



Save the Children®

SAVE THE CHILDREN
REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) FOR THE BASELINE, MIDLINE, ENDLINE
EVALUATION OF THE PALAM/A PROGRAM

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Tender Information

Introduction

Save the Children Federation, Inc. (hereafter “SCUS”) is the world’s leading independent organization for children. In 2015, we reached an estimated 185 million children, achieving lasting, large-scale results around the world. We worked in 120 countries, including the United States. Our signature programs in 13 countries have contributed to increasing newborn survival, giving children a healthy start and improving learning outcomes on a national scale. We work with our donors and partners to inspire breakthroughs in the way the world treats children and to achieve immediate and lasting change in their lives.

RFP Overview

SCUS is requesting competitive proposals from qualified firms or individual consultants interested in conducting a baseline, midline, and final evaluation, which includes the project impact evaluation of the Promoting Autonomy for Literacy and Attentiveness through Market Alliances Project (hereafter “PALAM/A”). SCUS will use the same external evaluator for all three phases to support consistency in the data collection and analysis. An external consultant or evaluation firm will be selected in the first year, and SCUS will work with the same firm throughout the life of the program. The budget ceiling for this RFP is \$1M. Please note, when reviewing proposals, Save the Children will consider value for money as a key evaluation criterion.

Provisional Calendar of Events

December 3, 2018	Request for Proposal issued
December 7, 2018	Please provide a written notification via email to Maria Makinde at mmakinde@savechildren.org of your <u>intention to bid or not bid</u> . If not to bid, please include reason in the email.
December 12, 2018	Deadline to submit any questions related to RFP
December 17, 2018	Answers to any questions related to RFP issued to all Bidders
January 4, 2019 “Closing Date”	Electronic copies (Adobe PDF) of the proposals should be submitted to Clay Westrope at cwestrope@savechildren.org and Maria Makinde at mmakinde@savechildren.org by Noon EST. The subject line should read “USDA Sri Lanka. Evaluation Proposal Submission”.
January 7-11, 2019	Review of proposals by Procurement Committee
Mid-January, 2019	Contract winner determined and notified and contract negotiations to begin

Terms of Reference (TOR)
Baseline, Midline, Endline Evaluation
Promoting Autonomy for Literacy and Attentiveness through Market Alliances
(PALAM/A) Project

Donor: United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)
Start Date: October 1, 2018
End Date: September 30, 2023

I. Introduction

The core principle of Promoting Autonomy for Literacy and Attentiveness through Market Alliances Project (PALAM/A, or bridge in Tamil and Sinhala) is to bridge constraints to sustainability and full government ownership of the national school meal program in Sri Lanka. Using a market-based approach to achieve full graduation of Sri Lanka's Homegrown School Meal Program, PALAM/A will build government capacity to implement a resilient, context-specific school meal program. The strengthened Homegrown School Feeding Program will support sustainable literacy and nutrition outcomes for school children throughout the country. PALAM/A will use a systems strengthening approach to support literacy and health outcomes by improving training and coaching for teachers on teaching comprehension and fluency to early-grade readers. PALAM/A will also strengthen the training and coaching of Public Health Inspectors, charged with implementing and monitoring school health and nutrition in schools, and Public Health Midwives, responsible for identifying and referring underweight children to the existing government-run nutrition supplementation program and providing appropriate counseling to their parents, including pregnant and lactating women.

The PALAM/A project will improve the quality of literacy instruction, improve children's attentiveness by decreasing short-term hunger, and improve children's attendance, while increasing the use of health, nutrition, and dietary practices in Sri Lanka. To achieve these goals, Save the Children will partner with International Executive Service Corps (IESC), implementers of the USDA Food for Progress (FFPr) Market Oriented Dairy Project, and Lanka Jathika Sarvodaya Shramadana Sangama Movement (Sarvodaya) to reach approximately 196,092 school children over five years in 887 schools in seven districts in the Northern and Eastern Provinces, along with the Estate/Plantation Sector (Kilinochchi, Mullaitivu, Trincomalee, Nuwara Eliya, Badulla, Monaragala, and Ratnapura). The project will improve cost efficiency in the existing school meal program by creating Joint Sourcing Groups (JSG) of individual School Meal Providers to decrease the cost of sourcing ingredients for school meals and increase the incentive to provide nutritious meals. Schools in Nuwara Eliya District will receive a randomly assigned mix of these interventions and will comprise the sample for the project's impact evaluation.

Project Results Framework

The project's results framework (see Annex A) is based on the following strategic objectives (SO):

SO1: Improved literacy of school-age children through the following activities:

- **1.1.3: Improved Literacy Instructional Materials:** Develop instructional materials that include social cohesion, gender, nutrition, and health themes to provide resources that are easy for

teachers and volunteers to use to improve children's fluency and reading comprehension skills, while also improving gender norms, social cohesion, and nutrition and dietary practices.

- 1.1.4: Increased Skills and Knowledge of Teachers: Collaborate with the National Institute for Education and teachers' college trainers to train In-Service Advisors. Co-facilitate In-Service Advisor teacher trainings, using the USAID 5 T's as a keystone methodology, and mentor In-Service Advisors to coach teachers.
- 1.2.1: Reduced Short-Term Hunger: Enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the Government of Sri Lanka's Home Grown School Meal program by creating groups of School Meal Providers (Joint Sourcing Groups) for 887 schools to procure bulk ingredients, promoting a fully graduated program as a vehicle to meeting schoolchildren's nutrition requirements.
- 1.3.2: Reduced Health-Related Absences: When children are sick, they are unable to attend school. PALAM/A will reduce health-related absences by Increasing the Use of Health, Nutrition, and Dietary Practices.
- 1.3.5: Increased Community Understanding of Benefits of Education: Promote parent support to literacy, nutritional well-being, and positive discipline through meetings with community volunteers and community-based reading activities.

