFID priority list ([here](#)) outside of this list of seven. Proposals from countries not among these seven will be evaluated with priority given to overwhelming compelling examples of system reform(s) or transformation(s) consistent with RISE's research goals.

If bidders wish to propose research programmes in more than one country, this is permissible, but cross-country programmes will be funded at the same level as individual country research programmes.

RISE is willing to make more than one award per country, depending on the quality of the proposals. That is, the RISE Directorate will not rule out multiple awards in the same country (by different bidders) if the proposals are of high quality and add distinct bodies of knowledge. This especially applies to larger, federal countries (e.g., India, Nigeria, Indonesia), that may be home to multiple, distinct education systems within a country. RISE does not anticipate making multiple awards per country in smaller countries.

Especially in larger countries, proposals are welcome to include research that is limited to sub-national regions (states, districts, etc.), as long as the reforms or innovations meet the parameters described below.

### 3.2.2 Proposals to include

Fundamentally, research proposals should specify the country where the research is to take place, and specifically where in the country (states, regions, etc.). Bidders should also provide a justification for why they are proposing to work in this country, and why the context is relevant to the RISE programme. Some background research conducted by the RISE Directorate on prioritized countries may be made available to bidders at the RfP stage.

## 3.3 ELEMENTS OF EDUCATION SYSTEMS TO BE STUDIED

### 3.3.1 Background

The primary priority for a research site is the presence of interesting and innovative reforms or system elements that can provide the foundation for the RISE research programme. Note that while the word 'reform' is used here, RISE encourages proposals that study any components or elements of a system that are innovative and have or have the potential to have large impacts on learning. As mentioned above, RISE is primarily interested in studying the effects of system change and how systems changes affect learning.

There are a variety of initiatives that would be considered interesting elements of a system and worthy of research under the RISE programme. Here and in Table 1 below is a discussion of some key attributes of systems or innovations worthy of study under RISE.

First, the element or system characteristic should be hypothesized to have or have had a meaningful impact on learning for substantial proportions of the population.

Second, reforms or system characteristics should be at scale or have the potential for scale. (This can mean scaled at the sub-national or national levels, or be potentially replicable in other countries.) RISE will not rule out reforms or system characteristics that have not yet been scaled nationally or sub-nationally, but at the same time, RISE is not interested in reforms that are simply a proof of concept with no trajectory for longer-term scalability.

Third, proposed reforms or system characteristics need to

- a. Be appropriate to the context (meaning make sense for the students and other actors affected by the reform, e.g., a curriculum change that is tailored to the learning abilities of students rather than being under- or overambitious)
- b. Be hypothesized to have the potential for success, i.e., improved learning, within the context of the larger system. Any discussion of a reform should consider what other system level changes need to take place for the reform to be successful and sustained. Well-intentioned reforms or policies implemented in a paralyzed system are unlikely to be successful unless fundamental system features are also addressed. For example, raising teacher pay across a system in an environment without concomitant improvements in teacher accountability or skills may be ineffective.
- c. Have the support of those implementing them. This could be the government, NGOs, the private sector, etc.

### 3.3.2 Illustrative examples of research projects relevant to RISE

We do not intend to delineate the entire scope of what the potential systems reforms are in advance, but the following areas are illustrative of those that would be considered interesting from the RISE perspective:

- **Teacher policies as a vehicle for improving teaching quality.** While there is strong evidence that attractive compensation is an element of an overall policy of recruitment of the needed skills into teaching, research from India (showing higher performance from much less highly paid teachers in the private and public sector) and recently from experience/experiment in Indonesia shows that

pay alone is neither necessary nor sufficient for motivating superior performance. Research into how the structure of the overall policies of recruitment, retention, training, supervision, management, and allocation to posts and compensation together can make for a coherent policy for enhancing the quality of teaching would be of interest.

- **Student assessment systems that feed into an overall coherent strategy for accountability and improving learning.** There is recent experience in India, Pakistan, and East Africa with using civil society organizations to raise awareness of learning deficiencies and promote accountability and reform that provides the basis for ‘second generation’ rounds of research in those (and other) places. Expanding the dissemination of examination results as a way of sustaining and encouraging school level reforms and exercise of parental/student voice and choice within the public sector has shown promise in some contexts. Development of formative assessment systems that are of direct use of teachers and school management by providing useful, student-specific feedback that allows the individualization of instruction in a low-cost and feasible (disruptive) way is another potential avenue.
- **Increasing teacher and school autonomy within a performance-driven system.** While ‘decentralization’ per se has proven no panacea, there are promising innovations in the overall system architecture that change who is responsible for what specific functions in ways that produce a more coherent system focused on learning and capable of producing, sustaining and diffusing innovations. Issues of school (and teacher) autonomy and how that is embedded in learning performance-driven systems in ways that enable superior teaching practices (through for instance better local support systems for teaching, or greater control over resources at the school level) are of interest.
- **Teaching to the level of the student.** There has been emerging evidence, particularly in South Asia but also in other locales, of curricular and pedagogical mismatch such that teaching of fundamental literacy and numeracy skills does not produce a foundation of early mastery that research shows is necessary for further progress. This can be a cause of exacerbating socio-economic and other disadvantages and (inadvertently) promoting inequality. There have also been promising attempts to ‘teach to the right level’ and research on how to bring those practices and sound science into new system approaches to early grade teaching of literacy and numeracy is of interest.
- **Private schools.** In many countries the low performance and lack of responsiveness of public systems to parental demands has led to a proliferation of low-cost private schools. How those fit into an overall system of improving student learning and equity raises a number of issues of high research interest. For example, research on Chile since 1981 shows that it is not so much whether but how private schools operate in an overall system that determines sustained

progress. In particular, there has been interesting research in Pakistan on how the provision of information about the performance of private schools changes the entry and exit of private providers and the prices they charge. Recent research in India that combined information at the level both of the individual student who moved schools and the performance of students in the schools from which and to which they moved provided key information on potential spill-over effects (positive and negative) of providing ‘money follows the student’ funding. Research into ‘win-win’ approaches that improve learning and promote equity through innovative modes of integrating private schooling options into an overall system of education are of great interest.

