



Terms of Reference for Endline External Evaluation

Making Ghanaian Girls Great! (MGCubed)

Project Title	Making Ghanaian Girls Great! Also known as MG3 or MGCubed
Funding Agent	Department for International Development (DFID) ¹
Lead partner	Plan International UK
Implementing partner	Plan International Ghana
Type of exercise	Endline Evaluation
Target & Location	Greater Accra and Oti Regions, Ghana
Contract Period	September 2020 (inception) – April 2021 (final report)

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¹ We will continue to refer to DFID throughout this Terms of Reference. This Endline evaluation is unaffected by the UK Government's 16th June announcement of a restructure of Government departments.

1. Background

Plan International UK is seeking proposals from relevant parties to take on the role of External Evaluator for the Endline evaluation of Making Ghanaian Girls Great! (also known as MGCubed), a DFID-funded Girls' Education Challenge project in Ghana, in line with the below Terms of Reference.

About Plan International UK

We strive to advance children's rights and equality for girls all over the world. As an independent development and humanitarian organisation, we work alongside children, young people, our supporters and partners to tackle the root causes of the challenges facing girls and all vulnerable children. We support children's rights from birth until they reach adulthood and enable children to prepare for and respond to crises and adversity. We drive changes in practice and policy at local, national and global levels using our reach, experience and knowledge. For over 80 years we have been building powerful partnerships for children, and we are active in over 75 countries.

Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) programme background

The Department for International Development (DFID) leads the UK's work to end extreme poverty. DFID is tackling the global challenges of our time including poverty and disease, mass migration, insecurity and conflict. DFID's work is building a safer, healthier, more prosperous world for people in developing countries and in the UK too.

DFID is working to reach the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. Progress on girls' education is critical to the achievement of these targets. SDGs 4 and 5 specifically relate to education and achieving gender parity. SDG 4 specifically notes *'inclusive and quality education for all and [to] promote lifelong learning'*.

Globally, 31 million primary age girls have never been to school. The majority of these girls come from the poorest and most marginalised communities in the most disadvantaged locations. Over the last 20 years, primary enrolment for girls has improved along with boys, but primary completion rates are equally low for both sexes. At the secondary level, the differences between boys' and girls' participation rates really start to show. Significant disparities exist within countries, with the poorest girls from rural areas most severely subject to educational disadvantage - even at the primary level.

Launched in 2012, The Girls' Education Challenge (GEC) aims to help up to a million of the world's poorest girls improve their lives through education by finding better ways to get girls in school and ensuring they receive the best opportunities in life. The programme operates in 17 countries, supporting over 40 projects across Africa and Asia with a wide range of non-state organisations. More information can be found on the [GEC website](#).

Through the GEC, DFID provided £355m between 2012 and 2017 to PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP (PwC), the dedicated Fund Manager (FM) to disburse to individual projects throughout sub-Saharan Africa and Asia to help girls' education. In 2016, the GEC Transition window was set up with additional DFID funding to support the original GEC beneficiaries to continue their journey through stages of education and further improve their learning.

In the current context of the Covid-19 pandemic, which has seen up to 90% of the world's school-age population out of school, the GEC is working to ensure the continuation of teaching and learning and to respond to the emerging needs and priorities of GEC beneficiaries, their communities, and the education systems to which they belong.

MGCubed project background

MGCubed is a 4 year, DFID-funded Girls' Education Challenge project supporting marginalised girls and children with disabilities in two regions of Ghana. MGCubed aims to address the challenges of teacher quality, teacher absenteeism, and poor learning environments through the provision of quality educational content in rural Ghanaian schools. Using solar-powered and satellite-enabled distance learning infrastructure to deliver interactive learning sessions to students, teachers, communities and government officials, MGCubed aims to improve learning outcomes for marginalised pupils, support pupils to transition successfully through school, and contribute to sustained improvements in the Ghanaian education system.

MGCubed builds on the first phase of the project (GEC1), which ran from 2013-2016 and supported primary pupils in Primary 3 to 6, with an explicit focus on supporting marginalised girls to continue on their educational journeys. In this current phase (2017-2021), the project's main beneficiaries are Primary 3 to 6 pupils and Junior High school (JHS) students. Grades P3 to P6 and JHS1 students receive satellite-enabled remedial numeracy and literacy lessons, while P3 to P6 pupils are also offered grade-based lessons in Maths and English using the distance learning technology. Interactive afterschool life skills sessions are also delivered in the form of Wonder Women, Boys Boys, and mixed gender sessions, where both girls and boys are introduced to content including careers and future aspirations, adolescence and reproductive health, nutrition, gender stereotypes and inclusion.

To enhance teaching quality and school leadership, the project also offers training for teachers and school heads. Ghana Education Service (GES) officials are trained to enhance their capacity and support system strengthening. Parents and communities are engaged to create sustained buy-in to the project and enable attitudinal change to girls' education. The project also provides Cash Transfers to girls in P6 to support their transition to secondary school (into JHS1).

This project was designed and delivered by the Varkey Foundation from its inception until 19 October 2019. The management of the project was novated (transferred) to Plan International UK on 20 October 2019, with Plan International Ghana as the in-country partner.

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, MGCubed has adapted its activities to respond to countrywide school closures. During the initial response phase, Plan International has worked with the Ministry of Education to support the delivery of a national distance learning programme. (For the project's first phase Covid-19 response plan, see Annex 8.) Utilising MGCubed's existing infrastructure and technical expertise, the project has supported the production and broadcast of televised educational content for students from Kindergarten to JHS3 to households across the country via a dedicated television channel. MGCubed has also developed and disseminated Information, Education and Communication materials covering health and hygiene, positive parenting, home learning, safeguarding and child protection.