SO2: Increased use of health, nutrition, and dietary practices through the following activities:

- 2.1: Improved Knowledge of Health and Hygiene Practices: With the National Institute for Education, cascade child-centered teaching for nutrition and health subjects to In-Service Advisors and teachers. Provide training to Medical Officers for Health and co-facilitate trainings to Public Health Inspectors to implement the School Health Promotion Program guidance for School Health Clubs. Co-facilitate trainings for School Health teachers to use child-to-child methodologies to improve children's knowledge of key health messages with special emphasis on nutrition and increased dietary diversity.
- 2.2: Increased Knowledge of Safe Food Prep and Storage Practices. Provide training to Medical Officers for Health and ensure cascade of training to Public Health Inspectors to train School Meal Providers through Joint Sourcing Groups on safe food prep and storage practices.
- 2.3: Increased Knowledge of Nutrition: Public Health Inspectors monitor schoolchildren's growth during annual School Medical Inspections and provide referrals to medical establishments for children who are underweight. School Health teachers with School Health Clubs monitor children's growth each school term. School Health teachers will refer children who do not demonstrate growth two measurements in a row to the Public Health Inspector. Medical Officers for Health train 300 Public Health Midwives in Nurawa Eliya, Ratnapura, and Monaragala on growth monitoring for children under five years of age, counseling caregivers, and providing referrals for supplementation to families of underweight children.
- 2.4: Increased Access to Clean Water and Sanitation Services: Ensure that Public Health Inspectors regularly monitor the school environment, following the School Health Promotion

Program. Community volunteers work with School Development Societies to develop and implement school WASH maintenance plans, including point-of-use water treatment.

- 2.5: Increase Access to Preventative Health Interventions: When children are sick, they are unable to attend school. Ensure that all 887 schools are connected to the School Health Promotion Program's School Medical Inspections, including annual deworming and Vitamin A and iron supplementation.
- 2.6: Increased Access to Requisite Food Prep and Storage Tools and Equipment: Support links between School Meal Providers and lending services to equip household kitchens with requisite food prep and storage tools and equipment.
- 1.4.1 & 2.7.1: Increased Capacity of Government Institutions: Work with MOE and MOH to develop efficiencies for In-Service Advisors, Public Health Inspectors, and Public Health Midwives allowing them to support children's learning, health, and nutrition effectively.
- 1.4.2 & 2.7.2: Improved Policy and Regulatory Framework: Link MOE, MOH, and other stakeholders to develop, approve, and enact a Home Grown School Meal policy.
- 1.4.4 & 2.7.4: Increased Engagement of Local Organizations and Community Groups: Establish private sector market linkages for the Home Grown School Meal program, including Joint Sourcing Groups and Dairy Supplier linkages.

USDA Learning Agenda

The findings from the impact evaluation for the PALAM/A project will build on the USDA Learning Agenda and fill the following two gaps in the evidence base:

1. Which components of school meal programs, including food production, procurement, and preparation of meals, are the most sustainable in terms of operational efficiency and why? Does the cost-effectiveness of these programs change over time and if so, how and why?
2. In what ways do the combination of school meal interventions and educational interventions improve health, nutrition, and education and literacy levels? How can these combinations improve cost-effectiveness?

By leveraging an experimental cross-sectional design with matched comparison group, the impact evaluation will: (1) evaluate the effect of the Joint Sourcing Group approach to school meals on health, nutrition, and literacy outcomes, and (2) evaluate the effect of literacy, health, and nutrition programming on literacy, health, and nutrition outcomes.

II. Scope of Work for Evaluator

Save the Children is seeking a consultant or research consulting firm to lead its external evaluation process from baseline to endline. The midterm and final evaluation contracts will be dependent on satisfactory completion of the baseline. The midterm and final evaluations will be re-competed if the baseline does not meet quality standards. The methodology and sampling detailed below may require revision based on the results of the baseline and suggestions from the consulting entity.

II.I Baseline Study

A. Purpose and Scope

Baseline data will be collected for four purposes: (1) to measure pre-implementation values for performance indicators, (2) to confirm estimated indicator targets, (3) to establish baseline values for the project impact evaluation and determine the comparability of the intervention and comparison schools, and (4) to confirm project design assumptions and identify potential threats to project implementation.

B. Methodology

For the PALAM/A baseline study in Year 1, the evaluation team will use a mixed-methods approach and will replicate the approach for the midterm and final evaluations in Years 3 and 5. The evaluation team will use quantitative and qualitative methods to establish baseline values and track progress for targeted performance indicators throughout the project. Additionally, the baseline data from Nuwara Eliya District will serve as the baseline for an experimental impact evaluation.

Tools

The evaluation will include the following quantitative data collection tools to establish baseline indicator values and measure outcomes at midterm and final evaluations stages:

- A literacy assessment of students in Grade 2 in all seven districts. The evaluation team will administer to all sampled students a one-on-one oral emergent literacy test composed of five sub-tests: letter awareness, single word recognition, reading fluency and accuracy, and a set of comprehension questions linked to the passage. This assessment is similar to the Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) developed by RTI with USAID funding, but is adapted for use with Save the Children's literacy interventions.
- A health and nutrition assessment of students in Grade 2 in all seven districts. The project will assess all sampled students on height, weight, age, individual food intake recall, and incidence of diarrheal disease recall.
- A health and nutrition knowledge, attitudes, and practices (KAP) assessment of Grade 2 students and School Meal Providers in all seven districts.
- A School Meal Provider survey in which cost data will be collected retrospectively following an ingredients approach using a semi-structured questionnaire. The project will base the survey on a standardized costing framework capturing capital (fixed) and recurrent costs incurred at the provider level. The questionnaire will cover cash and in-kind contributions to estimate financial costs. Financial costs capture actual expenditures for project implementation on an annual basis.
- A school observation checklist, including a WASH resources assessment, in all 887 schools.

The evaluation team will collect the literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP data on tablets using the electronic data collection software Kobo Toolbox (developed by the Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and Brigham and Women’s Hospital). Save the Children has extensive experience programming surveys in Kobo and training internal and external staff on their use.

