Introduction

*Suaahara*, a USAID-funded multi-sectoral program in Nepal operates at scale. In its first phase (2011-2016), *Suaahara* expanded into 40 of Nepal’s 75 districts and now in its second phase (2016-2021), *Suaahara* operates in 42 of Nepal’s 77 districts; in both phases a district-wide approach was used, meaning blanket coverage of key interventions in all communities throughout the intervention districts. *Suaahara II* is led by Helen Keller International with six core implementation partners: CARE, FHI360, Environment and Public Health Organization (ENPHO), Nepali Technical Assistance Group (NTAG), Vijaya Development Resource Center (VDRC) and Digital Broadcast Initiative - Equal Access Nepal (EAN). In addition, district-specific Partner Non-governmental Organizations (PNGOs) are *Suaahara* sub-recipient partners responsible for sub-national level implementation of activities.

The overall program objective is to reduce the prevalence of stunting, wasting and underweight among children under 5 years of age, underweight among mothers, and anemia among mothers and children. The program aims to achieve these objectives through a multi-sectoral approach, organized around a results framework with four intermediate results (IRs).

- **IR 1:** Improved household nutrition, sanitation and health behaviors
- **IR 2:** Increased use of quality nutrition and health services by women and children
- **IR 3:** Improved access to diverse and nutrient-rich foods by women and children
- **IR 4:** Accelerated roll-out of the Multi-sector Nutrition Plan (MSNP) through strengthened local governance

For IR1, *Suaahara*-hired frontline workers (FLWs) (Field Supervisors and Community Nutrition Volunteers) conduct household and community level activities to increase awareness and support families to engage in optimal practices. Additionally, *Suahara* works alongside Nepal’s large cadre of Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) as principal agents for change. FCHVs conduct face to face counselling, run women’s groups, and support behavior change at the household level through interpersonal communication and education activities.

For IR2, strengthening nutrition-related knowledge and skills, including counseling staff at health facilities and FCHVs working in the communities on health and nutrition is critical. Furthermore, *Suaahara* promotes and supports integration of nutrition into maternal and child health services, including growth monitoring and promotion, and works to improve service availability and quality related to family planning and maternal and child health.
For IR3, *Suaahara* supports reductions in food insecurity and improvements in diversity of food produced, consumed, and sold in markets (when surplus) in disadvantaged communities (about 45% of the wards), through its homestead food production (HFP) (vegetable gardening and chicken rearing) package, delivered through village model farmers (VMFs) established by the project (at varying points between 2012 and now) through selection and capacity building.

For IR4, strengthening Government of Nepal (GoN) systems (at all levels) for policy and program development and implementation to support sustainable improvements in nutrition is crucial. A key aspect of this relates to the allocation and utilization of government funds for nutrition-specific and nutrition-sensitive investments.

*Suaahara* uses a multi-platform Social and Behavior Change (SBC) approach to integrate across these thematic areas. The four primary means of reaching households include: interpersonal communication (IPC) (e.g. home visits); community mobilization events (e.g. health mothers’ groups and food demonstrations); mass media via a weekly radio program known as *Bhanchhin Aama* (now also available on Facebook and YouTube); and technology (e.g. SMS message campaign; interactive voice response).

*Suaahara* has a robust monitoring, evaluation and research (MER) system. *Suaahara* has been carrying out various qualitative and quantitative research studies, including: several rounds of formative research on key behaviors; a randomized controlled trial with related formative research and process evaluation; and a cohort study of adolescent girls becoming women. *Suaahara* also conducts annual surveys, with data collected externally to track progress over time in relation to inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts in intervention areas. The annual surveys help to identify gaps in coverage and knowledge and practices related to *Suaahara*’s IRs. An evaluation is needed, however, to complement the monitoring surveys and enable findings that attribute changes over time to *Suaahara*.

**Background**

Before the start of *Suaahara*, an evaluation was planned and the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) was contracted to design the impact evaluation and lead the baseline survey of the impact evaluation in the summer of 2012. A Nepali survey firm was responsible for the baseline survey data collection and management. Additionally, in 2014 a mixed-methods process evaluation (de facto *Suaahara I* endline and *Suaahara II*) was carried out by an externally contracted principal investigator to lead the study design and locally-contracted firms to carry out the quantitative and qualitative components.

