

RFP-SOT-2025-004
Request for Proposals***Research on bilingual policy implementation in contexts of language mismatch in Senegal*****RFP Release Date: January 21, 2025****Question Submission Deadline: January 27, 2025****Question Response Posted Deadline: January 29, 2025****Proposal Submission Deadline: February 7, 2025****Study Name:** *Research on bilingual policy implementation in contexts of language mismatch in Senegal***Geographic Source:** Any country including the place of performance but excluding any country that is a prohibited source. Senegalese-based firms are preferred.**Contract type:** Deliverable-based fixed price contract**Approximate date contract issued to successful bidder(s):** on/about March 3, 2025**Contract Funding:** Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation**Submit proposal to:** FLN@rti.org, please include solicitation number in subject line**Solicitation Number:** RFP-SOT-2025-004

This RFP in no way obligates RTI to make an award, nor does it commit RTI to pay any costs incurred by the Seller in the preparation and submission of a proposal or amendments to a proposal. Your proposal shall be considered valid for **90 days** after submission.

The RFP is organized as follows:

1. Background
2. Overview of Study Design
3. Scope of Work and Deliverables
4. Summary of RTI Responsibilities
5. Proposal and Submission Requirements
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1. Background

RTI International is an independent international non-profit organization dedicated to conducting innovative, multi-disciplinary research that improves the human condition. With a worldwide staff of more than 4,000 people, RTI offers innovative research and development and a full spectrum of multi-disciplinary services. Universities in North Carolina founded RTI in 1958 as a centerpiece of the Research Triangle Park.

With funding support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), RTI manages the Science of Teaching initiative—a 5-year program focused on improving foundational literacy and numeracy in sub-Saharan Africa. As part of this initiative, RTI is implementing a study titled “*Research on bilingual policy implementation in contexts of language mismatch in Senegal.*” This study intends to build new evidence about the relative frequency of the ideal versus sub-optimal conditions of language (mis)match in schools, as well as the effects of the (mis)match on student learning. The focus of the study will be, where mismatch does exist, the strategies that teachers can or do implement to mitigate the additional challenges posed by the misalignment to ensure student success. This research is intended to serve as a public good, contributing to the emerging body of evidence on how education systems can support large-scale, substantive improvements in foundational learning in complex, multi-lingual contexts. It builds on other BMGF-funded research under the [Learning at Scale](#) and [Science of Teaching](#) activities.

The research questions to be addressed by the study include:

1. In Mandinka and Pulaar schools, what is the prevalence of language (mis)match between:
 - a. students’ language proficiencies and the designated school national language of instruction (LOI)?
 - b. teachers’ language and literacy proficiencies and the designated school LOI?
 - c. students’ language proficiencies and their teacher’s?
 - d. students’ language proficiencies and their textbooks regarding regional language variations (for students whose general language is a match to the school LOI/TLM language)?
2. What strategies do teachers use for dealing with language mismatch?
3. What are the teachers’ and head teachers’ attitudes and beliefs about the MOHEBS, the teacher deployment policy regarding linguistic alignment, the challenges of language mismatch in their school (if any), and any needs for further linguistic support for the teachers and/or students? In addition, what are the teachers’ beliefs about their own current language proficiencies and their ability to attain the necessary language skills in the national language(s) that they need for teaching?

The study will include primary data collection using questionnaires/interviews, student language assessments, classroom observations, and teacher focus groups. The study will be led by a small team of RTI researchers and a data collection/research firm.

The proposal will be open to organizations from all geographic locations, with a strong preference for Senegal-based organizations. *We are not seeking applications from international firms without a presence in Senegal who partner with a Senegal-based firm to implement the work.*

Organizations should demonstrate the following preferred qualifications and experience:

1. Relevant direct experience collecting data in Senegal, ideally at multiple levels of the education system, including the school level.
2. Ability to conduct data collection with fluent Mandinka and Pulaar-speaking teams.
3. Experience fielding qualitative and quantitative data collection.
4. Expertise in instrument coding/rendering and deployment (optional but not required) in qualitative instruments like Tangerine, SurveyCTO, CommCare, etc.
5. Experience managing and cleaning quantitative datasets.
6. Comprehensive understanding of research quality standards, with a specific focus on data quality assurance.
7. Strong processes for planning, budgeting and change management.
8. Ideally, experience engaging with district, school leadership and teachers during data collection.