The baseline will utilize qualitative methods to inform the Joint Sourcing Group component of PALAM/A. Save the Children will conduct focus group discussions with School Meal Providers in the existing government model and key informant interviews with principals, School Development Society members, and district government officials to gain a better understanding the existing school meal model.

Research Design and Sampling

PALAM/A’s quantitative evaluation approach allows for tracking over time trends in children’s literacy skills, health and nutrition status, children’s KAP, trends in School Meal Provider KAP, and assessment of different treatment impacts through an experimental design.

Impact Evaluation. PALAM/A’s experimental impact evaluation will take place in Nuwara Eliya District, where there are 264 project-targeted schools of which 62 are not currently receiving any government-recognized school meal program. Most of these schools will be part of the evaluation, split among one of four groups, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1: Impact Evaluation Treatment Groups

Group	Sample Size (Schools)	Mode of Assignment/ Selection	Project Interventions		
			School Meal	Literacy	Health and Nutrition
Treatment 1	50	Random	Current government meal program	Nothing	Nothing
Treatment 2	50	Random	Current government meal program	Literacy Programming	Health and Nutrition Programming
Treatment 3	102	Random	Joint Sourcing Group Model	Literacy Programming	Health and Nutrition Programming
Comparison	40	Matched Comparison	Nothing	Nothing	Nothing

The evaluation team will randomly assign to one of the three treatment arms 202 schools in Nuwara Eliya that are currently receiving school meals. Random assignment will occur after the baseline needs assessment. The project will geographically block the schools and then randomly assign treatment to ensure there is enough distance between treatment and comparison schools to mitigate the risk of contamination. The experimental blocked randomized design will allow the evaluation team to estimate causal effects of different approaches to school meal and literacy interventions. This design also takes into account the fact that most schools in Nuwara Eliya currently receive some form of meal services.

In order to estimate the effect of treatment on intervention to a counterfactual in which schools receive no meals, literacy, health, or nutrition intervention, Save the Children will layer on a quasi-experimental evaluation. For this component, the evaluation team will select a set of 40 comparison schools from among those schools that are not currently receiving any school meals (estimated at a total sampling frame of 62 schools based on data from MOE). Save the Children will take two approaches to minimize the threat to internal validity due to selection bias – that is, the presence of external factors that result in most schools in Nuwara Eliya receiving school meal but these 62 schools are not receiving such

services. First, the evaluation team will use propensity score matching to identify the subset of possible comparison schools that most closely match the set of treatment schools. Then the evaluation team will randomly select 40 of these schools to comprise the final comparison group. This setup allows for multiple treatment-control contrasts:

- First, among the randomly assigned treatment groups, the evaluation team can compare the effect of literacy programming (pooling treatment 2 and 3) to no literacy programming (treatment 1). Save the Children expects to see moderate to large gains on the literacy assessment upwards of 0.35 standard deviations (SD).i
- Second, among the randomly assigned treatment groups, the evaluation team can compare the effect of health and nutrition programming (pooling treatment 2 and 3) to no health and nutrition programming (treatment 1). Save the Children expects to see moderate gains on the health and nutrition assessment upwards of 0.20 SD.ii
- Third, among the randomly assigned treatment groups, the evaluation team can compare the effect of the JSG model (treatment 3) to the current school meal model (pooling treatment 1 and 2). Save the Children expects to see more moderate gains on student outcomes – focusing primarily on health and nutrition outcomes – given that all schools are receiving some form of meal services. A reasonable detectable effect size is 0.18 SD.
- Fourth, the evaluation team can compare school meal services (pooling treatments 1 through 3) to no meal services (comparison).

The evaluation team will randomly select 20 Grade 2 students (10 girls and 10 boys) from each of the 242 schools to participate in the literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP assessments at baseline. This yields a total sample size of 4,840 Grade 2 students. This sample size was calculated using the user-written “clustersampsi” command in Stata 15.1 and is the minimum sample size necessary to detect a project effect size of 0.35 standard deviations for comparisons between treated and non-treated schools and a project effect size of 0.18-0.20 standard deviations for comparisons between treatment groups, assuming a power level of 80%, intra-cluster correlation of 0.25, and a 50% correlation of other covariates with the measured outcomes. The team will assess a cross-section of Grade 2 students in each of the baseline, midterm, and final evaluation phases. The evaluation team will administer the School Meal Provider KAP and cost survey to a random sample of 20% of all school meal providers for the schools sampled as part of the student-level assessments.

Project Evaluation. The evaluation team will also collect literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP data from schools in the remaining six districts for the broader project evaluation to track changes in indicators over time. Save the Children will use a two-stage cluster sampling approach to select a cross-section of Grade 2 students for the baseline literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP assessments. First, the evaluation team will randomly select a number of schools from each district according to the relative project size in that district (see Table 2). Next, for the Grade 2 literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP assessments, the team will randomly choose 10 students (five girls and five boys) from one Grade 2 classroom.

The sample size for the literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP assessments was derived using the recommendations from the USAID EGRA Toolkitⁱⁱⁱ to confirm the sample size of 830 second graders for the literacy, health, and nutrition outcomes. The sample size was calculated using the following formula:

$$n = 4 \left(\frac{t_{\frac{\alpha}{2}, n-1} \sqrt{1 + (k-1)\rho\sigma}}{CIwidth} \right)^2$$

Where $t_{\frac{\alpha}{2}, n-1}$ is the critical value corresponding to a 95% confidence level (set to 1.96), k is the cluster size (set to 10 students per school), ρ is the inter-cluster correlation (set to 0.45 based on previous EGRA studies), σ is the estimated standard deviation (set to 26 based on previous EGRA studies), and $CIwidth$ is the width of the confidence interval (set to 8). The formula yields a desired sample size of 820, which has been adjusted upward to 840 to allow the school sample size in each district to be proportionate to the number of project schools in the district.

