REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

Situational Analysis: Drowning Prevention Creche Programme, West Bengal

Background and Context

Mobile Creches (MC), established in 1969, has been a pioneer in promoting early childhood development (ECD) among India's most marginalised communities. Through an integrated approach encompassing healthcare, nutrition, early learning and community systems strengthening, MC has reached over 8,70,000 children across 13 states and union territories.

The early years are critical for children's physical, cognitive, social and emotional development. However, poverty, caregivers' livelihood responsibilities, seasonal migration and geographical barriers can constrain children's access to adequate childcare, responsive caregiving, early learning opportunities and safe environments. These challenges may affect children's development and overall well-being. In West Bengal, nutritional indicators show improvement between NFHS-5 and NFHS-6: stunting declined from 33.8% to 22.4%, severe wasting from 7.1% to 4.8%, and underweight prevalence from 32% to 28.5%. However, wasting remained unchanged at 20.3%[1], indicating that nutritional vulnerabilities persist. Understanding the circumstances in which young children grow, receive care and access essential services is therefore important for identifying gaps and informing context-responsive early childhood interventions.

Alongside these broader early childhood care and development needs, the local environment and availability of safe supervision are important considerations for young children's safety. In West Bengal, proximity to water bodies across the Sundarbans, coastal belt and inland river networks poses safety concerns for young children. In line with WHO's recommendations on child safety, adequate supervision and access to safe childcare environments are essential to protecting young children from accidents including drowning. Recognising these needs, MC, in partnership with government systems and technical partners, is implementing the Community-Based Drowning Prevention Creche Programme across 50 high-risk villages in South 24 Parganas, Purba Medinipur and Paschim Medinipur districts of West Bengal, with approximately 15–18 creches planned in each district. The programme aims to strengthen access to safe, supervised childcare while contributing to community-based efforts to prevent drowning and promote young children's safety and well-being.

[1] https://www.nfhsiips.in/nfhsuser/assets/National%20Family%20Health%20Survey%20(NFHS-6)%202023-2024%20Fact%20Sheets.pdf

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2. Purpose of the Assignment

The purpose of the Situational Analysis is to establish a baseline understanding of the early childhood care and development needs of children aged 1–4 years, existing childcare arrangements, caregiver livelihoods, child safety risks, including drowning, and the availability and responsiveness of community and government systems. The study will cover a sample drawn from the 50 selected villages across the three programme districts.

The findings will inform programme planning and implementation by identifying gaps in childcare and child safety, understanding community needs and resources, and assessing opportunities to strengthen local government responsiveness and service delivery. The study will also establish a baseline reference point for the programme's endline evaluation, planned in 2027-28.

3. Scope of the work

The agency or consultant will undertake a mixed-methods situational analysis covering the following areas:

a. **Parental and Community Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices**: Assess parents' and community members' knowledge, attitudes and practices across the five domains of the nurturing Care Framework-good health, adequate nutrition (child diet and feeding practices), responsive caregiving, opportunities for early learning, and safety and security.
b. **Childcare Arrangements, Caregiving and Livelihoods**: Examine existing childcare and supervision arrangements, the roles of mothers, fathers and other caregivers, and how livelihoods, paid and unpaid work, seasonal migration and household responsibilities influence the availability, continuity and quality of care for children aged 1–4 years.
c. **Children's Developmental Needs, Health, Nutrition, and Safety Risks**: Assess the health, nutritional, developmental and care needs of young children, including their exposure to environmental hazards and accidents such as drowning. Examine existing prevention practices, access to essential services, and gaps in safe supervision and emergency response.
d. **Community Resources and Collective Action**: Explore community networks, local resources, social norms and collective practices that influence early childhood care and development. Assess community participation in identifying children's needs, supporting caregivers, and addressing childcare and safety concerns.
e. **Local Governance, Responsiveness and Service Delivery**: Assess the extent to which local government structures, including Gram Panchayats, recognise and respond to the early childhood care and development needs of young children and their caregivers. Examine how these needs are identified, prioritised and addressed through local

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planning, resource allocation, existing schemes and services, and engagement with communities. Assess the roles and responsiveness of relevant local representatives and frontline functionaries, identify gaps in service delivery and coordination, and examine opportunities to strengthen government action on childcare, child development and child safety.