RTI will lead the overall research process, including the research design, sampling strategy, development of data collection instruments, data analysis, and reporting. RTI will also provide technical support for training the data collectors, but this training should be lead by the Offeror. The Offeror will review the final instruments and sampling plan and will specifically ensure the data entry into the software follows the sampling plan (multiple assessments from the same school will need to be connected later for analysis). The Offeror will be responsible for all activities related to data collection, including field planning, recruitment, and training of data collectors; field-testing instruments; and the supervision of data collection in compliance with best practice protocols. The Offeror will also ensure data quality assurance, and timely delivery/uploading of raw and cleaned data sets and field reports. Additionally, the Offeror will assist RTI in securing the necessary data collection approvals at the national and local levels. **Table 2** in Section 3. Scope of Work provides an overview of responsibilities between RTI and the Offeror.

2. Overview of Study Design

There will be two phases of the following data collection activities in a total of 2 regions and in two languages, Mandinka and Pulaar. The region selection will be finalized with the government, but Offerors should budget for 2 regions.

Phase 1: Quantitative Data Collection

There will be one phase of data collection activities in 100 schools associated with the 2 regions (the sampling will likely not be split an even 50/50 between the two regions). This phase will serve as the quantitative phase of data collection during which the following six instruments will be administered:

1. Classroom Observation and Home Language Survey
2. Classroom Language Usage Survey (no assessor needed as it's automatic data capture through Tangerine's new Loquat software on a tablet).
3. Student Assessment
4. Student Interview
5. Teacher Questionnaire

6. Head Teacher Questionnaire

It is envisaged that these six instruments can be administered at a school in one day.

Table 1: School-based data collection provisional sample

Instrument	Respondent	Sample	Estimated Duration in minutes	Total per Language (Mandinka/Pulaar)	Total Sample
Classroom observation	G2 classroom	1 per school x 100	60 minutes	50	100
Classroom home language survey	G2 teacher/ students	1 per school x 100	15 minutes	50	100
Classroom language usage survey	G2 classroom	1 per school x 100	60 minutes (automatic data capture on tablet using Loquat software)	50	100
Student assessment	G2 students	16 per school x 100 (8 L1 speakers and 8 L2 speakers)	10 minutes	800	1600
Student interview	G2 students	16 per school x 100	10 minutes	800	1600
Teacher questionnaire	G1-G2 teachers	approximately 2 per school x 100	30 minutes (self-administered)	100	200
Head teacher questionnaire	Headteacher	1 per school x 100	30 minutes (self-administered)	50	100

Phase 2: Qualitative Data Collection

In addition, the second phase of data collection will comprise the implementation of four focus groups, inviting 10-12 Grade 1-2 teachers from multiple neighboring schools. This data collection will happen on separate days from the Phase 1 Quantitative Data Collection.

Timeline: All data collection must be completed by the end of May 2025.

3. Scope of Work and Deliverables

The Offeror will be responsible for all activities related to data collection including field planning, recruitment and training of data collectors, field-testing the instruments, and supervision of data collection in compliance with RTI's protocols. The Offeror will also ensure data quality assurance, and timely delivery/uploading of raw and cleaned data sets and field reports. Additionally, the data

collection partner will assist RTI in securing the necessary data collection approvals at the national and local levels. **Table 2** below outlines the tasks for the Offeror and RTI.