Table 2: Sample Sizes from Each District for the Project Evaluation

District	Number of schools in PALAM/A	Number of schools selected for evaluation	Total Grade 2 students (10 per school)
Nuwara Eliya	202	19 (subset of impact evaluation sample)	190 (covered by impact evaluation sample)
Trincomalee	122	12	120
Kilinochchi	40	4	40
Mulaitivu	58	5	50
Ratnapura	175	17	170
Badulla	204	19	190
Monaragala	86	8	80
Total	887	84	840

The evaluation team will administer the School Meal Provider KAP and cost survey to a random sample of 20% of all School Meal Providers for the schools sampled as part of the student-level assessments. For the qualitative component of the project evaluation, the evaluation team will select School Meal Providers, School Development Societies members, principals, and district government officials from 10% of the project communities where PALAM/A will implement the Joint Sourcing Group model of school meals (see Table 6 [for sample details](#)).

Data Analysis

The evaluation team will clean and analyze quantitative baseline data using Stata or similar software. The contracted external evaluator will produce summary statistics and indicator data according to a pre-specified analysis plan. Additionally, the evaluator will assess the equivalence of the three treatment groups and one comparison group for the Nuwara Eliya impact evaluation, using comparison of means through clustered t-tests and chi-squared analyses. As needed, additional analyses according to gender, socio-economic status, and home literacy environment will provide data to the project. The evaluation team will transcribe and analyze qualitative evaluation data using ATLAS.ti, NVivo, or similar software.

C. Selection of Evaluation Team

In Year 1, Save the Children will contract an experienced, independent third party to conduct the baseline, midterm, and final evaluations and the impact evaluation. Save the Children's preference is to use the same external evaluator for all three phases to support consistency in the data collection and analysis. Save the Children will select the third party consultant or firm through a competitive recruitment process in alignment with Save the Children and United States Department of Agriculture

(USDA) policies. The PALAM/A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Manager will manage the recruitment process and the finalization of the evaluation team with support from the Save the Children technical advisors and the PALAM/A Chief of Party.

D. Key Audience and Stakeholders

Save the Children will consult key stakeholders in both the design and results dissemination phases for the baseline, midterm, and final evaluations and the project impact evaluation. Save the Children will plan the evaluation in collaboration with the implementing and technical partners (IESC, Sarvodaya), local and national government partners and research institutions, such as Sri Lanka’s Medical Research Institution, and USDA. Stakeholder groups to be consulted as key audiences include students, parents, teachers, school administrators, community leaders, and volunteers.

E. Baseline Study Timeline

The baseline study will take place in Year 1 during the first trimester of the school year, in March 2019, prior to the start of project activities. USDA will receive the final baseline report within six months of the finalization of the performance monitoring plan and evaluation plan. See Table 3 below.

Table 3: Timeline of Activities for the Baseline Evaluation

Baseline Evaluation Activities	Month and Year
Finalize performance monitoring plan with USDA	December 2018
Finalize Terms of Reference (TOR) for PALAM/A evaluator with USDA	December 2018
Advertise for PALAM/A evaluation consultant (for baseline, midterm, and final evaluations, including impact evaluation)	December 2018
Recruit consultant and finalize consultant contract	December 2018-January 2019
Refine evaluation methodology and data collection tools	January-February 2019
Data collection	March 2019
Data analysis	April 2019
Conduct stakeholder meetings to share initial findings	April/May 2019
Finalize and submit draft baseline report to USDA (within 60 days of evaluation fieldwork and within 15 days of report completion)	May 2019
Submit final baseline report and established targets to USDA	June 2019
Discuss actions to address findings and recommendations with USDA	June 2019
Report on implementation of follow-up activities	September 2019

II.II Midterm Evaluation

A. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the midterm evaluation is to assess the progress of PALAM/A implementation, assess the relevance and early effectiveness of the interventions, determine whether the project is on track to meet its objectives, summarize the lessons learned to date, and recommend any changes to the project components that are necessary. The midterm evaluation will use the same instruments from the baseline assessment. The evaluation will also include key informant interviews with students, parents, School Development Society members, teachers, principals, Joint Sourcing Group School Meal Providers, non-Joint Sourcing Group School Meal Providers, and local officials. In Nuwara Eliya District, the site for the PALAM/A impact evaluation, the evaluation team will use an experimental design with matched comparison group approach to compare literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP gains in the schools assigned to each of the three treatment arms and one comparison arm.

B. Key Evaluation Questions

The midterm evaluation will assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact of the key project interventions. Key representative midterm evaluation questions are below.

Relevance

- Do project stakeholders (students, parents, School Development Society members, teachers, principals, Joint Sourcing Group School Meal Providers, non-Joint Sourcing Group School Meal Providers) feel the PALAM/A project is meeting their needs? Why or why not?
- Are the in-school meals culturally appropriate?
- Are educational and instructional materials perceived as culturally appropriate and age-appropriate for primary school students?

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the project achieved its output and outcome targets?
- What factors have inhibited or facilitated the achievement of project goals, objectives, and expected results?
- What is the cost of school meal provision through the government feeding model compared with the Joint Sourcing Group model? To what extent has the Joint Sourcing Group model led to greater efficiency and cost-savings in school meal provision?

Efficiency

- Have intervention components been delivered within the planned timeline?
- Are commodities delivered on time and in a way that minimizes waste?

Sustainability

- Do stakeholders feel that the PALAM/A's school meal, literacy, and nutrition activities can be sustained at current levels after the project's conclusion? What additional inputs are necessary to achieve sustainability?
- What are the current barriers to achieving sustainability?

Impact

- Have literacy skills of school-age children generally improved in the PALAM/A project area?
- Have nutrition outcomes of school-age children generally improved in the PALAM/A project area?
- Have nutrition, dietary, and food safety practices in schools improved in the PALAM/A project area?
- Have there been any positive or negative impacts in the target areas, besides the realization of the strategic objective-level results?
- How do literacy, health and nutrition, and Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices (KAP) outcomes compare across the three treatment groups and one comparison group in Nuwara Eliya District? Is there evidence of a positive impact of PALAM/A on literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP outcomes?

