

Solicitation Summary
Request for Proposal (RFP)
for

Proposal Development and Writing Consultant – East and Southern Africa and Asia (Retainer)

NATURE OF SERVICES: Helen Keller International seeks an experienced proposal development and writing consultant to provide on-call support for competitive funding opportunities across East and Southern Africa and Asia. The consultant will collaborate with technical, program, finance, and country teams to develop high-quality, donor-responsive concept notes, proposals, and related submissions for institutional donors. Services include proposal planning, technical writing and editing, compliance review, quality assurance, and production of submission-ready documents for a range of public health and nutrition programs, including nutrition, food fortification, neglected tropical diseases, eye health, and integrated health services. The consultant must be able to support both rapid-response and complex multi-country proposals while ensuring compliance with donor requirements and maintaining a consistent, persuasive narrative throughout proposal documents.

CONTRACTING ENTITY: Helen Keller International.

Guided by the remarkable legacy of its co-founder, Helen Keller, Helen Keller Intl partners with communities striving to overcome longstanding cycles of poverty. By delivering the essential building blocks of good health, sound nutrition and clear vision, we help millions of people create lasting change in their own lives. Working in more than 20 countries – across Africa, Asia, Europe and the United States – and together with a global community of supporters, we are ensuring every person has the opportunity – as Helen did – to reach their true potential.

PLACE of PERFORMANCE: Remote.

TIMEFRAME

The anticipated period of the resulting contract is expected to be 9 months beginning on or about **September 1, 2026**.

Background

Helen Keller International seeks to establish a retainer agreement with an experienced proposal development and writing consultant to support competitive funding opportunities across the East and Southern Africa and Asia portfolio. The portfolio includes Kenya, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Nepal, Bangladesh, Cambodia, and the Philippines, and may also include opportunities in related sub-regions. The consultant will provide as-needed support for proposals to institutional donors with varied compliance frameworks, templates, timelines, and technical expectations, including rapid-response bids and complex multi-country or multi-partner proposals in public health and nutrition.

Purpose of the Consultancy

The purpose of this consultancy is to provide professional proposal development and writing services on an as-needed basis. The Manager, Project Management, East and Southern Africa and Asia, will serve as Helen Keller Intl's contract manager and primary point of contact. The consultant will determine the manner, means, sequence, time, and place of performing accepted assignments, subject to the agreed deliverables, deadlines, donor requirements, acceptance criteria, and reasonable coordination requirements.

Scope of Work

- Analyze solicitations, evaluation criteria, and donor guidance to identify proposal requirements, compliance needs, and win themes.
- Facilitate or take part in program design sessions with key staff to understand the context, needs and gaps, and proposed approach.
- Develop proposal outlines, writing plans, and storyboards, including section assignments and review cycles.
- Develop or review technical frameworks, including the theory of change, results framework, log frame, and work plan ensuring alignment with budget assumptions.
- Lead the drafting, turning technical inputs into clear, persuasive, and accurate narrative with a consistent voice across sections and contributors.
- Flag gaps, inconsistencies, and compliance risks to the proposal team early.
- Incorporate feedback from technical reviewers and keep the proposal responsive to the donor's evaluation criteria.
- Produce a submission-ready document in the donor's required format and page limits, including editing, proofreading, and final quality checks

Types of Funding Opportunities

Examples include proposals to:

- UNICEF, WFP, OCHA, and other UN agencies
- U.S. Government donors (including USDA and the U.S. Department of State)
- Foundations, bilateral and multilateral donors
- Corporate and other institutional donors

Assignments may include both rapid-response opportunities and large, multi-partner proposals. Assignments may include concept notes, EOIs, executive summaries, and full proposals. Assignments may require familiarity with varying donor templates, compliance rules, review criteria, and submission processes, including those used by UN agencies, U.S. Government donors, foundations, and bilateral or multilateral agencies, as well as private foundations and individual philanthropic donors.

Technical Areas

- Nutrition (including Vitamin A Supplementation and Multiple Micronutrient Supplementation)
- Food fortification and food systems
- Neglected tropical diseases
- Eye health
- Integrated health services

The consultant must have sufficient public health or international development background to engage substantively with technical teams, synthesize evidence-based inputs, and write with technical fluency even where they are not the lead subject-matter expert. Assignments will primarily support the East and Southern Africa and Asia portfolio.