As the situation evolves, MGCubed will continue to adapt its programming to ensure beneficiaries are able to access teaching and learning during school closures and to prepare beneficiaries, caregivers and school communities for the safe reopening of schools. MGCubed will also work with communities to strengthen wellbeing and resilience, to provide access to education for the most marginalised sub-groups and to ensure access to social protection mechanisms both during the pandemic and beyond. More information will be provided to the successful bidder.

The project runs for four years from May 2017-September 2021. For the project's Theory of Change see the MEL Framework in Annex 1.

As Plan International UK is the lead agency for multiple GEC projects,² the Endline Evaluation Team would be well-positioned to bid for work on other GEC evaluations provided they meet the quality standards required.

2. Rationale for the Evaluation

Plan International UK is seeking to procure the services of an Evaluation Team to design, plan and conduct an Endline evaluation for the MGCubed project in Ghana.

The findings from the evaluation will primarily be used:

- By Plan International and the Fund Manager to assess the degree to which MGCubed has achieved its intended impact and outcomes;³
- To demonstrate accountability for the funding received to the UK Government, UK taxpayers, UK media;
- By Plan International, the Fund Manager, the Government of Ghana and other stakeholders to learn lessons from the project about what has worked and why, and to understand drivers and barriers to positive change;
- To share lessons and recommendations from the project with the UK Government, the Fund Manager, the Government of Ghana and the wider sector to inform education policy and practice, and the design and implementation of future programming;
- By partners, stakeholders and the Government of Ghana to learn lessons from the project for the purpose of replicating what works and/or taking up approaches and activities that have proven to work in order to sustain the project's activities and impact;
- To advocate with the UK Government, the Government of Ghana and other donors and governments for continued focus on and investment in girls' education, gender equality and social inclusion;
- By other donors, academic institutions and education networks to inform the wider policy debate concerning the education of girls and marginalised girls.

3. Evaluation objective

Plan International UK is seeking a mixed-methods, gender-sensitive Endline evaluation of the MGCubed project that is inclusive of persons with disabilities. The Evaluation Team will provide an independent and rigorous evaluation and research function, designing and implementing frameworks which will assess the delivery, effectiveness, value for money and impact of the project and report the findings and lessons learned through these processes.

The evaluation should explicitly explore the reasons why change has or has not occurred in relation to the current cohort of girls' education in the two regions, and identify key learnings and recommendations that can be used to inform future policy and programming. The Evaluation Team will be expected to bring a creative and innovative approach to the assignment, actively involving beneficiaries and communities in the work and employing in-depth qualitative methods to investigate and provide context to the quantitative findings.

Plan International recognises that the scope and methodology of the evaluation may be affected by the current Covid-19 pandemic and associated impacts. The successful bidder will need to demonstrate flexibility and creativity in responding to the changing situation to ensure they meet the

² Plan International UK leads two GEC-T projects and one LNGB project within the DFID GEC portfolio.

³ It should be noted that the measurement of impact and outcomes and associated targets may be revised in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and will remain under review as part of ongoing discussions with the Fund Manager.

fundamental requirements of the evaluation within the parameters of what is feasible and safe. Plan International will work closely with the successful bidder to design a suitable approach to the evaluation that considers possible scenarios and restrictions, ensuring that the safety of beneficiaries, communities and staff is paramount at all times.

The design and implementation of the Endline evaluation must take into account and abide by Plan International's Child-Centred Community Development Standards (Annex 4). This means, for example, ensuring children are at the centre of the research, that principles of gender equality, inclusion (particularly around disabilities) and non-discrimination are considered and acted upon throughout, and that meaningful participation of children and other key stakeholders is promoted throughout the project. Furthermore, the assessment is required to be conducted in line with Plan International's [Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy](#) and internal guidelines on child protection and ethical standards in monitoring, evaluation and learning.

The quality of all work undertaken as part of this assignment will be assessed against Bond's Evidence Principles and Checklist (Annex 5), and all aspects of the evaluation will be expected to meet at least a 'Good' standard of evidence, according to the definitions stated. The Evaluation Team will be expected to demonstrate how they intend to incorporate these principles⁴ to the required standard throughout the Endline process, from inception to analysis and final reporting, and we would encourage the Evaluation Team to refer to them in their response to this Terms of Reference.

4. Evaluation questions

The Endline evaluation is intended to assess the project's progress in achieving its core outcomes of **learning, transition and sustainability**; and to test the assumptions underpinning the project's Theory of Change and clearly articulate **how and why** change happens and for whom. The Endline evaluation will be required to provide Endline data for the project logframe (Annex 2) in order to assess the extent of change from the Midline, noting that the original logframe may undergo alterations as the project continues to develop its Covid-19 response plan. The Evaluation Team will be required to develop an evaluation approach that answers the following overarching questions as defined by the Fund Manager:

- **Process** – Was the project successfully designed and implemented?
- **Impact** – What impact did the project have on the **learning and transition** of marginalised girls and children with disabilities? How and why was this impact achieved?
- **VfM** – Did the project demonstrate a good value for money approach?
- **Effectiveness** – What worked and what did not work to increase the **learning and transition** of marginalised girls and children with disabilities as defined by the project?
- **Sustainability** – How sustainable were the activities and changes achieved by the project at school, community and system level?

Project-specific evaluation questions:

In addition to using the Fund Manager questions, the project is also looking to the Endline to generate meaningful learning and insights into certain key areas of interest, linked to the project's core and intermediate outcomes. These research questions remain under review, and we expect to take a collaborative and participatory approach to designing the final research questions with the successful bidder during the inception phase, in order to respond to the evolving context arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

⁴ The five Bond Evidence Principles are: Voice and Inclusion; Appropriateness; Triangulation; Contribution; and Transparency.