C. Methodology

Tools, Research Design, and Sampling

To ensure comparability of the midterm evaluation findings with the baseline, the midterm will use the same tools and sampling methodology described in the *Baseline Study* section (Section II.I.B.) above. See Table 6 for details of the midterm evaluation tools and sample.

Data Analysis

The team will use multivariate regression to analyze the midterm impact data from Nuwara Eliya District. Given the experimental design of the three treatment arms, a straightforward analytic approach for these analyses. For comparisons between treatment and control, a propensity score matching technique will be used to derive the trimmed sample of schools that should comprise the comparison group with a difference-in-differences analytic approach to estimate the difference in literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP outcomes among the three treatment groups and one comparison group. The evaluation team will use the same statistical and analytical software from the baseline. The team will reflect any necessary changes identified through the midterm evaluation in updates to the project’s detailed implementation plan and, as appropriate, in revisions to the project M&E system, after being approved by USDA.

D. Selection of Evaluation Team

Before the baseline evaluation, Save the Children will seek to engage an external consultant or evaluation firm that can carry out the baseline, midterm, and final evaluations throughout the life of the project.

E. Key Audience and Stakeholders

The project will plan the midterm evaluation in collaboration with IESC, Sarvodaya, local and national government partners, and USDA. The key audience for the midterm evaluation will consist of the same stakeholder groups as the baseline evaluation, described above.

F. Midterm Evaluation Timeline

Preparation for the midterm will commence at the end of Year 2 in August 2020, with data collection in March 2021 and a final report submitted to USDA in June 2021.

Table 4: Timeline of Activities for the Midterm Evaluation

Midterm Evaluation Activities	Month and Year
Submit draft TOR for midterm evaluation to USDA	August 2020
Finalize midterm evaluation TOR with USDA and consultant	October 2020
Revise and finalize consultant contract	November 2020
Prepare for midterm evaluation -Finalize internal project evaluation team -Finalize evaluation design with consultant and government	December 2020 – February 2021
Data collection	March 2021
Data analysis	April 2021
Conduct stakeholder meetings to share initial findings	April/May 2021
Finalize and submit draft midterm report to USDA (within 60 days of evaluation fieldwork and within 15 days of report completion)	May 2021
Submit final midterm report to USDA	June 2021
Discuss actions to address findings and recommendations with USDA program analyst (within 30 days of report submission)	June 2021

Midterm Evaluation Activities	Month and Year
Report on implementation of follow-up activities	September 2021

II.III Final Evaluation

A. Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the final evaluation is to assess whether the project achieved the results outlined in the results framework and, through the impact evaluation, to estimate the overall impact of the project on literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP outcomes among the cross-section of Grade 2 students, as well as KAP and costing survey of School Meal Providers. The impact evaluation will also allow for a calculation of cost-effectiveness of the existing government model as compared to the JSG model. The final evaluation will use the same quantitative and qualitative methods as the baseline and midterm evaluations to explore questions related to project design, implementation, management, lessons learned, sustainability, and impact.

B. Key Evaluation Questions

Like the midterm evaluation, the final evaluation will focus on questions of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, and sustainability. Key representative final evaluation questions are below.

Relevance

- Do stakeholders feel that their voices were heard and their needs considered throughout the project?
- Were activities to support literacy and improved nutrition integrated in culturally appropriate ways in the target communities?

Effectiveness

- To what extent has the project achieved its output and outcome targets?
- What factors have inhibited or facilitated the achievement of project goals, objectives, and expected results?
- What is the cost of school meal provision through the government feeding model compared with the Joint Sourcing Group model? To what extent has the Joint Sourcing Group model led to greater efficiency and cost-savings of school meal provision?

Efficiency

- Were intervention components delivered within the planned timeline?
- Which commodity management strategies were most efficient for quick delivery and reduction of waste?

Sustainability

- Do schools, School Meal Providers, and Joint Sourcing Groups have the necessary infrastructure and food management plans in place to continue feeding after the project concludes?
- What are the necessary components for successful school handover of activities, as modeled by this project? What were the lessons learned?

Impact

- Have literacy skills of school-age children improved in the PALAM/A project area?
- Have nutrition outcomes of school-age children improved in the PALAM/A project area?

- Have nutrition, dietary, and food safety practices in schools improved in the PALAM/A project area?
- Have there been any positive or negative impacts in the target areas, besides the realization of the strategic objective-level results?
- How do literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP outcomes compare across the three treatment groups and one comparison group in Nuwara Eliya District? Is there evidence of a positive impact of PALAM/A on literacy, health and nutrition, and KAP outcomes?
- How does the cost-effectiveness of the two models of school feeding compare?

C. Methodology Tools, Research Design, and Sampling

The PALAM/A final evaluation will use the performance evaluation methodology detailed in Section II.I.B. above. Refer to Table 6 for details of the final evaluation tools and sample size.

Data Analysis

The evaluation team will use the same data analysis approach from the midterm evaluation. See Section II.II.C. for more information.

D. Final Evaluation Timeline

Preparation for the final evaluation will commence at the end of Year 4 in August 2022, with data collection in March 2023 and a final report submitted to USDA in June 2023.

Table 5: Timeline of Activities for the Final Evaluation

Final Evaluation Activities	Month and Year
Submit draft Terms of Reference for midterm evaluation to USDA	August 2022
Finalize final evaluation TOR with USDA and consultant	October 2022
Revise and finalize consultant contract	November 2022
Prepare for final evaluation -Finalize internal project evaluation team -Finalize evaluation design with consultant and government	December 2022 – February 2023
Data collection	March 2023
Data analysis	April 2023
Conduct stakeholder meetings to share initial findings	April/May 2023
Finalize and submit draft final report to USDA (within 60 days of evaluation fieldwork and within 15 days of report completion)	May 2023
Submit final evaluation report to USDA	June 2023
Dissemination workshop	June 2023

E. Limitations of the Study Design

The main limitation of the quantitative approach is the inability to triangulate student self-reported responses with those of an informed adult, like a parent or a teacher (e.g. parents' education, availability of reading materials at home). The team will place a strong emphasis on the cognitive interviews prior to data collection to ensure instrument suitability to the Sri Lankan context and collection of reliable data.