Table 2. Responsibilities Matrix

RTI	The Offeror
Design research	Facilitate submission to in-country ethics review
Develop sampling strategy	Create mobilization plan based on sample
Define criteria for and approve data collectors	Recruit qualified data collectors
Development instruments	Secure functioning tablets& render/deploy instruments into the software ((rendering is optional but not required)
Determine number of schools for field testing	Select schools for field testing
Provide guidance on field testing	Field-test instruments
Make adaptations to instruments based on field test results	Prepare tablets with final instruments
Support Training of data collectors	Lead training of data collectors
Provide support (virtually) to data collection as necessary	Supervise and ensure the quality of data collection
Clean and code data	Upload data daily

More specifically, the Offeror shall execute the following activities for the study:

- a. Prepare data collection plans/timeline and protocols.
- b. Code surveys and qualitative questions and protocols in Tangerine or SurveyCTO.
- c. Field-test instruments in two schools (one per language) and pilot instruments in 5 schools. A pilot could be part of data collector training.
- d. Provide all necessary tablets, data access, and printed materials to implement the training and data collection successfully.
- e. Recruit, train, and supervise qualified data collectors.
- f. Support country level ethics submission and approach and secure access to data collection sites (primary schools) with support from RTI and RTI's USAID/RELIT project.
- g. Organize and lead data collector training.
- h. Conduct the data collection as outlined in the data collection plans and in accordance with agreed upon timelines.
- i. Provide field reports and conduct trouble shooting during data collection.
- j. Quantitative data: monitor, daily, that the data is uploaded (daily) from the school (based on location data). Provide daily uploads of data collected to RTI.
- k. Qualitative data: Capture data and put it in analyzable form. Data should mostly be in French, but there could be a few examples where translation from local language (into French) might be needed. The facilitator of this focus group should be able to do this.
- l. Provide data cleaning and documentation.

With this RFP, we are asking for a detailed technical approach, staffing and work plan, and cost proposals aligned with the specific activities and deliverables listed below. Section 4 provides explicit guidance on content for technical and cost proposals, as well as guidance on the maximum length for each section.

Please reference Table 1 above for detailed information on the sample and instrumentation and Section 7 for a high-level activity timeline.

Deliverables and Activities:

1. Data Collection Plan and Timeline

Following a kickoff call with the RTI team, the Offeror will submit a full Workplan and timeline that takes into account Ramadan and school closures. The timeline should allow for data collection to conclude by the end of May at the very latest.

2. Provision of Tablets¹

Approximately 40 tablets will be needed per the following breakdown:

- 20 tablets (one per enumerator) for classrooms observation & student assessments. One enumerator will administer these subsequently in the classroom.
- 10 tablets or phones (one extra per team of enumerators at each school) to administer the Classroom Language Usage Survey (an automatic observation tool using Tangerine’s new Loquat software).
- 10 tablets (one extra per team of enumerators at each school) to administer the teacher and head teacher questionnaires.

Tablets should be compatible with Tangerine and [Loquat software](#). Tablets should also support qualitative software like Survey CTA and Nvivo.

3. Coding/programming, testing and revisions of instruments and protocols

3.a Structured instruments (e.g., surveys, form capture) programmed into Tangerine

The Offeror will be responsible for rendering surveys into Tangerine and loading the Tangerine software to tablets.

¹ **Please note:** RTI cannot use any equipment or services from specific companies, or their subsidiaries and affiliates, including Huawei Technologies Company, ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, and Dahua Technology Company (“Covered Technology”). In response to this request for proposal, please do not provide a quote which includes any Covered Technology. Any quote which includes Covered Technology will be deemed non-responsive.

3.b Qualitative data collection protocols and loading into the specified software (TBD but could be Tangerine, Survey CTO or CommCare).