Q1. Drivers and barriers to learning – Where the project has contributed to improved learning outcomes, why is this the case? Where learning outcomes have not been shown to improve, who is this affecting and what are the reasons for this? How has the project identified and addressed these barriers? What are the factors affecting differences between attainment in literacy and numeracy? How far has learning been retained by girls who have left the project, either by graduating into higher grades or because they have dropped out, and what has influenced this? What other forms of learning has the project contributed to, for example relating to life skills, gender equality and knowledge of Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR)?

Q1a. Impact of school closures on learning - What has been the impact of school closures due to Covid-19 on girls' learning? How far have girls retained learning during school closures? Is there variation between different sub-groups in terms of retention of learning and progress during school closures? What has been effective in supporting girls to learn during school closures and what are the factors that have prevented them from doing so? Have girls been able to return to school successfully or have school closures led to a higher risk of dropout? What are the factors influencing girls' ability to return to school and their likelihood of dropping out?

Q2. Non-discrimination and inclusion – Who is benefiting from the project and who is excluded, and why? How successfully has the project included marginalised/vulnerable groups? What are the barriers facing specific sub-groups including young mothers, married girls, marginalised ethnic groups and children with disabilities that prevent them fully benefiting from the project? How successfully has the project addressed these barriers?

Q3. Gender – To what extent has the project contributed to increased equality and equity between boys and girls, women and men? To what extent was the project gender transformative and in what ways (see Annex 7)?⁵ What has been the impact of the three-club model (Wonder Women, Boy Boys and Mixed Club) on girls and boys, their relationships with each other and their attitudes and confidence in school?

Q3a. Impact of school closures on gender relations and equity - How have school closures affected girls' roles within the household? What impact have school closures had on gender relations and equality within households and communities? Have girls experienced greater levels of early marriage, pregnancy and other harmful practices as a result of school closures due to the Covid-19 pandemic?

Q4. Safeguarding – How effective are the project's processes for identifying and reporting potential safeguarding concerns? How far has the project strengthened safeguarding mechanisms, including reporting, monitoring and referral processes at the school and community level and with District Education Offices? Has the project ensured that beneficiaries do not feel at greater risk of harm as a result of their involvement, and that they are aware of relevant reporting channels, including during school closures? How will safeguarding and child protection practices continue to be used and championed by schools and communities beyond the end of the project?

Q5. Access and attendance – What difference has MGCubed made to enabling marginalised girls and children with disabilities to be in school? To what extent has the project been successful at ensuring high attendance and retention? Are there differences between attendance at by-grade classes and remedial after-school classes, and what has influenced this? Where dropout has occurred, what are the reasons, and what recommendations would the Evaluation Team make to address these?

Q6. Community participation – How effectively has the project involved communities, schools, local Ghana Education Service (GES) representatives and other stakeholders in implementing the project? How effectively has the project engaged PTAs and SMCs, and how has this affected the functionality

⁵ Plan International's Summary Guidance Note on Gender Transformative Programming can be found in Annex 7.

of these systems? How has the project contributed to increased capacity at the community and district levels? How has the satellite approach enabled and supported community participation? How far has the project contributed to demonstrable sustained changes in community attitudes and practices?

Q7. School Governance – Has the project supported Head Teachers to improve their capacity to promote teaching quality, school leadership and a conducive learning environment at the school level? How has school governance improved at the school and district level? Has the Project's approach encouraged District Education Officials and Head Teachers to promote and monitor inclusive student-centred learning techniques and gender equity at the school?

Q8. Teaching quality – To what extent has the project been successful at improving the quality of teaching in targeted schools? What factors have contributed to or hindered this? How do teachers participate in MGCubed lessons and what are their perceptions of the effectiveness of this approach? Do teachers apply techniques and approaches promoted through MGCubed lessons to their other teaching? Have some teachers been more successful in utilising MG3 technology and pedagogical approaches than others, and what are the possible reasons for this? What positive or negative effect has the distance learning approach had on teachers' skill levels, confidence and classroom delivery? Has the distance learning approach supported differentiated learning? Has the project been effective in moving towards more student-centred and gender-responsive teaching methodologies? Where are examples of good practice within the project that could be utilised to improve teaching quality more widely?

Q9. Technology – What are the advantages and disadvantages of the MGCubed distance learning approach in this context? What do the video lessons add to the learning in the classroom? Do they support learners to develop their understanding of literacy and numeracy in ways that are not possible in their ordinary classroom? Does this approach support teachers' professional development, and how does it influence the status and role of the classroom teacher? Is it an effective method to improve learning outcomes and teaching quality in underperforming schools? How far do schools and communities buy into the technology? What are the opportunities and risks associated with scaling up this approach? How successfully has the project mitigated the risks associated with this approach?

Q10. Education sector alignment – To what extent has the project been framed within national educational priorities and policies both before and during the Covid-19 pandemic? How successful has the project been at influencing national and district level systems? How effectively has the project partnered with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to identify opportunities to adapt or scale up the distance learning approach and enhance the sustainability of the project after its conclusion? How successfully has the project encouraged ownership of the approach amongst the MoE and the Ghana Education Service (GES)?⁶ To what extent has the project contributed to the MoE's long-term distance learning approach, and how far has the project contributed to increased capacity and resilience within the MoE and GES to respond to crises such as the Covid-19 pandemic?

Q11. Cash Transfers – How effectively have Cash Transfers supported girls to transition through school? Has the usage and impact of Cash Transfers varied between different sub-groups? Have there been any unintended consequences of providing Cash Transfers? How successfully has the project integrated Cash Transfers into its Covid-19 response? How can the impact of Cash Transfers be sustained beyond the project? What key lessons can the MoE and other partners learn from this intervention?