Another limitation arises from sampling students who are present at school, rather than drawing a sample from full classroom lists. The possibility of systematic student absences might induce a risk of sampling bias by selecting only present students in the absence of electronic lists. For example, students

from vulnerable socio-economic backgrounds with higher health-related absences may be precluded from the study if they are absent on the day of data collection. However, the current approach ensures a large enough sample for the evaluation and sampling consistency across schools and this concern is not significant given the high attendance rates across the country.

A limitation of the qualitative approach is that the data collected will be from a very small sample, and therefore the results are not necessarily generalizable. Another limitation is that the suitability of some questions asked in the focus group discussions and key informant interviews cannot be known prior to project implementation, so it is not possible to predict all potential threats.

Potential threats to randomization include: (1) non-random assignment of the comparison group, (2) incomplete exposure of one of the treatment samples or low treatment dosage, (3) movement of students and/or teachers between treatment and comparison schools, (4) given the nature of the government-level of some interventions, contamination of comparison schools due to district and provincial officials crossing over treatment/control conditions, and (5) other similar interventions in the project area. These potential threats will be prevented to every extent possible in consultation with the external evaluator.

Table 6: Summary of Evaluation Components

Evaluation Component	Tools	Sample	Timing
Baseline	Student literacy assessment	Cross-section of 5,490 Grade 2 students (including 4,840 for impact evaluation)	March 2019
	Student health and nutrition assessment	Cross-section of 5,490 Grade 2 students (including 4,840 for impact evaluation)	
	Student KAP assessment	Cross-section of 5,490 Grade 2 students (including 4,840 for impact evaluation)	
	School Meal Provider KAP assessment	20% of School Meal Providers from among sampled schools	
	School Meal Provider costing survey	20% of School Meal Providers from among sampled schools	
	School observation checklist	All 887 project schools	
	Qualitative focus group discussions and key informant interviews	Parents, teachers, principals, SDSs, government officials, and school meal providers from 10% of project communities	
Midterm	Same as baseline (excluding school observation checklist)	Same as baseline (excluding school observation checklist)	March 2021
Final	Same as baseline (excluding school observation checklist)	Same as baseline (excluding school observation checklist)	March 2023

III. Evaluation Management

A. Roles and Responsibilities

PALAM/A M&E staff in Sri Lanka will manage the monitoring and evaluation of the project. Save the Children’s US-based education and M&E technical advisory staff will provide technical input on the development of tools, sampling plan, electronic data collection instruments, assessor training, and piloting of tools. For the baseline, midterm, and final evaluations and the impact evaluation, Save the Children will contract an independent third party consultant firm to collect baseline, midterm, and final evaluation data that is reliable, accurate, valid, and timely. Save the Children will support the independent consultant through review of the survey plan, survey instruments, sampling methods, and the development of a data analysis plan based on the project indicators.

M&E staff in Sri Lanka will be responsible for managing the commodity monitoring system as well as maintaining the M&E monitoring system used for internal data collection and semi-annual reporting to USDA. M&E staff will conduct monthly visits to project communities to monitor and collect data on project activities. The Senior M&E Manager and technical team will review all data in the M&E monitoring system before submitting evaluation reports to USDA.

Table 7: Evaluation Roles and Responsibilities

Save the Children
PALAM/A Sr. M&E Manager: Draft and revise baseline, midterm, and final evaluation TOR for external evaluator, support selection of external evaluator, review draft evaluation methodology and tools, review data in monitoring system, finalize and submit donor reports, coordinate dissemination events with regional M&E staff and external evaluator.
PALAM/A Chief of Party: Recruit and contract external evaluator, review TOR for baseline, midterm, and final evaluations, review draft evaluation methodology and tools, review draft baseline, midterm, and final evaluation reports.
PALAM/A M&E Coordinators: Obtain necessary permits for evaluation activities, collect and input data in monitoring system, contribute to and review donor reports, coordinate dissemination events with the Sr. M&E Manager and external evaluator.
Save the Children Research Team: Revise assessment tools as necessary, support Sr. M&E Manager and external evaluator to conduct data collection, review baseline, midterm and final evaluation reports.
External Evaluator
External Evaluator: Draft and finalize tools and methodology, train enumerators and field test tools for baseline, midterm, and final evaluations, manage data collection and ensure data quality, analyze data for baseline, midterm, and final evaluations, facilitate reflection event for participatory analysis of preliminary results, co-facilitate evaluation dissemination events, prepare draft and final reports. The independent evaluator will be free to draw their own conclusions free from organizational or political pressure.
Government Partners
Provincial and District Education Staff, MOH Staff, MOE Staff: Contribute to design of TOR and interpretation of baseline, midterm and final evaluation findings, and participate in reflection events and dissemination workshops.
USDA
USDA: Comment and approve evaluation TORs and reports and participate in a stakeholder phone call with the third-party evaluator

B. Evaluation Plan Review and Updating

USDA’s M&E Policy and the McGovern-Dole Learning Agenda as well as Save the Children’s standard M&E policies and procedures will inform the evaluation plan for PALAM/A. The team will update the

M&E System and Evaluation Plan throughout the life of the project as needed, including following the semi-annual reports, the midterm evaluation, visits from technical assistance advisors, or at USDA's request.