- **Teacher motivation and performance.** Quality school systems rely on high-quality teaching. How to motivate existing teachers to improve their teaching practices continually over time—in particular by increasing the salience of the intrinsic motivation of teachers in situations in which ‘top down’ and overly bureaucratic modes of controlling and ‘supervising’ teachers have denuded that sense-- is an important question. How to unleash the power of teachers themselves, motivated around improving teaching practices to diffuse good teaching practices to change the overall system is an important question.
- **Sustainability prospects for contract teachers.** There have been several studies, particularly in India and Kenya, showing that changing the contractual status of teachers can improve learning impact (and cost effectiveness) over the existing operation of the, often quite degraded, ‘civil service’ contractual status, apparently as they introduce greater accountability. However it is not at all obvious how to build these insights into a sustainable model for attracting and retaining high-quality teaching.
- **Technology solutions that are widespread, sustainable, and go beyond a proof of concept.** While ‘technology’ as just another add-on into existing dysfunctional systems shows little promise there is a possibility of the use of technology to promote ‘disruptive’ innovations that change the nature and potential of schools, particularly in remote and difficult-to-reach rural areas, but also embedded into new approaches to high expectation schools with highly patterned instruction, or alternatively using structured feedback to guide instruction. While a number of these approaches have reached ‘proof of concept’ stage in various (branded) modalities, the next steps to scale up and their system potential are of high research interest.

These are characteristics of education programmes that would be less likely to be supported under RISE:

- Smaller, very geographically limited programmes
- Input-oriented interventions without complementary system reform elements (e.g., textbooks, flip charts, technological fixes like one laptop per child, ICT for



development, etc.) without complements. For example, if a curriculum reform involved textbooks, this reform might be worthy of study, but a study solely regarding the introduction of new text books would not merit research attention under RISE.

- Programmes that focus on enrolment as the primary objective (e.g., conditional cash transfers)
- Programmes with no potential for scale. The RISE programme is reluctant to support the hypothesis that NGOs are the appropriate laboratory for designing government policy.
- Interventions designed solely by researchers. We expect intervention design to be either driven by implementers or a collaborative undertaking between local implementers and researchers.

### 3.3.3 Quantity and level of reforms, innovations or system elements eligible for study

Proposals that study multiple reforms or characteristics within a system that meet the above criteria are welcome. That is, research teams can propose to study one reform or system element, or a package of reforms or system elements that may be related or unrelated, i.e., these can be linked or separate reforms. However, any reform proposed must include justification for how it is pivotal in improving learning.

Research teams are welcome to study reforms or innovations at different levels of the education system. Research teams may propose to study a set of separate or linked sub-systems. For example, some countries have superintendents separate from the ministry. Or at the subnational level, districts or regions may manage a group of schools. These would be considered sub-system reforms and are eligible for study under RISE.

### 3.3.4 Scope of RISE funding: research vs implementation

RISE will only fund *research*-related activities regarding system reform or innovation, not the implementation of the reform or innovation. This means that given the scope of RISE and the funding available, RISE does not expect to be able to support research *plus* fund the implementation a larger reform or innovation. The RISE Directorate expects that researchers will not be generating the innovation proposed to be studied with RISE funding but that these will be initiatives already underway or starting during the timeframe of the research project. RISE is willing to fund the incremental cost of doing research on reforms, such as outreach, policy engagement, advising, and technical assistance, meaning that RISE country research teams are welcome to act as advisors or even play a role in reform or innovation design. But RISE will not fund the core cost of project implementation, such as teacher salaries or bonuses, educational materials, educator training, school fees, school monitoring, etc.

### 3.3.5 Timing of reforms

In terms of timing or the stage of the reforms or system characteristics, the primary objective of RISE is to generate lessons for the causes and outcomes of systemic change. Thus, reforms or system characteristics proposed for study could be completed or nearly completed, and the subject of a retrospective study; currently underway; or planned to take place over duration of assignment. Preference will be given for studying reforms that can generate the greatest learning to the proposed country and to the broader education community.

### 3.3.6 Reform prospects of success

Reforms, policies or innovations could be successes or failures. RISE is not opposed to funding the study of reforms that fail (of course preference is for reforms that succeed) as long as the reforms can offer valuable lessons about how to improve learning going forward.

### 3.3.7 Summary table on eligible reforms

Table 1 elaborates on the types of systemic reforms or initiatives that RISE is and is not interested in supporting. The cells in the prospective column that say ‘yes (but must be highly likely)’ indicate that if teams are proposing reforms that have not started yet, they should make a compelling case that the reform is likely to happen. This case could be made with for example legislation, evidence of implementation starting, or interviews with key informants.