Q12. Learning and sustainability - How effective were the project's learning and adaptation mechanisms, and were they used to inform evidence-based changes to the project? Has the project adequately captured and learnt from any unintended consequences? How far is the project model

⁶ The Ghana Education Service (GES) is responsible for the implementation of the Ministry of Education's pre-tertiary educational policies and programmes.

sustainable, and in what ways? What changes can be sustained to support improved outcomes in future for girls in these schools and communities?

Q13. Project's Covid-19 response - How successfully has MGCubed adapted its activities to respond to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic? How far has the Government's distance learning programme supported by MGCubed enabled girls to engage in learning during school closures? How successfully has MGCubed responded to the needs and priorities of girls and communities to support learning, wellbeing and life skills during the pandemic? How successfully has MGCubed engaged with caregivers to support their children's learning during school closures? How effectively has MGCubed disseminated information to girls, communities and teachers during school closures? How successfully has the project supported the continuous professional development of teachers during school closures? How successfully has the project supported and prepared girls, communities and teachers for the safe reopening of schools? How far has the project linked in with the Government of Ghana, UNICEF and other actors to ensure a joined-up response to the pandemic?

These questions help define the scope and focus of the project evaluation process. The successful bidder will be expected to work with the Project Management Team to review and refine these questions as appropriate at the outset of the evaluation.

5. Methodology

5.1 Overall evaluation approach

The overall evaluation approach requires the Evaluation Team to design, plan and conduct a mixed-methods evaluation that is longitudinal in nature. The design should be participatory, inclusive and gender-sensitive, and consider pre and post-test changes in key outcome indicators to assess the impact of the project.

At Baseline, the External Evaluator used coarsened exact matching (CEM) to construct a valid counterfactual comparison group based on school level variables. At Midline, a difference-in-difference approach (DID) was used to calculate the changes in outcomes of interest. However, due to ethical considerations relating to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Endline evaluation will not involve the assessment of a comparison group.

In light of the Covid-19 pandemic, Plan International recognises that the evaluation approach may be subject to revision based on considerations of feasibility and safety. We would expect the successful bidder to demonstrate flexibility and creativity in adapting the evaluation approach as necessary to respond to existing circumstances, while ensuring that the evaluation fulfils the fundamental requirements of assessing learning, transition and sustainability, generates meaningful learning and includes the voices of girls, communities and other key stakeholders.

5.2 Research and evaluation design

Bidders are invited to take a flexible and creative approach to the evaluation design which they should outline in their proposal. Plan International is seeking proposals which involve a mixed-methods design, and participatory methodologies are highly encouraged. The evaluation is also expected to incorporate in-depth and innovative qualitative approaches.

The Evaluation Team should plan to work across all 7 districts within the two regions of Greater Accra and Oti with the target group including both marginalised girls and children with disabilities, as well as other key stakeholders including Master Teacher Trainers, facilitators, GES officials, Head Teachers,

parents, Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) and School Management Committees (SMCs), project staff and Ministry staff/other stakeholders of interest.

As part of their proposal, applicants should demonstrate that they have considered possible scenarios relating to the Covid-19 pandemic and how these might affect the evaluation design - for example the implications of prolonged or repeated school closures, travel restrictions and physical distancing rules - and outline how they would adapt their approach to take these into account.

Learning remains a core outcome of the MGCubed project and a central focus of the evaluation. However, in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Evaluation Team is no longer expected to assess learning outcomes by administering learning assessments to a statistically significant sample of girls. The Endline will also not involve assessing the learning of a comparison group. The Evaluation Team will therefore need to explore alternative approaches to assessing quality of learning and factors affecting learning outcomes amongst the MGCubed cohort. This may take into account secondary data and involve other forms of impact assessment including extensive qualitative data collection.

Bidders are invited to take note of the following when outlining their proposed evaluation approach:

Cohort tracking: The project is seeking to track a sample of girls throughout the lifetime of the project as part of its longitudinal approach. While tracking of a full learning sample will not be possible as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, the Evaluation Team should outline its approach to drawing part of the Endline sample from within the cohort sampled at Midline.

Qualitative research: Qualitative data is a crucial element of the evaluation and is expected to provide insights into why and how change has happened. We will expect the Evaluation Team to articulate a detailed qualitative methodology in their proposal, including how qualitative data will be fully integrated into the analysis. **The Evaluation Team is strongly encouraged to sequence quantitative and qualitative data collection in order to explore emerging trends or tensions and is expected to outline their approach to doing so in their proposal.** The Evaluation Team will be expected to demonstrate a creative approach to qualitative inquiry, integrating innovative and participatory data collection methods which amplify the voices of beneficiaries. The size and composition of the qualitative sample should be explicitly informed by how the Evaluation Team intends to analyse the qualitative data, and the Evaluation Team should set out a clear coding plan (whether using software such as NVivo or manually) through which it will explore themes, patterns and contradictions.

Project sampling framework: The Evaluation Team will be required to create the sampling frameworks for both qualitative and quantitative samples in line with the project's longitudinal design, making reference to the sample used at Midline. These should be of a sufficient size and representativeness to allow:

- reasonable levels of certainty that the findings are representative for the target population;
- reasonable ability to generalise the intervention's effectiveness to similar contexts; and
- reasonable ability to generalise the insights into what works and why for similar contexts.

The Evaluation Team is expected to outline their approach to the sampling referencing the MGCubed MEL framework (Annex 1), and once appointed, will be expected to ensure their sampling framework builds on a thorough understanding of the beneficiary sample involved in the Midline study in order to keep its longitudinal integrity.

Reviewing and adapting Midline tools for Endline: The Evaluation Team will be expected to review and adapt Midline tools, and to design new tools where necessary in line with the overall evaluation approach. Approval will need to be secured from the Fund Manager for all tools used in the Endline.