C. Deliverables

The consultant should submit the following deliverables for each stage of the evaluation process (baseline, midterm, endline) during the evaluation process:

- A research protocol that includes at a minimum: Principal Investigator, Country/Location, Objectives, Research Questions, Research Design, Sample, Data Collection Methods, Data Analysis Methods and Plan, Quality Assurance Plan, Data Handling and Confidentiality, Consent and Assent Forms, Translation Services (if needed), and Data Collection Tools. The research protocol will be submitted to Save the Children US Ethics Review Committee (ERC) and the consultant will incorporate ERC's input.
- Data collection tools developed for primary data collection.
- A draft report
- A final report submitted in English that incorporates Save the Children's feedback into the draft report (public and internal versions, where relevant)
- Raw data (both qualitative and quantitative) and appropriate data documentation including a data dictionary
- Cleaned datasets
- Presentation of key findings to be delivered at an evaluation stakeholders' meeting
- Standalone summary¹

As noted, the deliverables will be reviewed and approved by the Save the Children team, which will include the PALAM/A Chief of Party, the Senior M&E Manager, SC/Washington technical advisors, as well as USDA/Washington.

Save the Children expects that the final reports will include the following sections, at a minimum:

- Cover Page
- Acronym List
- Executive Summary
- Project Background
- Objectives of the Evaluation
- Key Evaluation Questions
- Evaluation Methodology
- Evaluation Results
- Conclusions (successes and challenges)
- Recommendations
- Lessons Learned
- A minimum of two success stories (not relevant for baseline)
- Performance indicator tables including custom and standard indicators and updated values
- Attachments (photos, charts, graphs, regression analysis results)

¹ A two to three-page stand-alone summary describing the evaluation design, key findings and lessons learned. This document will serve to inform any interested stakeholders of the final evaluation, and should be written in a language easy to understand by non-evaluators and with appropriate graphics and tables.

The final versions of the baseline, midterm, and final evaluation reports must be submitted in two hard copies and in electronic format.

D. Dissemination Strategy

Save the Children will share the information from PALAM/A evaluations with stakeholders, such as beneficiaries, local authorities, Sri Lankan government agencies, other local or regional organizations working in the education sector, USDA, and other USG-funded education projects. Save the Children will ensure that results are shared widely in appropriate formats (e.g., stakeholder workshops and on Save the Children's external website) and at various venues, including government partnership meetings, internal Save the Children presentations and workshops, and externally-facing conferences such as the Comparative International Education Society annual conference. The project will hold dissemination events after the baseline, midterm, and final evaluations to present findings to key government figures and community members. Additionally, USDA will be notified and invited to attend key events where evaluation results will be presented.

E. Key Audience(s)

Save the Children will consult key stakeholders in both the design and results dissemination phases for the baseline, midterm, and final evaluations and the project impact evaluation. Evaluations will be planned in collaboration with the implementing and technical partner (Mercy Corps), local and national government partners, and USDA. Stakeholder groups to be consulted as key audiences for the evaluation include program beneficiaries (students, parents, teachers, school administrators, community leaders, and volunteers), the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Health, and provincial education and health officials.

IV. Selection of Evaluation Team

A. Evaluation Criteria

An external consultant or evaluation firm will be selected in the first year, and Save the Children will work with the same firm throughout the life of the program. The third-party consultant or firm will demonstrate the following characteristics:

- Be financially and legally separate from Save the Children and PALAM/A partner organizations
- Have staff with demonstrated knowledge, analytical capability, language skills, and experience in conducting evaluations of development involving agriculture, education, and nutrition
- Use acceptable analytical frameworks, such as comparison with non-program areas, surveys, involvement of stakeholder in the evaluation, and statistical analyses
- Use local consultants, as appropriate and feasible, to conduct portions of the evaluation
- Provide a detailed outline of the evaluation, major tasks, and specific schedules prior to initiating the evaluation.

SCUS will make the award to the Bidder whose proposal provides the best value, considering both technical and cost factors. Technical and cost factors will be evaluated relative to each other, as described herein. The technical evaluation factors, taken as a whole, are of greater importance than cost or price in determining best value. Bidders should note that these criteria: (1) serve as the standard against which all proposals will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters which Bidders should address in their proposals. Each proposal will be evaluated on the criteria listed below and the criteria will be weighted according to the following allocations:

Criterion	Points Possible
1. Technical Approach	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Proposed methodology, approach and implementation plan demonstrates it will achieve the requirements of the SOW for the project B. The proposal is clear and the sequence of activities and the planning logical, realistic and promises efficient implementation of the evaluation C. Describes the activities to be implemented, how and by whom, and the proposed timelines for each major objective/deliverable/milestone described in the TOR D. Provides in table format clear and well-defined deliverables and due dates that can be used as milestones on which fixed payments will be based 	40
2. Key Personnel	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Academic qualifications B. Team Leader/coordination experience C. Professional experience and expertise in technical area <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Experience with conducting impact and performance evaluations of education, nutrition, health, and child development programs, including prior experience with experimental and quasi-experimental research designs b. Demonstrated expertise in evaluation design, statistical analysis and sampling, development of quantitative and qualitative data collection tools, data collection management, data analysis and visualization, and report writing 	35
3. Fees and Associated Costs	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The degree to which costs are allocable B. The degree to which costs are reasonable C. The degree to which costs are allowable D. A clear and concise budget narrative 	25
Total Points Possible	
100	

The proposal submitted will be the primary document upon which each Bidder will be evaluated. SCUS reserves the right to waive any minor or technical defects or irregularities, and reserves the right to reject any or all bids.