For qualitative data collection, the Offeror will load the interview and FGD instruments (questions), together with the related instructions to data collectors and standard language for beginning and concluding interviews and FGDs, into the software for viewing/reference, along with fields for capturing other qualitative data such as found documents and media such as photographs, etc. Additionally, the Offeror will develop a) a system for recording and filing the audio for all interviews and FGD using the device, and b) all note-taking templates for capturing notes on paper during qualitative interviews and FGD (including for capturing the data collectors' relevant observations and reflections), and for post-data collection note expansion/memos covering reflections, insights, and flagging potential biases, and for initial extraction/coding of major themes in relation to the research questions. The Offeror will also establish a system for organizing and cataloging initial notes and expanded notes/memos either within the software. Data collectors should use audio recordings of the interviews and FGD to check the accuracy of their notes and their understanding of what was said.

Offerors are also requested to propose an option for the transcription of all the focus group recordings, and for translation of these transcripts from national language to French (if applicable), with quality control for completeness and accuracy.

4. Recruiting, training, and supervising enumerators.

The Offeror will provide suitable training facilities and all logistics necessary to support trainings and field tests for all data collection activities. The Offeror will recruit and competitively select a sufficient number of qualified field staff candidates to allow for trainees who will not successfully complete the training and for attrition during the training and field period. RTI staff will support the design and delivery of training emphasizing the data collection instruments, protocols and strategies for reliable data collection. All data collection staff must have excellent speaking, reading, and writing skills in French. In addition to French, 10 enumerators should possess these same skills in Mandinka or 10 enumerators should possess these skills in Pulaar. In addition, previous experience with EGRA administration, classroom observation, and/or focus group facilitation is highly desired. The Offeror will be responsible for arranging the overall training agenda, in consultation with RTI, as well as all training on logistical issues and general fieldwork and enumeration training. The training program should incorporate measures of assessor accuracy and consistency as appropriate and ensure an acceptable rate (as agreed between Offeror and RTI) is achieved before fieldwork commences.

Not all enumerators will participate in the qualitative data collection/conduct focus group discussions (perhaps 2-4 enumerators supporting this) The 1-2 enumerators who facilitate the groups will be given a structured protocol with open-end questions and related sub-questions. The facilitator will need the ability to recognize that the responses are yielding something useful (teacher experiences, ideas, opinions) or when to use the sub-questions. They need to be able to pivot and make decisions on the moment. Ideally, there would be one facilitator/enumerator who attends all the focus groups and the second

facilitator/enumerator might vary for the two language groups.

5. All printed materials necessary for enumerator training and data collection.

In addition to provision of tablets for data collection, the Offeror will be expected to provide all other necessary printed materials to implement the training and data collection successfully. This may include materials such as training manuals, prompts, maps, data tracking sheets, etc.

6. Support for submission and attainment of country-level ethics approvals (as necessary) The Offeror will secure access to data collection sites (primary schools) with support from RTI and its USAID/ RELIT program. The Offeror will be responsible for contacting districts and schools and arranging access to district staff school staff in advance of the data collection for each of the five survey periods. To facilitate access to schools, the Offeror will also be responsible for contacting the appropriate district and sector education offices and securing permission letters from them.

7. Data collection planning and logistics

The Offeror will develop data collection plans that outline in detail all aspects of the field work to be conducted by the Offeror. The plans will be developed with guidance from RTI and should include the following:

- Final updated Activity Timeline Chart
- Composition of Field Teams, including the ratios between enumerators, supervisors and field managers, and descriptions of their roles
- Allocation of field teams to districts/sectors/schools
- Quality assurance processes

The data collection plan and planned level of resources/time should align with the following guidelines:

- Include sufficient field supervision and quality assurance for data collection teams.
- Include sufficient logistics, transportation, etc. to ensure an efficient and timely data collection.
- For qualitative interviews and FGDs:
 - All interviews and FGD should be conducted by teams of two.
 - Each team member should review and expand their notes immediately following each interview/FGD to check for completeness and accuracy, and use audio recordings.
 - Paired teams should conduct a reconciliation process together after each FDG, developing shared interpretations.
 - Teams should complete initial coding of key themes and extract points in relation to the research questions.
 - Transcripts will also be required for analysis

8. Data security and quality control plan

The Offeror should include a data security and quality control process in its technical

approach. RTI reserves the right to conduct its own quality assurance processes during data collection. The Offeror's validation methodology shall be subject to RTI approval.