Measuring outcomes: The Evaluation Team is expected to understand the project's three key outcomes and intermediate outcomes and suggest the most appropriate data collection approach to evaluate each outcome, involving a mixture of qualitative and quantitative approaches. This will

include working with the MGCubed project team and Fund Manager to determine which intermediate outcomes should be used to support the assessment of sustainability, with reference to the project's sustainability plan. More information will be provided to the successful bidder.

Preliminary analysis: The Evaluation Team is encouraged to build in time during the initial stages of the data collection phase to conduct a preliminary analysis of incoming data, so that key trends and findings which are identified at an early stage can be fully explored during the remainder of the fieldwork. This approach aims to ensure that the Evaluation generates meaningful insights into the issues and causes which contribute to significant or unexpected findings, as agreed with the project team. This should align with how the Evaluation Team plans to sequence quantitative and qualitative data collection, and can be discussed during the inception phase.

Updating the logframe: The Evaluation Team will be expected to update the project logframe with Endline data in order to assess the extent of change from the Midline. It should be noted that the original logframe may undergo alterations as the project continues to develop its Covid-19 response plan and that the project will work with the Evaluation Team to determine any revisions to Endline indicators in light of the impact of the pandemic. The Evaluation team will be expected to enter Endline data for indicators that are retained from Midline.

Utilising project monitoring: MGCubed collects a robust body of ongoing monitoring data, which should form part of the Endline evaluation's evidence base at analysis and reporting. Project monitoring data is collected using an online platform called Taroworks and stored and analysed through Salesforce. The Evaluation Team will be expected to draw on existing project monitoring (which will be made available) to inform the Endline evaluation and should outline a broad approach to doing so in their submission.

Integrating gender-sensitive and participatory methods for working with girls and children with disabilities: Where possible, the Evaluation Team should integrate methods tailored to working with girls and children with disabilities, including creative and participatory ways to engage beneficiaries in the process of gathering and interpreting data. The Evaluation Team will be expected to use the Washington Group questions to collect data on disability.

6. Ethics and Safeguarding

Plan International is committed to ensuring that the rights of those participating in data collection or analysis are respected and protected. All applicants should include details in their proposal on how they will ensure ethical considerations are fully integrated into every stage of the evaluation process, in line with [UNICEF's guidelines on ethical research involving children](#).

Before work can start, the Evaluation Team will be required to understand, comply with and sign Plan International's Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People (Annex 6). This will involve an induction to Plan International's policies with Plan International UK's Safeguarding and Protection Mainstreaming Technical Adviser. Within the proposal, the Evaluation Team will need to clearly outline their approach to managing and reporting suspected or actual cases of abuse.

In addition, the Evaluation Team will need to demonstrate the following:

- How they have considered the protection of children, vulnerable groups (including girls and people living with disabilities) and adults with specific vulnerabilities, including how to mitigate risks;
- How they have considered additional or heightened risks arising from the Covid-19 pandemic with regards to the protection of children, vulnerable groups and adults, and how to mitigate these;
- A consideration of how to ensure the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) within their approach to the assignment;

- How appropriate, safe, non-discriminatory participation of all stakeholders will be ensured through the different evaluation stages, including recruitment and training of enumerators, data collection, data analysis and report writing;
- How confidentiality and anonymity of participants will be guaranteed, and how personal data will be stored and protected, in line with Plan International UK's obligations under the European General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR);
- Experience of putting safeguarding approaches and procedures in place, as well as how they ensure compliance from their staff (including enumerators), at all times.

Research ethics plan: Bidders are required to set out their approach to ensuring complete compliance with international good practice relating to research ethics and protocols, particularly with regards to safeguarding children and vulnerable groups (including girls and people with disabilities). Consideration should be given to:

- Administrative, technical and physical safeguards to protect the confidentiality of those participating in research;
- Safeguards for those conducting research;
- Do No Harm safeguards for children participating in research, including child-safe physical safeguards as well as emotional/psychosocial safeguards and safeguarding against the risk of sexual exploitation or abuse;
- Adherence to good practice guidelines on conducting research with children and vulnerable groups;
- Appropriate time allocated to engage with children participating in the research;
- Data protection protocols and secure maintenance procedures for personal information;
- Parental or caregiver consent concerning data collection from children or collation of data about children;
- Age- and ability-appropriate assent processes based on reasonable assumptions about comprehension for the ages of children and the disabilities they intend to involve in the research;
- Appropriate spaces and methodologies tailored in consideration of unique needs of girls and boys, including those with disabilities and for vulnerable adults;
- Appropriate language and communication for different ages and the disabilities of children involved in the research.

Ethical approval will need to be secured from the Ghanaian Institutional Review Board (IRB) before data collection activities can commence. This will include the submission of complete research tools and protocols. Further information will be provided to the successful bidder.

7. Risk and risk management

Risk management plan: It is important that the successful bidder has taken all reasonable measures to mitigate any potential risks to research participants and the delivery of the required outputs for this evaluation. Therefore, the Evaluation Team should submit a comprehensive risk management plan covering:

- The assumptions underpinning the successful completion of the proposals submitted and the anticipated challenges that might be faced;
- Estimates of the level of risk for each risk identified;
- Proposed contingency plans that the bidder will put in place to mitigate any occurrence of each of the identified risks;
- Specific safeguarding risks (for both children and adults) and mitigating strategies, including reference to the child protection policy and procedures that will be in place;
- Health and safety issues that may require significant duty of care precautions, with particular consideration paid to risks relating to Covid-19.

8. Data quality assurance

Quality assurance plan: The bidder is required to submit a quality assurance plan that sets out the systems and processes for quality assuring the evaluation and research process and deliverables of the project, from start to finish. This plan should include the proposed approaches to:

- Piloting of all research activities;
- Training of enumerators and researchers conducting the mixed-methods primary research, including in research ethics;
- Logistical and management planning;
- Field work protocols and data verification including back-checking and quality control by supervisors;
- Data cleaning and editing before any analysis;
- Analysis and validation of results;
- Report writing and review processes.