Table 1: Systemic reforms eligible and ineligible for study under RISE

	<b>Retrospective</b>	<b>Ongoing</b>	<b>Prospective</b>
<b>Proximate determinants of learning (‘inputs’)</b>	No	No	No
<b>Components of systemic reforms</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes (but must be highly likely)
<b>Major systemic reforms</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes (but must be highly likely)

### 3.3.8 Eligible areas of the education sector: basic education

The RISE initiative is primarily interested in reforms or system characteristics related to basic education (i.e., primary and secondary school). The reforms or system elements should meet the criteria that they are expected to impact learning meaningfully for a large portion of children/young adults, and are part of transformative systematic reform.

### 3.3.9 Proposals to include

The main focus of this section is background about reforms, innovations or system elements teams propose to study. For smaller or sub-system reforms, bidders may propose to examine multiple reforms. In this case, they should complete the following for each reform or innovation. In presenting the proposed reform(s) to be studied, applicants will need to explain:

1. What the reform, innovation or system element is and why it is relevant to the RISE initiative
2. Framing of the reform within in the institutional architecture or framework recommended by the RISE team. (Framework will be included in an annex to this ToR by September 2015.)
3. *Expected impacts on learning*: why these reforms are most pivotal to education systems change in the country/state, how reform(s) have or will affect learning. Bidders should map out the theory of change from reform implementation to large-scale learning improvements, especially including the intermediate steps along the path to changes in learning.
4. *Actors* involved in designing and implementing reforms (e.g., government, NGOs, private sector, community, etc.).
5. *Context*: justification for why the proposed reforms can work within the system, and how this reform will rely on other aspects of the system to function. For example, if one is proposing to study the reform of teacher pay, the proposal should emphasize how system pieces fit together qua system. This section should also include political factors that could affect reform success (e.g. elections, new leadership, etc.). Proposals should include discussion of how team plans to encounter opposition to the political economy of change, if that is anticipated. We expect an analysis of the context to be a critical part of this section of the proposal.
6. *Timeframe for implementation and effects*: For incipient reforms or those not yet underway, proposals should explain the conditions under which this reform will or won't take place, and why the bidder thinks the reform or policy will be carried out. This should include the risks and limitations of the reform or innovation.
7. *Relevance of reforms or system elements to learning about reform inside and outside of country*: How will learning about the reform(s) or system characteristic(s) proposed for this research inform other education reforms the country is undertaking or will undertake? How will lessons from this reform inform reforms in other developing countries? Relevance is not simply contributing to 'international best practice' but rather providing concrete lessons for other countries and regions.

## 3.4 METHODS

### 3.4.1 Background

RISE seeks to answer questions on how reforms accelerate progress in student learning using a variety of disciplinary approaches. RISE is not simply looking for the immediate causes of why a reform succeeds or fails to improve learning, but also the deeper-level causes for how reforms happen and why. Answering these questions will likely require a range of methods.

A key principle of the methodological approach supported by RISE is that research methods should be driven by the research question and tailored to the context. This means that RISE expects proposals to include a variety of qualitative and quantitative approaches, such as process, case, and impact studies. For example, we would expect that country research programmes include studies on the pace and quality of reform implementation; sociological, anthropological, and political science work on the context of reform; and narratives of teachers and other key education actors about how they are affected by or implementing a reform or innovation. We might also expect to see experimental or quasi-experimental impact studies where establishing a credible control group for a reform or innovation is feasible.

As discussed, we anticipate that methods will be adapted to the nature of the research question. Bidders should also note that the focus in this programme is on producing gold standard research, and that this is a research initiative that will generate publications in top-quality academic journals. Thus we expect research produced to be of the highest quality in the relevant discipline. (See more about publications in section 4.)

### 3.4.2 Proposals to include

As stated above, the central research question for RISE is ‘how can education systems transform to significantly improve learning for all children globally?’ Using this as the overarching research question, specific research questions should then be drawn down by research teams, dependent upon the country and reform focus.

The methods section of the proposal should first outline the key research questions to be answered under the proposed research programme. Using the research questions as foundation, the methods section should address:

- a. *How bidders arrived at the research questions:* This would include consultations with in-country policymakers, thought leaders or innovators, background research, personal field research, etc.

- b. *Methods proposed to answer each research question*: The methods should be justified by explaining why the proposed methods are best suited to answering the research questions about the proposed reforms or system elements.
- c. *Data sources, mapped to research questions and methods*: This includes the use of secondary and primary data sources.
  - i. If using secondary data, discuss any data access issues and how you plan to obtain and clean the data. Secondary data could include household survey data (e.g. DHS, Young Lives, country-specific datasets) or administrative data (e.g., education management information systems data, standardized testing data).
- d. If proposing *primary data collection* (strongly encouraged), section 4.2 below discusses the background and requirements of primary data collection. Please review that section in preparation for this part of the proposal.

### 3.5 RESEARCH PARTNERSHIPS, STAFFING, AND LINKS TO IMPLEMENTERS

#### 3.5.1 Background

The study of systems reform demands research teams with knowledge of local institutions, policies, projects, and actors. These actors include government, the private sector, NGOs, thought leaders, civil society, and DFID and other donors. Networks among these political, policy and implementation spheres are necessary not only to facilitate the scale of research that RISE entails, but also to drive the reforms and innovation that RISE teams will study. Proposals will need to demonstrate strong understanding of and relationships across these networks, as well as a proven record of high quality, rigorous research experience.