9. Implementation of Data Collection

The Offeror will field the data collection as outlined in the data collection plans and in accordance with agreed upon timelines.

10. Data uploads and field report

Tablet data and recording uploads should be completed on a daily basis and data extracts provided to RTI within 24 hours of request. RTI will review on a regular basis the data for data quality review and to assess data collection progress. The Offeror should also provide a brief daily update on data collection activities and a verification that all tablet data has successfully uploaded. The Offeror should also provide weekly fieldwork reports describing any incidents and challenges confronted during the week of reporting.

4. Proposal Preparation and Submission Requirements

Proposals should be separated into two parts: a) Technical Proposal and b) Cost Proposal. Offerors are expected to examine the specifications, deliverables and instructions in the RFP and address each in their proposal. See **Table 3** for further proposal instructions.

Table 3 Proposal Submission Requirements

Content	Content Details (<i>Maximum page length or range</i>)
Technical Proposal	
Organization Details (2 pages max.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization overview, including management structure Summary of incorporation/legal status
Offeror's Understanding (1 page max.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief narrative outlining the Offeror's understanding of the proposed activities

<p>Relevant Experience (4 pages max.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of large-scale data collection plans and execution of the same • Execution of research studies in Senegal • Recruitment and supervision of well-qualified enumerators • Enumerator training design and delivery • Field-testing of instruments • Programing of instruments in SurveyCTO, Tangerine, CommCare or similar qualitative software tool and fielding tablet-based data collection • Qualitative research, including focus group discussions and interviews • Securing access to education system actors and schools for data collection in a timely and appropriate manner • Data management and cleaning <p><i>Project Summaries for up to 3 of the most relevant assignments in the last 3 years should be included at the end of this section.</i></p>
<p>Comments and Suggestions (1 page max.)</p>	<p>List of observations or suggestions (if any) on the RFP and scope of work.</p>
<p>Technical Approach and Workplan (6-8 pages)</p>	<p>Description of the Approach, Methodology & Workplan proposed by Offeror for successful execution of the activities listed in the RFP. More specifically, the Offeror's approach to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • collaborating with RTI on data collection planning and preparation • fielding the data collection at the district and school level, while ensuring minimal disruption and maximum time and effort efficiencies • strategies for the capture of qualitative data (i.e., focus groups) • working with district staff, school administrators, and teachers • recruiting and retaining sufficiently qualified data collectors • field-testing and revising instruments • ensuring data quality, protection of data and PII and compliance with relevant respondent protection protocols • identifying, communicating and addressing barriers during planning and implementation of data collection • anticipated challenges for the above activities <p>risk mitigation strategies for the above activities.</p> <p><i>A week-wise Gantt Chart summarizing the project plan with deliverables should be included at the end of this section with specific consideration for school schedule and other relevant timing issues.</i></p>
<p>Project Staffing and Management Plan (2-3 pages)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the project staffing plan and structure, essential staffing, and the percentage of the time each will spend on this activity. • Offerors should describe the proposed team structure in this section.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offerors should clearly specify their proposed training and data collection staffing plan, including oversight/supervisory structures. • Offerors should include summary profiles of all candidates considered essential in this section. <p><i>Please include a resume (2 pages max.) for everyone considered essential for the successful implementation of this contract.</i></p>
Cost Proposal	
Budget Narrative	Narrative summary of the proposed budget including discussion and rationale for costing approach, major expenses, risks, and other considerations related to the budget.
Cost Proposal Details	<p>The proposed budget and associated narrative will have sufficient detail to allow a detailed evaluation of the costs proposed, using the Budget template in Appendix A. Budgets should be submitted in in the local currency of the bidding organization, with a conversion to U.S. Dollars for estimation purposes. RTI reserves the right to request any additional information to support the proposed budget.</p> <p>Please contact FLN@rti.org to request Appendix A – Budget Template in Excel format if unable to access. Budget should be submitted in unlocked Excel format.</p>