Deliverables

Deliverables will be defined for each assignment and may include proposal outlines, concept notes, proposal narratives, executive summaries, revised drafts, quality assurance reviews, and meeting summaries.

Level of Effort

This is a retainer consultancy. No minimum volume of work is guaranteed. Individual assignments will specify the scope of work, deliverables, estimated level of effort, and timeline. Acceptance of each assignment is subject to the consultant's availability and mutual agreement. No minimum number of assignments, hours, days, or fees is guaranteed. Each assignment will be documented through a mutually agreed task order or assignment authorization specifying the deliverables, acceptance criteria, timeline, maximum level of effort or fee, and payment schedule. The consultant may accept or decline each proposed assignment based on availability.

Performance Expectations and Service Standards

The consultant is expected to:

- Acknowledge assignment requests within one business day.
- Participate in proposal planning and review meetings as requested.
- Maintain agreed writing schedules.
- Produce clear, compelling, donor-responsive proposals.
- Incorporate feedback within agreed timelines.
- Ensure compliance with donor requirements.
- Communicate proactively regarding progress and risks.
- Collaborate effectively with country offices, technical teams, finance staff, and partners.
- Maintain confidentiality of proposal materials.
- Support rapid-turnaround proposals when mutually agreed.
- Interpret and apply donor rules, templates, and submission requirements accurately.
- Ensure the proposal reads as a unified document with a clear, consistent voice, regardless of the number of contributors.

- Demonstrate sufficient technical fluency to integrate and accurately represent subject-matter inputs from program, technical, MEL, and finance teams.
- Anticipate and proactively communicate risks related to compliance, coherence, or timeline

Contract performance will be evaluated against the requirements of each accepted assignment, including deliverable quality, timeliness, donor compliance, agreed service standards, and adherence to the contract. The consultant will not participate in Helen Keller Intl's employee performance-management process.

Required Qualifications

- At least 7 years of relevant proposal development experience.
- Demonstrated success with developing competitive proposals for UN agencies, U.S. Government donors, foundations, and/or other bilateral and multilateral donors.
- Strong knowledge of donor rules, regulations, templates, and compliance requirements, with the ability to translate solicitation guidance into actionable writing and review processes.
- Background in public health, nutrition, international development, or a related field required; advanced degree preferred
- Excellent English writing and editing skills and synthesis skills, including the ability to produce a single, coherent voice across contributions from multiple authors.
- Demonstrated ability to engage with technical content and write with fluency and accuracy, even when working across multiple health or development topics.
- Experience facilitating proposal design processes.
- Strong organizational skills and ability to manage multiple deadlines.
- Experience in nutrition, food systems, neglected tropical diseases, eye health, and/or health systems strengthening preferred.
- Experience in East and Southern Africa and/or Asia is highly desirable.

Competencies

- Exceptional written communication
- Strategic thinking
- Attention to detail
- Strong collaboration and facilitation skills
- Responsiveness and flexibility
- Ability to work under tight deadlines and work across multiple time zones

Application Requirements

Interested consultants should submit:

- CV
- Cover letter
- Daily or hourly consulting rate
- Two relevant writing samples or examples
- Two professional references

Evaluation Criteria

Applications will be evaluated based on:

- Two relevant proposal writing examples with a brief description of the applicant's role in each sample, including whether they were lead writer, editor, reviewer, or proposal manager
- Experience with Helen Keller International technical areas
- Institutional donor experience
- Writing quality
- Availability and responsiveness
- Cost competitiveness

SPECIFIC REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

To submit a response to this proposal, please email: Patricia Houck, PHouck@hki.org noting the RFP title **Proposal Development and Writing Consultant – East and Southern Africa and Asia (Retainer)**.in the subject line, and request the complete copy of the Request for Proposals for further details on qualifications, scope of work and other relevant information.

Please follow the detailed RFP Instructions to submit your complete proposal (cover letter, technical offer, and financial offer). The deadline for submissions is **August 20, 2026**.

EVALUATION and AWARD PROCESS

This RFP is open to all persons or entities that are deemed capable of implementing the scope of work, with a solid record of integrity and business ethics.

The award will be made to the Seller representing the **best value** to the project and to Helen Keller. For this RFP, price, delivery, technical and past performance are of equal importance for the purposes of evaluating and selecting the “best value” awardee.

**In the spirit of our founder and namesake,
Helen Keller places diversity and partnership at the core of our work.**

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