

Request for Proposals

WomenLift Health Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) Discovery: India

Background

WomenLift Health was established in 2019, with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, to expand the power and influence of women in global health and catalyze systemic change to achieve gender equality in leadership. Its work is based on the theory that advancing accomplished mid-career women to senior positions in global health will lead to improved health outcomes and advancements in gender equality. WomenLift Health believes that elevating these women to senior positions requires both investment in their individual leadership skills and contributing to and influencing change in the environment in which they live and work.

WomenLift Health implements a portfolio of interventions that reinforce transformative change and that ripple out to reach an increasing number of women and men. The [Women Leadership in STEM](#) (WLS) program, recently launched by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC) and WomenLift Health, aims to enhance the power and influence of mid-career women working in STEM in India. Through its focus on transformative leadership and mentorship for women in STEM, the WLS program works to offer a pathway for their increased representation and participation in decision-making processes, leading to more balanced and diverse leadership teams.

WomenLift Health is committed to continuous learning and adaptation to ensure we, along with our network of partners, leverage best practices to advance women's leadership and gender equality. WomenLift Health has partnered with Bixal as a global monitoring and evaluation (M&E) partner since its inception. Bixal is a US-based consulting firm that conducts annual evaluations, regular monitoring, and other research and learning services for WomenLift Health.

STEM Discovery

To understand the landscape around women's leadership in STEM in India, WomenLift Health, with support from Bixal, is undertaking a discovery exercise. As such, WomenLift Health is looking for an India-based partner to design and implement a stakeholder analysis study in India. We anticipate that this partner will coordinate with Bixal, who has been working with local firms across geographies.

The objectives of the Discovery exercise are to understand the current state and the needs of the mid-level women in STEM in India in the following areas:

1. Current status of women's leadership in STEM in India.
2. Barriers (institutional and societal) to women's leadership in STEM.
3. Facilitators (institutional and societal) enabling environment for women's leadership in STEM.

4. Current efforts and opportunities to foster women's leadership, diversity, and inclusion within organizations.

Proposed activities to accomplish the objectives above include:

1. **Landscape Analysis:** The partner will conduct a desk review of peer-reviewed and gray literature to contextualize women's STEM leadership in India and help WomenLift understand the data that exist and current context.
2. **Stakeholder Mapping:** The partner will develop a list of top influential organizations in STEM.

The mapping will begin with identifying top influential organizations by the following sectors:

- INGOs
- Local NGOs
- Government
- Universities
- Private sector
- Philanthropy
- Multilateral institutions

From this list, the partner will select organizations to be a part of the final sample for interviews in consultation with WomenLift Health and Bixal. The partner will work to identify 2-3 mid-level women per organization to interview as part of the analysis. Finally, the partner should also track key attributes (mission, scope, size) to build a profile for the final organizations selected.

3. **Interviews:** It is anticipated that the partner will conduct interviews virtually but may opt to conduct some interviews in-person. WomenLift or Bixal staff may also join some of the interviews. The interviews should cover the mix of sectors identified in the Stakeholder Mapping exercise. Approximately 25-30 interviews with mid-level women will be conducted.

In partnership with Bixal and WomenLift Health, the partner organization will develop an interview guide from sample interview guides used in other regions.

In addition, we are committed to ensuring that the Discovery process is inclusive and reaches a diverse pool of women, marginalized ethnic and caste groups, the LGBTQIA community, people with disabilities, and other underrepresented communities. In the Indian context, this also means appropriate representation from different states. Our target is a respondent pool of at least 50% members of non-dominant groups.

Rigorous documentation should be maintained for each interview, including an English language translated transcript and recording, if applicable. The partner will work with Bixal to get necessary national approvals, as needed.

4. **Analysis & Report:** The partner will analyze the data collected and produce a

summary narrative report of the primary data and desk review findings, as well as profiles of the organizations interviewed. The report will detail the needs of the mid-level women in STEM in India.

Contract Deliverables

- An **inception report** for the Stakeholder Analysis including the landscape analysis and interview guides.
- Routine **check-in calls** with Bixal to share progress, lessons learned, and emerging findings.
- A **list of influential organizations in STEM**, including key attributes.
- Comprehensive **documentation of interviews** in original language and in English (if not originally conducted in English).
- A **draft and final report** highlighting key findings and providing profiles of target organizations.
- A **virtual presentation of final findings** for WomenLift Health (including a PowerPoint presentation) jointly led by the partner and Bixal.

WomenLift Health is funding the Discovery exercise. The partner is expected to own and lead the Discovery process and will receive on-going support from Bixal.

Timeline

The expected timeline is below. This may be impacted by the RFP award process. A final timeline will be agreed upon in the Inception Report.

Activity	Month	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Award local contracts		X								
Local partner inception reports & training			X							
Desk review				X						
Stakeholder Mapping				X						
National Approvals				X						
Interviews						X				
Analysis								X		
Draft report									X	
Report QA and revision										X
Global summary slide deck										X
<i>Deliverable submission</i>		X								

Proposal Requirements

India-based organizations interested in applying for this work should submit a proposal via email to RFPsubmission@womenlifthealth.org by 11:59pm EST on August 15, 2024. The proposal should contain the following:

- No more than 5 pages describing your organization's overall technical approach to completing this work.
- No more than 2 pages outlining your organizational qualifications, including relevant past performance in qualitative methods.
- No more than 2 pages on the team structure and management approach that will be used to complete the work.
- No more than 3 pages on cost proposal, including all costs, fees, and expenses required to carry out the consultancy. The level of detail should be sufficient for reviewers to understand the key drivers and facilitate negotiations if necessary. The cost proposal should be in US dollars.
- Annex: CV of the principal investigator.

Questions on this opportunity can be addressed to RFPsubmission@womenlifthealth.org and should be submitted by 11:59pm EST on August 15, 2024.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Quality of technical approach (40%),
- Relevant past performance, including demonstrated knowledge of the STEM landscape in India through past research and/or experience with qualitative research methods using key informant interviews (20%),
- Team structure and management approach (20%), and
- Overall cost (20%).