As mentioned previously, please note that the quality of all work proposed and undertaken under this Terms of Reference will be assessed against Bond's Evidence Principles and Checklist in Annex 5. Only work that meets these standards, in addition to the standards expected by the Fund Manager, will be signed off.

9. Existing information sources

For general information on GEC, the bidder should in the first instance refer to the following websites: <https://girlseducationchallenge.org> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/girls-education-challenge>.

Bidders should refer to the following GEC project documentation that includes:

- MGCubed Project MEL Framework and Theory of Change (Annex 1)
- MGCubed Project Logframe (Annex 2);
- MGCubed Midline report (Annex 3); and
- MGCubed Covid-19 phase 1 response plan (Annex 8).

The Evaluation Team should also refer to relevant country data and information that is currently available, including the MGCubed Baseline evaluation report (available upon request) in addition to the MGCubed Midline evaluation report, as required, to prepare the proposal.

10. Professional skills and qualifications

Bidders are required to clearly identify and provide CVs for all those proposed as part of the Evaluation Team, clearly stating their roles and responsibilities for this evaluation. We expect that the individuals identified at proposal stage are the ones who will undertake the work.

Please note that if the enumeration is to be sub-contracted, the evaluator will be ultimately responsible for the enumerators they are subcontracting to. Please specify in the proposal your proposed in-country enumeration partner.

The proposed Evaluation Team should include the technical expertise and practical experience required to deliver the scope of work and evaluation outputs, in particular with regards to:

- **Evaluation design:** focused on mixed-methods impact evaluation, potentially using experimental or quasi-experimental techniques, ensuring they understand the policy context around girls' education and social inclusion;
- **Skills in quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis,** drawing findings from multiple sources and handling potential contradictions between data sets, including ensuring a greater understanding of quantitative data results through the triangulation of qualitative data;
- **Gender-sensitive research methods** and experience measuring changes in gender attitudes;
- **Conducting research with children** using interactive, child-friendly and participatory methodologies;
- **Conducting research with people living with disabilities, including children:** experience with the Washington Group methodology would be particularly appreciated;
- **Evaluation management:** experience managing large-scale and complex evaluations and research processes from end-to-end, including conducting and reporting for Baseline, Midline and Endline evaluation reports;
- **Primary research:** inclusive and gender-sensitive design, management and implementation of primary quantitative and qualitative research in potentially challenging project environments. This could include the design of longitudinal household panel surveys, EGRA/EGMA learning assessment tests, in-depth interviews, focus groups, etc., with a particular understanding of the policy context around education and disability and the barriers that affect the target beneficiaries and communities;
- **Qualitative research expertise:** expert skills in qualitative data collection and analysis are required, including innovative and participatory methods. Experience of alternative forms of impact assessment such as outcome mapping and contribution analysis is desired. The size and composition of the qualitative sample should be explicitly informed by how the Evaluation Team intends to analyse the qualitative data, and the Evaluation Team should set out a clear coding plan (whether using software such as NVivo or manually) through which it will explore themes, patterns and contradictions;
- **Education sector expertise:** knowledge and experience conducting evaluations within the education sector. Prior experience working on the GEC and experience using learning assessments is desirable;
- **Country or context-relevant experience:** it is particularly important that the team has the appropriate country or context-relevant knowledge/experience and the Evaluation Team should be able to demonstrate they have the appropriate language skills within their wider team to conduct the research required in the Ghanaian context;
- **Statistical analysis:** experience with a range of statistical modelling and analysis of impact data; highly proficient user of SPSS or STATA;
- **Value for Money (VfM) assessment of education projects:** education economics expertise to conduct cost-benefit analysis and cost effectiveness analysis as part of the assessment of the project's value for money;
- **Safeguarding and Do No Harm considerations:** ensuring the whole evaluation process adheres to best practice for research with children, including the implementation of relevant policies and procedures to ensure the safety of participants (note that all bidders are expected to show they have a child protection policy in place to safeguard children whom the research team would come into contact with through the research activities).

The proposed team should also demonstrate:

- **Organisational Experience** – Provide evidence of previous project experience on the provision of similar evaluation services and the design and implementation of similar evaluation activities required by this ToR;
- **Independence** – Demonstrate the necessary independence and declare any conflict of interest and potential biases, including bias towards any of the stakeholders, target groups, type of approach, etc.;
- **Applied understanding of rights and ethics** – Respect the rights and dignity of participants and comply with relevant ethical standards.

11. Deliverables and schedule

- **Inception report** – Setting out the design of the evaluation strategy and plan including sampling strategy and quantitative and qualitative approach. This should also include associated planning, logistics, quality assurance, child and adult safeguarding measures and risk management information, including gender analysis. As part of this, the Evaluation Team is also required to provide a detailed workplan incorporating all relevant tasks and milestones of the evaluation study, from start to finish.
- **Data collection report** – Compiled from those completed by enumerators, including any actions taken as a result of any issues arising (e.g. erroneous or missing data).
- **Endline evaluation report with Executive Summary (including drafts)** – Design, conduct and submit an Endline evaluation that assesses and reports on the performance of implemented activities, outputs and outcomes, and answers the project's Key Evaluation Questions. The report should also support learning and sustainability by identifying key achievements and challenges and assessing the probability of long-term benefits after the project has been completed. A report template will be provided by the Fund Manager.

All reports should be submitted in electronic form and should be submitted in English. An Evaluation Review Group will be set up and chaired by Plan UK, comprising members from across the Plan International UK and Plan International Ghana MGCubed project teams. Its primary responsibility will be to provide oversight and guidance at key stages during the evaluation, in collaboration with the GEC Fund Manager. The Evaluation Team will be required to engage with the Evaluation Review Group and deliver presentations on all of the above deliverables.