We expect that research teams will most likely be comprised of researchers and thought leaders with local and international multi-disciplinary experience and knowledge. Thus, preference will be given to teams that demonstrate true partnerships between developed and developing-country-based researchers. This means that developed and developing-country nationals are equal partners in for example tasks such as research design, analysis, or authoring academic papers. In some countries, it might make sense for developing-country based research or policy organizations (think tanks, universities, private consultancies, NGOs, etc.) to lead proposals, calling on expertise from abroad to fill gaps in local research capacity.

#### 3.5.2 Proposals to include

The most important aspect in this area of the proposal is the research team (point a). The proposal should include details about:

- a. Key staff. Bidders should specify
  - i. Qualifications of up to ten individuals who will play key roles in the research team, with a focus on research and country-specific experience. (Bidders are

- welcome to include fewer than ten key staff. However, during the proposal review stage, the RISE Directorate will only evaluate CVs of up to ten key staff members.) Qualifications should include relevant research and policy experience, specifically years of experience working in the country of study, and national language ability.
- ii. Roles that each of named staff members will play. Bidders are required to name the team leader and lead researcher. (Bidders can assign roles/titles for the other up to eight staff members, but this is not required.)
    - The team leader should have deep knowledge of the country and its education system, and at least ten years of experience leading research or project implementation projects. He or she should have a history of working with leaders of education reform, and be connected to the local education community.
    - The lead researcher should be a nationally prominent or an internationally-recognized expert demonstrated through publications relevant to education in the country of study.
  - iii. Time each named staff member will devote to the project (days per year), and time expected to be spent inside and outside of the country of study. This should be specified for every key staff member named.
  - iv. Note that for each major research output (e.g. report or journal publication), RISE requires that one or more research task leads are nationals of the country of study and co-authored on the output. ('Major' can be defined by the research team in the proposal.) The task leads need not be key staff. (Task leads are individuals who lead aspects of research projects, such as data collection, data management and cleaning, stakeholder engagement, or analytical aspects of a publication such as the quantitative analysis or variable construction.)
- b. Non-key staff. Bidders are welcome to name additional resource persons who are non-key but included in the budget, and include summaries of their qualifications in an annex. Note however, as mentioned above, the RISE Directorate will only review CVs of up to ten team members. Bidders are encouraged to keep CVs brief and targeted to the proposal.
  - c. Organizational capabilities of lead/prime organization. Bidders should emphasize relevant policy and academic research experience, experience working in the country of study, and experience conducting research projects of similar scale and cost to RISE.
  - d. Organizational capabilities of any partner organizations. This could include subcontractors or other resources. Bidders should emphasize same characteristics as asked of the lead organization (in c).
  - e. Links of prime and partner organizations to entities leading the education reforms. Here bidders should discuss how they have worked and intend to work with the

- implementers of the reforms being studied. In order for systems research to be carried out effectively, research organizations must have access to individuals involved in designing and implementing reforms. Ideally, the local organization will have a history of working with implementing partners or other actors involved in the reforms.
- f. Links of prime and partner organizations to the education policy community in-country (if these are not the same individuals in (e)), and how the of prime and partner organizations plan to work with education policymakers in-country, through efforts like engaging the policy community in RISE research.

## 4 EXPECTED OUTPUTS DURING RESEARCH IMPLEMENTATION

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Section 3 outlined the scope and requirements for proposals, this section outlines the main steps that the RISE Directorate expects research teams to take to carry out the research programme. Thus, the main purpose of this section is to give prospective teams an overview of what they should expect to implement after contract signing, and to help bidding organizations develop a proposal budget for their research programme. Unless otherwise noted, the services discussed here are mostly illustrative and research teams can feel free to propose additional or alternate services and deliverables. The RISE Directorate expects all proposals to include a brief workplan for carrying out the research, with a more detailed workplan due during inception (see more below). Workplans included in the proposal should start from March 2016, the anticipated start of the contract.

### 4.1 INCEPTION PHASE: BACKGROUND RESEARCH AND PLANNING

This section outlines the key steps we expect research teams to undertake in the inception phase of this contract. We anticipate that the inception phase will last six months (from March to September 2016), but bidders are welcome to propose a different schedule in their workplans.

The main deliverables in the inception phase are the system diagnostic and the inception report.

#### 4.1.1 System diagnostic

An education system diagnostic will lay the groundwork for the RISE six-year research programme in each country. It will map out features and actors within the education system and how they are supporting or impeding learning progress. System diagnostics will be part of the first and last deliverables of the contract. We expect the first diagnostic to be done by the research teams within the first six months of the contract,

so by September 2016, and again in year six. Guidance on how to conduct this diagnostic will be provided in an annex to the RfP by September and at a cross-country workshop convened by the RISE Directorate soon after contract signing.

Research teams are expected to produce a document diagnosing the education system that will be based on the framework developed by RISE. The purpose of using a common framework is to encourage country teams to utilize a common vocabulary to describe systems throughout the course of the project, such as to articulate why a reform succeeded or failed and, ultimately, to enable some cross-country learning. Reforms do not happen in isolation and thus it is important to frame the reform within the constraints and freedoms the system allows. We expect the system diagnostic to highlight complementary, blocking and reinforcing components within the system. For example, teacher pay reforms should not be discussed without addressing the political and social influences of the teacher unions.