Following selection of the apparently successful applicant, RTI reserves the right to request due diligence documentation, which is not limited to but may include:

- A. Audited balance sheets and profit and loss statements for the last two complete years. If audited financial statements are not available, please provide copies of the unaudited financial statements.
- B. Unaudited balance sheets and profit and loss statements for the current year-to-date.
- C. Copies of any audit reports/findings, if any
- D. Organizational chart
- E. Copies of Insurance coverage (i.e. worker’s compensation, general liability insurance, automobile insurance, etc.)

5. Past Performance References

Offerors should include three organizational client references and contact information. Ideally, at least one reference should be a firm with international operations. References should have worked with your organization within the past five years on projects relevant to the activities and geographic area of work and activities outlined in this RFP.

6. Proposal Evaluation and Award Process

The selection committee will evaluate the proposals based upon their written technical and cost proposals. Each proposal will be evaluated first on the merits of the technical proposal. Those proposals

that reflect sufficient quality in technical approach, work plan, staffing and management plan and organizational experience will advance to the cost proposal review. The award will be made to the Offeror representing the **best value** to the project and to RTI. RTI intends to evaluate offers and award a contract without negotiations with Offerors. Therefore, the Offeror's initial offer should contain the Offeror's best terms from a price and technical standpoint. RTI reserves the right to conduct discussions if determined necessary by RTI.

7. Proposed Timeline

Table 4 Estimated contract timeline for 2025

Activity	Start	End
Selection – Contract Execution	February 1	March 3
Inception, Detailed Workplan, Design Feedback, submit for local IRB	March 3	March 14
Enumerator recruitment, instrument coding, translation and testing completed, enumerator training plan, final sample and data collection protocols, detailed field plan for field-test and data collection. Secure approval to visit schools and send out letters	March 17	March 28
Field testing, field test data delivered and revisions to instruments, training plans etc based on field test	March 31	April 9
Training + one day of pilot (within training)	April 14	April 18
Main stage data collection	April 21	May 23
Raw and cleaned quantitative data delivered, qualitative data and recordings delivered	April 30	June 6
Field report delivered		June 27
[Possible transcription and translation of all FGDs]		June 27

8. Deliverable And Payment Timeline

Deliverables will be reviewed for quality and compliance with the requirements by RTI. Should a deliverable be found insufficient in terms of quality or completeness, RTI will provide written feedback and the opportunity to correct the deliverable by the Offeror within a reasonable timeframe. Table 5 below outlines the anticipated payment percentage and timeline for each deliverable, which will be finalized upon selection and award.

Table 5: Key deliverables, payments, and tentative timeline of the assignment

Deliverable	Description	Estimated Timeline	% of contract value
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Inception report, which will include the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Organization’s understanding of the project based on consultation with RTI Detailed work plan with timing approved Data quality assurance processes documented and approved b. Feedback on overall design, instruments and protocols completed c. Detailed recruitment plan approved d. Support for country-level approvals completed 	2 weeks after contract execution	20%
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Instrument coding, translation and testing completed b. Detailed enumerator training plan approved c. Final sample and data collection protocols approved d. Detailed field plan for pilot and data collection approved 	4 weeks after contract execution	30%
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Training completed b. Provision of tablets and other supplies for data collection c. Pilot implemented and pilot data delivered 	6 weeks after contract execution	20%

4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Main data collection training completed b. Main data collection completed c. Field report delivered and approved d. Raw and cleaned quantitative data delivered e. Qualitative data and recordings delivered 	10 weeks after contract execution. (Main data collection completed 9 weeks after contract execution)	30%
5	[Possible transcription and translation of all FGDs]	12 weeks after contract execution.	TBD