In addition to the above:

1. Applicants are required to provide a **detailed workplan** incorporating all relevant tasks and milestones of the Endline evaluation study, from start to finish; they are also required to include in their detailed workplans the milestones set out below (please note final dates will be confirmed once evaluators are recruited and initial discussions are scoped out with the evaluators).
2. The Evaluation Team will be required to deliver a face-to-face and/or online **presentation** of the evaluation findings, as an integral part of the submission process. An in-country presentation is desirable; however, an online interactive webinar may also be considered.
3. Other **communication materials** for dissemination are encouraged. The project is particularly interested in materials which will help us feed back to the beneficiaries and communities we work alongside, engaging stakeholders more widely. These will be agreed with the project team during the inception phase.
4. **Final Data Collection Tools** – The Evaluation Team should include a clean copy of the all data collection tools developed and used in the study.
5. **Cleaned Data Set (including transcripts)** – The Evaluation Team will be expected to provide a fully 'cleaned-up' dataset for both the qualitative and quantitative aspects of the evaluation. For quantitative reporting, this may be in SPSS, Stata or SAS file format accompanied by the code used to carry out analysis and a variable codebook. Similarly, for qualitative work, this should include cleaned and anonymised transcripts and coding framework.

All bidders should ensure they are available for the full duration of this project.

Typical project milestones /outputs for deliverables	Deadlines
Invitation to tender sent out to bidders Deadline for receipt of tenders Evaluation of tenders and shortlisting completed Interviews of shortlisted suppliers held Supplier appointed	22 nd June 2020 17.00 UK, 3 rd August 2020 14 th August 2020 w/c 17 th August 2020 w/c 24 th August 2020
1. Inception Phase	Deadlines
Inception Meeting held Literature/document review & data gathering completed Review of project's theory of change, impact logic and evaluability completed Stakeholder consultation completed Child protection framework developed Sampling framework for primary research for Endline completed Design of data collection strategy including cohort tracking design completed Design of primary research instruments for Endline completed Approval of primary research tools for Endline secured from the Fund Manager Draft Inception Report (including design of Endline study) submitted for review and comments by Project Manager and Project Partners Presentation to Evaluation Review Group Review complete and comments returned to supplier Final Inception Report submitted	September 2020 Bidder to complete Bidder to complete Bidder to complete Bidder to complete Bidder to complete Bidder to complete Bidder to complete Bidder to complete Bidder to complete Bidder to complete Bidder to complete 31 October 2020
2. Endline Evaluation Phase	Deadlines
Tool development and piloting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Tool translation b) Secure Ghanaian Institutional Review Board approval c) Field piloting d) Tools Finalisation e) Enumerator training Endline research starts Endline research completed Data entry and cleaning Data analysis Draft Endline Evaluation Report submitted for review Validation of findings with key stakeholders and respondents & incorporation of feedback, including presentation to Evaluation Review Group Review by Project Management and stakeholders completed/comments provided to Supplier Supplier addresses comments and revises Endline Report Final Endline Evaluation Report submitted Clean dataset provided and submission of any other deliverables In-country/webinar presentations and any other planned dissemination activities	Bidder to complete January 2021 February 2021 Bidder to complete Bidder to complete 31 March 2021 Bidder to complete Bidder to complete Bidder to complete Bidder to complete 30 April 2021 Bidder to complete Bidder to complete
<p><i>Please note the Evaluation Team is contractually engaged until approval of all final deliverables is secured by the Fund Manager.</i></p>	

A more detailed milestone document in line with the Fund Manager's requirements will be agreed with the evaluators once they are recruited.

12. Reporting and contracting arrangements

The Evaluation Team will be expected to identify a Project Director and Project Manager for communication and reporting purposes. At the inception meeting, they will be expected to submit a full contact list of all those involved in the evaluation.

The Evaluation Team will be working directly with the Plan International UK MEL Specialist and the Plan International Ghana MGCubed MEL Manager, with support as required from the MGCubed project team. At key stages of the evaluation process, the Evaluation Team may also engage directly with the Fund Manager as appropriate.

The MGCubed project will provide:

- The project proposal, logframe, theory of change, MEL Framework and other relevant documents;
- Overview of the project, list of communities and schools per district; list of beneficiaries in each community disaggregated by grade and sex; lists of beneficiaries included in Midline evaluation sample disaggregated by grade and sex;
- Contact list of key people in-country and in the field;
- Support identifying suitable local enumerators;
- Support in setting up introductory meetings with relevant stakeholders and communities;
- Logistical support during the fieldwork phase.

The Evaluation Team will be responsible for the timely delivery of all outputs and deliverables as outlined above, as well as for the prompt reporting and presentation of raw data, draft and final reports (inclusive of responding to feedback from Plan International UK and the Fund Manager on the draft reports). More specifically, the Evaluation Team will:

- Submit a full list of contacts for all staff involved in the Evaluation Team during the inception meeting;
- Secure Fund Manager approval for all data collection tools;
- Report to the Evaluation Review Group and attend meetings as agreed with the Plan International UK MEL Specialist;
- Contact the Plan International UK MEL Specialist on a daily basis during the fieldwork stage of the evaluation;
- Report any safeguarding or child protection concerns as soon as possible and within 24 hours to the Plan International Safeguarding Focal Points;⁷
- Recruit and train research assistants such as enumerators for the assessment;
- Make own logistical arrangements to reach the selected schools and / or communities and organise interviews and ensure full logistical support for the entire exercise across all districts;
- Supervise and take full responsibility for the behaviour and performance of data collectors, including data collection checking in the field;
- Perform child protection and safeguarding background checks on all their staff involved in evaluation activities, including contractors;
- Submit (by email) to the Plan International UK MEL Specialist weekly progress reports during the evaluation period, summarising activities / tasks completed to date (% achieved), challenges and mitigation strategies, time spent, etc.;
- Ensure individual data collection reports outlining progress achieved and any challenges are completed by enumerators and that these are compiled into an overall data collection report;
- Design or modify tools where necessary, in consultation with the MGCubed Project MEL staff;
- Run analysis of the findings and produce reports which sufficiently explore and explain the results;
- Produce any other relevant dissemination materials, and share findings with the MGCubed project team.