While we expect that the diagnostic will include a cursory overview of the broader system generally, a diagnostic need not cover the *entire* system in depth, especially if aspects of the system are not hypothesized to affect learning. For example, if a discussion of how the Ministry of Education procures inputs is not ultimately related to learning progress, then the diagnostic need not address this. Research teams that propose to study a set of linked sub-systems can limit the diagnostic to those sub-systems. For example, some countries have superintendents separate from the ministry. Or at the subnational level, districts or regions may manage a group of schools. The diagnostic in this case should map out each of these sub-systems and how they related to each other, such as how they related to the national or central government and the agencies.

*System diagnostic meeting:* Note that all research teams will be required to send up to three representatives to a central location (depending on where the research teams are located) to participate in a three-day workshop led by the RISE Directorate on how to prepare a systems diagnostic. Bidders should budget for travel and accommodation to London, UK, understanding that the eventual location will be announced upon award. All staff time, accommodation, and travel expenses should come out of the country research team budgets. We expect this meeting to take place around contract signing, in March or April 2016.

#### 4.1.2 Inception report

In addition to the system diagnostic document, the inception phase also requires that bidders produce an inception report that includes a detailed research design and workplan. The research teams will receive feedback from the RISE Directorate on the



workplan that was included in the proposal, and research design ideas that were in the proposal and revise accordingly.

### **Research design**

Research teams are expected to submit a proposed research design as part of the proposal. This second research design document due in the inception phase (six weeks after contract signing) builds on what was outlined in the proposal, and offers a more in-depth outline of specific research designs over the life of the contract. For example, if conducting an evaluation with a quantitative or qualitative survey, this design document would include research questions, primary outcomes, questionnaire parameters, sample size (and power calculations with justification for sample size), and planned analysis.

The research design document will be approved by the RISE Directorate before fieldwork and/or analysis begins.

### **Workplan**

Also as part of the proposal, bidders will submit an illustrative workplan for year 1. Upon initiating work, the research team will be required to update this workplan, and submit a detailed year 1 workplan for activities to be carried out in the first year, along with an illustrative workplan for subsequent years. The inception workplan should incorporate feedback from the RISE Directorate, expand on details in proposal, and include:

1. How research will be carried out, by when, and by whom, including
  - a. Logistical details of planned surveys, not discussed in the design section of the report
  - b. Staffing allocations and timeline for analysis, i.e., who is doing the analysis and by when
  - c. How the research is structured around the school or academic year as well as policy cycle, if relevant
2. All staffing and subcontractor arrangements
3. The number of expected days each staff member will work on which tasks, ensuring balance between staff based in vs outside of the country
4. Dissemination plan and country engagement strategy (see section 4.5 below)
5. Key deliverables expected over the year (reports, working papers, academic publications, etc.)

## **4.2 PRIMARY DATA COLLECTION**

RISE strongly encourages the collection and use of primary data. This section outlines RISE's guidelines for collecting and using primary data, and what details about primary data collection should be included in proposals. Note that all data collected as part of RISE must be shared publicly, as detailed below.

The first guiding principle of utilizing any form of data under RISE is that the data analysis inform the causal chain/theory of change that links the reform or innovation being studied to improvements in student learning. For example, if the research focuses on changes in teacher practice or school management practice or bureaucratic efficiency that are causally linked to learning improvements, then it makes sense that data on teacher practice or school management practice or bureaucratic efficiency be collected as part of that research programme.

A second guiding principle is the goal of comparability across and within countries. We anticipate that research teams will develop their data collection proposals in consultation with the RISE Directorate to promote comparability and sharing of measures across countries. Successful bidders should be prepared to participate in a dialog with other country teams to settle on a consensus approach to choosing learning metrics and survey instruments. The RISE consensus need not impose a homogenous set of survey instruments on all countries. Compelling reasons may arise to do things differently in different places. When the use of international or regional measures does not make sense in the context of the research team proposal, teams should make every effort to tailor surveys and assessments to those already in use in-country.

Primary data collection supported under RISE can include but not be limited to

1. Student and teacher assessments: Outcome measurement

*Student assessments characteristics:* Preferred metrics are those that are widely used in developing countries: ASER, Uwezo, SACMEQ, Young Lives, PISA, TIMSS, etc. Research teams can deviate from this list depending on the scope and goals of the research programme proposed, in consultation with the RISE Directorate assessment experts. Any assessment that is not on the preferred list above should be submitted to the RISE Directorate for review by a group of assessment experts. If the assessment is not on the preferred list yet has been reviewed by another set of assessment experts, the research teams can submit that review to the RISE Directorate in lieu of going through RISE Directorate review.

*Originality:* Given the significant time and cost of developing original assessments, we do not expect RISE to fund the creation of original assessments specific to a country context. That is, we anticipate adaptations of assessments and items, but we do not expect research teams to create entire assessments from scratch. We would expect assessment items to at least come from those being used in-country.

*Representativeness:* RISE expects that student assessments be representative of the population of interest. This means that assessments can be but need not be representative of an administrative area within-country (e.g., state, district,

province), but that they be representative of the student population in the area of interest.