B. Proposal Submission

The consultant must submit a proposal taking into account the following guidelines:

1. Description of Methodology
 - a. Narrative description of proposed quantitative and qualitative evaluation methodology, including team composition
 - b. Proposed sample and data collection framework for primary data collection ☐ Plan for data analysis.
 2. Budget for the consultancy in US Dollars
 - a. The cost of the consultant should include the daily rate for each consultant, per diem for field work (hotel, meals and incidental expenses), all transportation costs foreign and domestic, and all other costs required for the duration of the contract (enumerators, data entry, etc.).
 3. Detailed evaluation schedule, including proposed dates for each evaluation stage for:
 - a. Secondary document review
 - b. Development of data collection tools
 - c. Field data collection
 - d. Data analysis
 - e. Submission of draft report to SC
 - f. Submission of final report to SC
 4. Curriculum Vitae with detailed summary of the evaluation of programs/ projects conducted previously for individuals/companies. If the evaluation was done for a company/organization please include a profile of such company/organization.
 5. A minimum of three letters of reference from organizations with which it/s/he has conducted previous consulting work or a list of three references.
 6. A minimum of two examples of evaluation reports that the consultant/consulting organization has led
-

V. Annexes

A. Project Results Framework (see attached)

B. Conditions of Tendering

By providing a proposal in response to this RFP the Bidder is confirming that it will abide by the conditions of tendering.

1. Late tenders

Tenders received after the Closing Date will not be considered, unless there are in SCUS' sole discretion exceptional circumstances which have caused the delay.

2. Correspondence

All communications from Bidders to SCUS relating to the tender must be in writing and addressed to the person identified in the Cover Letter. Any request for information should be received at least by the Closing Date, as defined in the RFP. Responses to questions submitted by any Bidder will be circulated by SCUS to all Bidders to ensure fairness in the process.

3. Acceptance of tenders

SCUS may, unless the Bidder expressly stipulates to the contrary in the tender, accept whatever part of a tender that SCUS so wishes. SCUS is under no obligation to accept the lowest or any tender.

4. Alternative offer

If the Bidder wishes to propose modifications to the tender (which may provide a better way to achieve SCUS' Specification) these may, at SCUS' discretion, be considered as an Alternative Offer. The Bidder must make any Alternative Offer in a separate letter to accompany the Tender. SCUS is under no obligation to accept Alternative Offers.

5. Prices

If the Bidder is US Based, all prices/rates quoted must be exclusive of all taxes, since SCUS is exempt from taxes.

6. No reimbursement of quote expenses

Expenses incurred in the preparation and dispatch of the tender will not be reimbursed.

7. Non-Disclosure and Confidentiality

Bidders must treat the Invitation to Tender, contract and all associated documentation (including the Specification) and any other information relating to SCUS' employees, servants,

officers, partners or its business or affairs (the "*Confidential Information*") as confidential. All Bidders shall:

- recognize the confidential nature of the Confidential Information;
- respect the confidence placed in the Bidder by SCUS by maintaining the secrecy of the Confidential Information;
- not employ any part of the Confidential Information without SCUS' prior written consent, for any purpose except that of tendering for business from SCUS;
- not disclose the Confidential Information to third parties without SCUS' prior written consent;
- not employ their knowledge of the Confidential Information in any way that would be detrimental or harmful to SCUS;
- use all reasonable efforts to prevent the disclosure of the Confidential Information to third parties;
- notify SCUS immediately of any possible breach of the provisions of this Condition 9 and acknowledge that damages may not be an adequate remedy for such a breach.

8. Award Procedure

SCUS' Procurement Committee will review the proposals to determine, in accordance with the Evaluation Criteria, whether they will award the contract to any one of them.

9. Unsuccessful Tenderers

SCUS shall consider any reasonable request from any unsuccessful Bidder for feedback on its tender and, where it is appropriate and proportionate to do so, provide the unsuccessful Bidder with reasons why their proposal was rejected. Where applicable, this information shall be provided within 30 business days from (but not including) the date on which SCUS receives the request.

10. Exclusion Criteria

- Neither it nor any related company to which it regularly subcontracts is insolvent or being wound up, is having its affairs administered by the courts, has entered into an arrangement with creditors, has suspended business activities, is the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- Neither it nor a company to which it regularly subcontracts has been convicted of fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organization, any money laundering offence, any offence concerning professional conduct, breaches of applicable labor law or labor tax legislation or any other illegal activity by a judgment in any court of law whether national or international;
- Neither it nor a company to which it regularly subcontracts has failed to comply with its obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the relevant country in which it the Bidder operates.

Any Bidder will automatically be excluded from the tender process if it is found that they are guilty of misrepresentation in supplying the required information within their tender bid or fail to supply the required information.

11. Conflict of Interest

- That it is not aware of any connection between it or any of its directors or senior managers and the directors and staff of SCUS which may affect the outcome of the selection process. If there are such connections the Bidder is required to disclose them.
- Whether or not there are any existing contacts between SCUS and any other Save the Children entity, and it and if there are any arrangements which have been put in place over the last twenty four (24) months.
- That it has not communicated to anyone other than SCUS the amount or approximate amount of the tender.
- That it has not and will not offer pay or give any sum of money commission, gift, inducement or other financial benefit directly or indirectly to any person for doing or omitting to do any act in relation to the tender process.

12. SCUS Child Safeguarding Policy and Zero Fraud Tolerance Policy

All bidders are required to comply fully with SCUS' Child Safeguarding Policy and Zero Fraud Tolerance Policy located at:

http://www.savethechildren.org/site/c.8rKLIXMGIpI4E/b.9364821/k.A2E4/Terms_Conditions.htm.

13. SCUS and Affiliates

All Bidders are required to confirm that they will if required be willing to enter into a contract on similar terms with either SCUS or any other Save the Children entity if so required.

ⁱ Save the Children International. 2014. *Literacy Boost: Gampaha District Final Report*. Colombo, Sri Lanka: Save the Children International.

ⁱⁱ Save the Children, IFPRI. 2016. *Preliminary findings from the NEEP Impact Evaluation study: A cluster randomized trial*. Unpublished.

ⁱⁱⁱ RTI International. 2015. *Early Grade Reading Assessment (EGRA) Toolkit, Second Edition*. Washington, DC: United States Agency for International Development.

^{iv} These calculation hold even for more conservative inter-class correlation of 0.25 as we assumed in our power calculations for the impact evaluation sample.