⁷ Relevant contact details will be shared with the External Evaluator once appointed.

13. Budget

The estimated budget for this work is **£180,000** inclusive of VAT (at a rate of 20%). Applicants registered outside of the UK should note that the VAT element will be paid directly by Plan International UK to the UK tax authorities and, therefore, will not form part of their payment tranches. Applicants registered within the UK should note that they will be responsible for paying the VAT element directly to the UK tax authorities.

The budget is inclusive of all costs covering team member costs, travel, research costs and any other costs associated with the completion of the work, including where required costs for reasonable adjustment. The Evaluation Team are required to organise and fund their own duty of care arrangements as required.

Milestone	Detail	Amount to be Paid (%)	Expected Timeframe
1. Submission of final inception report and tools	Includes detailed workplan	40%	31 October 2020
2. Submission of first draft of final report		30%	Complete by end of March 2021
3. Submission and sign-off of a final report and other deliverables to the satisfaction of Plan International UK, Plan International Ghana and the GEC Fund Manager	Final report assessed against Plan's standards for Quality and Completeness. Payment made on receipt of approval from the GEC Fund Manager.	30%	Complete by 30 April 2021

14. Ownership and disclosure of data

Please note that the successful applicant will be contractually required as data processor to comply with European General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

All documents, data and information shall be treated as confidential and shall not, without the written approval of Plan International UK, be made available to any third party. In addition, the bidder formally undertakes not to disclose any parts of the confidential information and this shall not, without the written approval of Plan International UK, be made available to any third party. The utilisation of the report is solely at the decision and discretion of Plan International UK.

All documents containing both raw data / materials and the final report, both in soft and hard copy are to be returned to the Plan International UK MEL Specialist upon completion of the assignment. All documentation and reports written as, and as a result of the research or otherwise related to it, shall remain the property of Plan International UK. No part of the report shall be reproduced except with the prior, expressed and specific written permission of Plan International UK. Similarly, any intellectual property developed as a result of the research will remain the property of Plan International UK.

15. Application requirements

Plan International UK invites bids from consultants or firms with the experience and skills described above. Please submit the following application documents to mgcubed@plan-uk.org no later than **5pm (17:00) UK time on Monday 3rd August 2020** referencing “Endline Evaluation for MGCubed Ghana” in the subject line and including support documents as outlined above. **For internal tracking purposes, please could interested applicants also send a brief email before the deadline confirming your intention to bid.**

Interested applicants should provide a proposal covering the following aspects:

- **Detailed response to the TOR** including:
 - **Proposed methodology**, including outline of overall evaluation design, cohort tracking and sampling approach.
 - **Quality Assurance plan** that sets out the systems and processes for quality assuring the evaluation and research process and deliverables of the project from start to finish (see Section 8 above for full details).
 - **Ethics and Child Safeguarding approaches:** applicants are required to set out their approach to ensuring complete compliance with international good practice with regards to research ethics and protocols (see Section 6 above for full details);
 - Comprehensive **Risk Management plan** (see Section 7 above for full details);
 - **Detailed workplan** for the proposed timeframe.
- **CVs** of each member of the Evaluation Team (no more than 3 pages), detailing relevant skills and experience;
- **Two examples of relevant previous work** undertaken by the Evaluation Team (involving both quantitative and qualitative analysis);
- **Detailed budget**, including:
 - Sub-total of fees for the delivery of any task or deliverable, broken down by the number of days for each individual team member against the tasks set out in the workplan;
 - Total fees per team member;
 - Day rates for each team member, against the total number of days per team member;
 - Expenses and overheads broken down by the project cost categories;
 - Total costs before and after any taxes that are applicable;
 - The Evaluation Team are required to provide a payment schedule on the basis of milestone payments for the successful delivery of each deliverable.
- **References:** Please provide two references who we may contact to discuss experiences of working with you.

Applications submitted after the deadline will not be accepted.

16. Implications of non-compliance

Once the successful applicant signs this Terms of Reference document, they are liable to comply with the conditions within it.

In case of any inappropriate behaviour, including fraudulent acts or safeguarding breaches that bring the reputation of Plan International into disrepute, Plan International UK reserves the right to take reasonable disciplinary action within the ambits of UK law. If the Evaluation Team fails to complete the work within the agreed period, extra time will be allocated to complete the exercise as deemed necessary by Plan International UK before their final payment. No extra payment will be made for negligence or failure to complete the tasks on time. The Endline evaluation will be deemed complete on receipt of approval from the GEC Fund Manager.

17. Annexes

All Annex documents are available here: https://planinternationaluk-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/planukshare_plan-uk_org/EmoK9KkeBcFPhGSPWw4NLEoBaMo3UGLLEDzRXpRniOaXDw?e=yLUGDv

Annex 1: MGCubed Project MEL Framework and Theory of Change

Annex 2: MGCubed Project Logframe

Annex 3: MGCubed Midline report

Annex 4: Child-Centred Community Development Standards

Annex 5: Bond Evidence Principles and Checklist

Annex 6: Plan International Global Policy on Safeguarding Children and Young People

Annex 7: Plan International's Summary Guidance on Gender Transformative Programming

Annex 8: MGCubed Covid-19 phase 1 response plan