*Location:* Assessments could take place in-school or out-of-school (in households) depending on the context. If a significant portion of students in the population of interest is in school and the research team is planning quantitative research, RISE encourages school-based assessments linked with teacher characteristic data to allow for value-added modelling.

*Follow-up and periodicity:* Assessments can be longitudinal or cross-sectional. Either approach should be justified through the research objectives. Assessments can take place with whatever frequency makes sense within the context of the research programme, but should be collected at least twice over the course of the research programme (baseline and endline).

*Teacher assessments characteristics:* RISE does not require assessing teacher subject matter knowledge or teachers' knowledge of pedagogic techniques. But if teams propose this because teacher knowledge improvements are linked to the research programme's theory of change, the same principles apply as under student assessments.

## 2. Pathways metrics

*Measures of classroom activities:* Some prominent examples of this include the Stallings Observation System, the Classroom Assessment Scoring System (CLASS), and the classroom observation tool used by the World Bank in collecting [service delivery indicators](#) (SDIs). Any classroom observation tool should be reviewed and approved by the RISE Directorate.

*Measures of management practices within schools:* One example of this is the [World Management Survey](#), led by Nicholas Bloom and John Van Reenen, which collected management practices data from over 15,000 manufacturing firms in lower, upper middle and high income countries over the last decade. This was expanded to school research (see [here](#)) in 2014.

*Other:* Surveys that fall outside categories above. These might include interviews with teachers, administrators, parents, education implementers, thought leaders, policymakers, students, out-of-school children, etc.

For the purposes of proposals, we recommend that proposals include as much detail on planned data collection as possible. Here is a list of information that the RISE Directorate expects about data collection in the design report submitted at the end of

the inception phase. Proposals should focus on the components marked with an asterisk when feasible.

- a. \*How any data collection effort fits into the theory of change of the reform or innovation being studied.
- b. \**Choice of metrics*. By default, research teams will be expected to agree on comparable metrics with other RISE country programs. If bidders foresee a compelling reason this will not be possible, this should be explained in the bid. For instance, if a team is collaborating with a government ministry, there may be a compelling case to adopt metrics already widely used within the ministry.
- c. \**Survey area*
- d. \**Representativeness*. What population will be covered by the data collection (country, region, etc.)
- e. \**Time-series comparability*. Is there a longitudinal dimension? If so, will data be comparable over time and/or with pre-existing data sources within the country?
- f. \* *Sample size and justification for sample size* (power calculations for quantitative surveys and sampling rationale for qualitative surveys). (Sample size and power calculations not required as part of the proposal but may be necessary for budgeting purposes.)
- g. *Required permits*. Bidders should be sure to include the cost of permits into budgets and build the permitting time into the data collection timeline.
- h. \**Plans for ethical oversight of research using human subjects*. Bidders must propose which IRB they plan to use for the research. This IRB should meet international research standards. IRB costs should be included in survey budgets.
- i. \**Budget*, including breakdown on cost to complete by respondent (household, child, school, etc.) (Cost to complete required in workplan for the year in which the survey is taking place, not proposal.)
- j. *Timeline*, including instrument development, piloting, fieldwork, cleaning and translation.
- k. *Data collection quality assurance procedures*, such as auditing and back-checking of surveys and assessments.
- l. *Data management protocols*, such as whether the surveys or assessments will involve electronic data collection, or if not, whether data will be entered in the field and how many times. RISE does not require but strongly encourages the use of electronic data collection devices.
- m. \**Who will be carrying out the data collection*. If a subcontractor not part of the country research team will be conducting the data collection, the workplan should specify who from the research team will oversee the data collection and ensure data quality.

Note that the RISE Directorate will offer feedback on a range of data collection deliverables, such as survey questionnaires, assessment instruments, training plans,

data entry protocols, etc., before fieldwork takes place. Key deliverables should be translated into English for RISE Directorate review.

This table summarizes some of the main analytical or data collection activities over the course of RISE and what details about each activity are required at which stage.

Table 2: Deliverable expectations at each research project stage

	<b>Proposal</b>	<b>Inception</b>	<b>Research (post-inception)</b>
<b>1. System diagnostic</b>	Include preliminary ideas about system context, challenges and opportunities in proposal	Diagnostic report required upon inception. Based on existing sources, literature review, key informant interviews.  Articulate causal pathways using RISE-consistent terms.	Diagnostic report will be required as part of project closeout. Main purpose is to examine how context has changed, what team has learned over course of project.
<b>2. Learning metrics (measuring outcomes)</b>	Include ideas about planned data collection efforts in proposal.	Inception report further details data collection plans, what instruments will be used and when.	RISE Directorate will review instruments prior to piloting and fieldwork.
<b>3. Pathways metrics (measuring intermediate steps to learning)</b>	Include ideas about planned data collection efforts in proposal.	Inception report further details data collection plans, what instruments will be used and when.	RISE Directorate will review instruments prior to piloting and fieldwork.

### 4.3 SECONDARY DATA USE

Some countries may be home to existing data sources that RISE research teams will want to use for descriptive or evaluative purposes. Plans for using secondary data should be included in proposals and elaborated on in yearly workplans. The same parameters above regarding comparability and representativeness for primary data apply to utilizing secondary data.

## 4.4 DATA ANALYSIS AND REPORTING

### 4.4.1 Analysis

Analysis plans should be prepared at the time of survey instrument design (for primary data collection) and prior to starting analysis (for secondary analysis) and submitted to RISE Directorate for review. The analysis plan should include background on analytical specifications and aggregating data (e.g., variable creation); and expected outputs, such as reports, policy briefs, and academic papers.