The endline for the main quasi-experimental impact evaluation of *Suaahara* will take place in the summer of 2020 and will estimate the effect of *Suaahara* interventions on household behaviors and nutritional status, as well as on knowledge and skills among health workers and FCHVs. To complement this quantitative study, a qualitative evaluation focusing on the
effect of Suahara at the FLW/community level and policy levels (federal, provincial/district and local) is also planned.

The impact evaluation, which is quantitative, has its primary research question of: What is Suahara’s impact on maternal and child nutritional status and dietary diversity? Secondary questions include: 1) What is Suahara’s impact on maternal and child nutrition, health and WASH behaviors and knowledge? and 2) What is Suahara’s impact in reducing equity gaps in nutritional status, dietary diversity, and maternal and child nutrition, health and WASH behaviors and knowledge?

Tasks and Deliverables

The Suahara Evaluation Quantitative Impact Evaluation Research Consultant is required to collaborate with the Suahara team, remaining in close consultation with the STA and MER teams, as well as the Principal Investigator and other consultants hired for the evaluation, from design through to completion of the studies. Details of the tasks required under this contract are outlined below by phase:

1. Evaluation Planning (January 1, 2019-May 31, 2020) (80 days)

During this phase, the main responsibility of the Suahara Evaluation Quantitative Impact Evaluation Research Consultant will be to ensure full understanding of the Suahara program and interventions beyond Suahara in both the intervention and comparison areas, two pre-requisites to ensuring that the evaluation design and questionnaires are appropriate. This position will also support in the drafting and finalization of the evaluation protocol, NHRC application, and survey questionnaires and consent forms. The main task in May will be daily participation in the survey training and field testing.

Deliverable: Final program impact pathway; documentation of interventions in Suahara and comparison areas; and final English survey tools (May 31)

2. Data collection: (June 1 – August 30) (20 days)

During this phase, the Suahara Evaluation Quantitative Impact Evaluation Research Consultant, will monitor some of the data collection and devote time to drafting a statistical analysis plan for the primary and secondary research questions.

Deliverable: Draft statistical analysis plan; documentation of training and field observations (August 15)

3. Data analysis: (September 1-December 15, 2020) (40 days)

During this period, the Suahara Evaluation Quantitative Impact Evaluation Research Consultant would work on analysis and documentation of key findings, prioritizing the
primary research question first followed by secondary research questions, in collaboration with the Principal Investigator.

**Deliverable:** Draft written report and slide deck of key findings (Dec 10)

**Timeline and Level of Effort**

January 1, 2020 to December 15, 2020 for a total of 140 days. The level of effort (LOE) is calculated according to the designated tasks, noted above. This scope of work does not require, but may include, a trip to Nepal to collaborate with other hired evaluation researchers and discuss key findings with USAID, Government of Nepal and other stakeholders.

**Qualifications/Evaluation Criteria:**

- Bachelors degree, with preference given for those with a masters, in epidemiology, statistics, economics, or public health nutrition or similar field (3 points)
- Experience working on quantitative studies, with preference for prior experience on at-scale and/or multi-sectoral program evaluations (5 points)
- Previous quantitative research experience in Nepal including all steps of the process from design to tool development to training and data collection (7 points)
- Previous experience working on a team and ability to work effectively across cultures, languages, and working styles (3 points)
- English writing and oral communication skills (2 points)

The top three candidates will be shortlisted by the technical evaluation committee. Based on a review of the application materials submitted and estimated costs, the evaluation committee will make a best value trade-off evaluation of the technical quality and the consultant’s daily rate, associated travel and incidentals costs to identify the successful candidate.

This consultancy will report to the Suahara II Sr. Technical Advisor.

**To Apply:**

Qualified candidates should submit a cover letter, resume, per day consultancy rate and total consultancy fee both, and a recent, relevant writing sample and biographical data sheet to Suahara.Consultants@hki.org noting “Quantitative Impact Evaluation Research Consultant” in the subject line. The biographical data sheet can be downloaded at the following address: [http://hki.org.np/](http://hki.org.np/)
Note:

Questions on scope of work to be submitted by November 26, 2019 by 5:00 p.m. Nepal Time at Email: Suaahara.Consultants@hki.org with subject line: “Questions for Quantitative Impact Evaluation Research Consultant.” The answers to questions on scope of work shall be posted on http://hki.org.np/ by November 29, 2019.

Applications will be accepted for three weeks from date of posting.