Sampling and Analysis: The agency will propose and justify the sampling strategy, sample size, selection of villages and households, data collection methods and analytical approach. The design should capture relevant geographical, livelihood and risk contexts across the three districts. The final methodology will be subject to MC's review and approval. Findings should be disaggregated by relevant characteristics, where feasible, and translated into actionable recommendations for programme planning and implementation.

4. Expected Deliverables

The selected agency or consultant will be expected to submit the following deliverables:

a. **Inception Report:** Proposed methodology, sampling strategy and justification, research questions, data collection and analysis plans, ethical safeguards, quality assurance measures, work plan and timeline.
b. **Ethical Approval and Research Protocol**: The agency/consultant will be responsible for obtaining prior approval from a recognised Institutional Review Board (IRB)/Institutional Ethics Committee (IEC) or an equivalent independent ethics review body before commencing field-level data collection. The agency will submit a copy of the ethics approval letter, along with the approved research protocol, data collection tools, informed consent forms and relevant ethical and safeguarding procedures, to Mobile Creches. The proposed timeline and costs for obtaining ethical approval should be included in the work plan and financial proposal.
c. **Finalised Data Collection Tools and Fieldwork Protocol:** Quantitative and qualitative tools, including household survey instruments, interview and discussion guides, observation formats and relevant administrative data review protocols, with procedures for informed consent, confidentiality, safeguarding and data protection.
d. **Preliminary Findings and Validation Presentation:** Preliminary findings, key gaps and emerging programme implications for discussion and validation with MC.
e. **Draft Situational Analysis Report:** A report presenting the methodology, key findings, analysis of geographical and contextual variations, and assessment of childcare and safety gaps, community resources, government responsiveness and service coordination. The draft should include preliminary conclusions and recommendations for MC's review.
f. **Final Technical Report and Presentation:** Revised report incorporating MC's feedback and validation inputs, with an executive summary, conclusions and prioritised

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recommendations for programme implementation, creche planning, capacity-building, community mobilisation, government convergence and potential scale-up.

g. **Data and Supporting Documentation:** All quantitative and qualitative data collected during the assignment, including cleaned datasets, qualitative transcripts or structured notes, codebook, analysis outputs and final data collection tools.

All deliverables will be reviewed by MC, and the agency or consultant will incorporate consolidated feedback within the agreed timeline.

5. Key Mandatory Qualifications and Socio-Cultural Requirements

The agency must demonstrate experience in conducting mixed-methods situational analyses in rural, coastal or riverine settings, preferably in West Bengal, along with expertise in early childhood care and development, childcare, child safety, drowning prevention, disaster risk reduction or community-based response systems.

Field teams must be proficient in Bengali, familiar with local dialects, and able to conduct empathetic, non-judgemental interviews on child deaths, drowning incidents, childcare practices and gender roles. The agency must also have the capacity to operate in remote and boat-access communities, with appropriate staff safety, travel and insurance arrangements.

Legally registered Indian organisations, institutions, consulting firms, non-profits and eligible individual consultants may apply. Consortia are permitted, provided a lead organisation is designated.

6. Submission Requirements

Interested agencies and consultants should submit separate Technical and Financial Proposals.

Technical Proposal: The proposal should include:

- Understanding of the assignment and its objectives.
- Proposed methodology, sampling strategy, sample size and justification.
- Proposed quantitative and qualitative data collection methods and analytical approach.
- Ethical safeguards, safeguarding measures, data protection and quality assurance procedures.
- Work plan, timeline and proposed team composition.
- Agency/consultant profile, relevant qualifications and experience, CVs of key team members, and examples of similar assignments.

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Financial Proposal: The proposal should provide an itemised budget covering professional fees, travel, fieldwork, data collection and analysis, applicable taxes, and any other anticipated costs.

7. Duration and Submission Details

Duration: Approximately 12–15 weeks from the date of contract signing

Proposal submission deadline: **10th November 2026**

Submission email: ranjit.k@mobilecreches.org

Email subject: "Proposal for Situational Analysis – Community-Based Drowning Prevention Creche Programme, West Bengal"

Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted for further discussions. MC reserves the right to seek clarifications or additional information from applicants as part of the selection process.

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