### 4.4.2 Reporting

In addition to the reports outlined in section 4.1 (diagnostic at inception and closeout, inception report), there will be several types of reporting required under the RISE initiative that will be tied to payments. These include:

- a. Yearly workplans (following format of inception workplan) including a detailed budget for the coming year. This should be submitted to RISE Directorate for approval three months prior to the upcoming contract year. These can be simple updates to the prior year's workplans. This workplan should also include any updates to the research design.
- b. Brief quarterly progress and financial reports of less than five pages. The RISE Directorate will offer feedback on these reports through quarterly phone calls.
- c. Analytical reports and/or academic publications after each data collection round (for primary) or analytical activity (for secondary). These type of outputs should be proposed in the yearly workplan. Report and/or publication is specified since some data collection activities will warrant reporting and analysis (e.g., baseline surveys) but may not warrant academic publications. Such reporting may also take the form of policy briefs or PowerPoint presentations, depending on the policy audience and how they best digest information. Academic publications can be substituted for policy reports as long as the research questions specified in the research design plans are answered. The format of such reports should be detailed in the proposal and updated in yearly workplans.
- d. Final report, including an updated system diagnostic.

In addition, bidders can propose optional deliverables that may be tied to payments, such as:

- e. Yearly progress reports recapping activities of the past year. This could reflect on deviations from yearly workplan and budget and reasons for deviations.
- f. Progress reports related to major activities, such as surveys or assessments.
- g. Dissemination tools. Reports prepared for a local policy audience should be in a local language when relevant. See section 4.5 for more detail.

Any payment-linked deliverable submitted to the RISE Directorate should be in English but other non-payment-linked deliverables can be in local languages.

Bidders should as part of their proposals indicate a deliverables schedule, which deliverables will be tied to payment, and payment amounts.

Bidders should note that the UK fiscal year begins on 1 April every year, and that it may be difficult to roll over funding across fiscal years, and thus research teams should factor this deadline into their budget planning.

#### 4.4.3 Academic publications

As mentioned above RISE expects that key outputs will be academically-rigorous journal articles, so bidders should in their proposals discuss at least illustrative journal-quality outputs they expect to produce over the life of the research programme.

#### 4.4.4 Data delivery and public use

All outputs from RISE research will be global public goods. The research outputs and primary data will be made publicly available in accordance with DFID's [Open Access Policy](#).

All data funded by RISE will be anonymized and made publically available on the RISE website. Because research teams will be responsible for cleaning data and preparing public use data files in accordance with RISE guidelines, to be released in 2016, bidders should factor this cleaning, anonymization and documentation work into budget proposals. All quantitative data must be made publicly available at the earlier of the following two dates: 1) concurrent with the public\* release of any final working papers or research reports using the data; or 2) twelve months after the end of fieldwork for any given round of data collection, bearing in mind that this may come well before the publication of any analytical work. Exceptions will be made in cases where anonymization is not sufficient to protect confidentiality. For qualitative research, certain elements of raw data will be made available under the open access policy (audio-recordings, transcripts, summary templates etc.).

\* In this case public release means disseminating on an organizational or RISE website. Draft papers and presentations to the RISE Directorate or to various relevant stakeholders can be released without concurrent release of the data.

### 4.5 DISSEMINATION, COUNTRY ENGAGEMENT, AND PARTICIPATION IN COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

In addition to producing analytical reports and papers, research teams will be engaged in country-level and international policy dialogue about education. We expect this dissemination and engagement to take the following forms:

- a. *Outreach to local policy stakeholders.* RISE research will be of relevance to domestic policymakers and thought leaders. Research teams are expected to be embedded in local policy dialogues and have frequent interactions with relevant policymakers. Depending on the type of system reform under study, this might

include government, NGOs, the private sector, thought leaders, donors, or other stakeholders. Bidders should in their proposals discuss which groups they intend to work with throughout the project, and why the proposed individuals or groups are key audiences for the research.

- b. *Dissemination of all analytical products in-country.* This could take the form of releasing reports and briefs, policy academic seminars and conferences, and meetings with policymakers and other stakeholders. As mentioned above, all products (reports, briefs, presentations) should be produced in the relevant local language where appropriate. Research findings must be disseminated in-country before they are submitted for journal publication.
- c. *Dissemination of analytical products internationally.* This includes occasional participation in international conferences and education policy events, and cross-site interaction and collaboration. As discussed below, any travel to national or international conferences and conference fees should be part of country research team budgets.
- d. *Blogging and engaging in social media.* This should be about the experience of doing system-level research, obstacles to such research, challenges encountered, and the evolution and development of education reforms. We expect research teams to engage in active reflection on education reforms taking place throughout the country and the research process. Blogs could also include preliminary research findings. RISE hopes to see frequent blog reports on research practice in an open and honest way. We strongly encourage creativity in the use of social media and dissemination.

*Participation in the community of practice:* bidders should budget for the following types of international (outside of country) meetings. Bidders should for budgeting purposes use London, UK as the destination, recognizing this may change depending on the composition of the country research teams (teams should budget for staff time, transport accommodation, and conference fees.)

- a. One annual RISE meeting for up to three team members. These meetings will allow research team managers to discuss overall implementation progress and challenges.
- b. Two annual subject specialist meetings for up to three team members. These meetings will be tailored to subjects of interest to RISE researchers, such as common assessments, teacher observation tools, analytical methods, or dissemination methods.
- c. Participation in conferences that may be of interest to research teams, such as academic conferences like [CSAE](#), [PAA](#), or [AEA](#), or policy conferences like [UKFIET](#) or [CIES](#).



## 5 ANNEX 1: PROPOSED PROPOSAL OUTLINE

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As discussed above in section 3, proposals must include all sections discussed in section 3. More specifically, this means that proposals must include the broad numbered sections 1-7 below, but that bidders are free to vary content within sections 1-7. A proposed proposal outline is included here.

Note that proposals must not exceed 20 pages, double spaced, 11 point Arial font.

8. Background
  - a. Country and system context, including preliminary ideas about plans for the system diagnostic
  - b. Reform or innovation to be studied (see more guidance in section 3.3), including
    - i. Why this reform or innovation is worthy of study, why it makes sense to study under RISE
    - ii. Presentation of reform within the RISE framework
    - iii. Theory of change for how the reform or innovation will generate large gains in student learning
    - iv. Study area – where the research team proposes to work
    - v. Relevant actors involved in reform or innovation
    - vi. Timeframe for reform
9. Research plans
  - a. Research questions and methods
    - i. Discuss each research question and how the research team proposes to study it
  - b. Data collection plans – survey rounds, types of surveys, comparability (see section 4.2)
  - c. Analysis and publication plans
10. Dissemination and country engagement plans (see section 4.5)
11. Organizational and individual capabilities
  - a. Background capabilities of lead organization and partners
    - i. Country experience
    - ii. Education experience
  - b. How lead and partners will work together, roles of respective organizations
  - c. Key staff
12. Logistics
  - a. Illustrative, detailed one-year workplan starting March 2016. Brief workplan for years 2-6.
  - b. Deliverables schedule, indicating payments tied to deliverables throughout the life of the contract. Note: do not indicate payment amounts in this section; payment amounts should be left to the budget section. (See section 4.4.2)

**13. Appendices**

- a. Key staff CVs (up to 10). Note RISE will only review 10 CVs. Bidders are encouraged to keep CVs brief and targeted to the proposal.

**14. Budget (to be submitted separately)**

## 6 ANNEX 2: PROPOSAL SCORING CRITERIA

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### 6.1 PROPOSAL SCORING

Note that these are tentative scoring criteria out of a maximum of 100 for proposals, which are subject to change prior to the release of the full RfP in November September 2015. Points are not yet included as these are under consideration, but highest points will be granted to the research proposal and staffing.

No criteria have been developed yet for the Eols. The request for Eols will be released on 1 July.

<b>Criteria</b>
<p><b>6.1.1 Quality of the research proposal</b></p> <p>Quality will be judged along three dimensions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The ambition of the question. Ask yourself: ‘Is answering this question a critical step for country X to reach developed-country learning levels?’</li> <li>Consistency with the broad analytical framework of the RISE programme.</li> <li>Methodological rigor in the relevant discipline. Proposals should explain relevant measurement issues, sampling strategies, and if relevant, the basis for any causal inference (e.g., randomization or a natural experiment design).</li> </ol>
<p><b>6.1.2 Staffing</b></p> <p>Proposals will be scored based on qualifications of team leader, lead researcher, and other (up to eight) key staff</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Some, though not necessarily all, key staff demonstrate multiple years of experience working in proposed country, national language ability, relationships with proposed implementers, policymakers, other education stakeholders.</li> <li>Research experience: description of education-related research projects led by key staff, reports, publications.</li> <li>Policy experience: experience working in education policy and implementation such as with NGOs, government, schools, and other organizations outside the research sector; track record of popular writing for a non-technical policy audience (i.e. newspapers, magazines, relevant blogs, etc.)</li> </ol>
<p><b>6.1.3 Organizational capabilities (70% of score for prime and 30% for subcontractors)</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RISE prefers but does not require that the prime organizations be based in the country of study, managed by nationals of the country of study. Local affiliates of international organizations that meet the criteria are eligible but would receive lower weighting.</li> <li>Experience leading large-scale studies over £1 million, or studies of equivalent scale (e.g., staffing, beneficiaries, sample, etc.)</li> <li>Track record of research outputs that are substantively relevant to RISE themes.</li> <li>Track record of work that is methodologically and logistically similar to the research tasks required under RISE.</li> <li>Demonstrated ability to reach local and regional/national policymakers and/or the general public in the country of study.</li> </ol>
<p><b>6.1.4 Policy and community of practice engagement plans</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How research team proposes to work with a) teams involved in the reform or system characteristics being studied, and b) policymakers and other stakeholders who could be influenced by study results.</li> <li>Quality of plans for dissemination and contributions to community of practice (e.g., blogging, social media, events, etc.), locally and internationally</li> </ol>
<p><b>6.1.5 Value for money</b></p>

## 7 OTHER ANNEXES (THESE WILL BE ADDED ONCE FULL RFP IS RELEASED)

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1. Guidance for producing a system diagnostic
2. RISE conceptual framework
3. Recommended reading (found at <http://www.rise.ox.ac.uk/>)
4. Due diligence/fraud
5. Conflict of interest and disclosures
6. Duty of care
7. Cancellations/clarifications