

Job Description: Independent External Evaluator

Fixed Price Contract

Deadline to apply: March 9, 2026

The Marshall Legacy Institute (MLI) is a non-profit organization located in Arlington, VA. MLI's mission is to help war-torn countries recover from conflict by promoting hope, growth, and stability. MLI is seeking an Independent External Evaluator (IEE) to provide external evaluation in a project to protect vulnerable children held in detention with their mothers through a tailored peace education program in Iraq. The estimated start time of the contract is on/around April 2026 and will be completed on/around April 2027. This is a fixed price contract, and the IEE's role will be to act as a consultant to conduct a midterm and final evaluation, and complete the deliverables listed in section 4 below.

Due to the sensitive nature of the project and its funding source, selected applicants will be required to adhere to strict confidentiality and data protection requirements. Project details beyond those included in this call will be shared only with the shortlisted candidates.

1. Project Summary

Through the project, an early childhood development curriculum is implemented for children who are detained with their mothers in reformatory facilities and State Children's Homes through trained educators; social workers and detained mothers are trained in caregiving and child support strategies; and newly released mothers and their children receive support to successfully reintegrate into their communities. The project is implemented in federal Iraq and the Kurdistan Region of Iraq. The project commenced on September 30, 2023, and will terminate on February 28, 2027.

MLI is the lead organization of the project, working with one implementing partner on the ground in Iraq. MLI is headquartered in Arlington, VA, with staff on the ground in Sulaymaniyah, Iraq. MLI's primary role in the project includes monitoring and evaluation, administration, and reporting. MLI's lead implementing partner is the Global Jothoor Foundation (GJF), which has offices in Arlington, VA, as well as Erbil and Baghdad, Iraq.

2. Evaluation Purpose & Objectives

The purpose of the evaluation is to conduct external independent midterm and final assessments of the project. While the evaluator will work in coordination with MLI and its partner throughout the process, the evaluator will maintain full analytical independence over findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

The objectives of the external evaluation are the following:

- Assess the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of the project in relation to its goals and objectives;
- Identify best practices and lessons learned in designing strategies to ensure the positive impact of the early childhood curriculum, training, and reintegration support provided;
- Provide evidence-based recommendations to inform future programming and support mutual learning with partners.

3. Methodology

The external evaluation should be conducted as a collaborative process, with the consultant working in close coordination with key project staff, including the MLI Program Director, the GJF Managing Director in Iraq, and the GJF Program Officer. The evaluation will be reviewed and approved by MLI. The inception report, detailing the proposed methodology, study matrix, and work plan, shall be approved by MLI and the project's funding entity prior to the start of data collection and evaluation.

A mixed-methods approach, integrating both qualitative and quantitative data should be employed across all evaluation phases, including data collection, analysis, and the discussion of findings. Qualitative tools should capture the varied understandings, perspectives, and interpretations related to the study's key concepts.

Given the high level of vulnerability among the project's target population, the evaluation shall be designed and implemented in strict accordance with ethical research standards and the Do No Harm principle. The evaluator must integrate a gender-responsive and child-sensitive approach throughout the evaluation, including in the design of data collection tools, sampling strategies, consent procedures, data management, analysis, and reporting. The evaluator's technical proposal must clearly describe how protection risks will be identified and mitigated, including measures to safeguard participant privacy, ensure informed consent, prevent re-traumatization, and manage sensitive information. The privacy, safety, and dignity of all participants must be safeguarded at every stage of the evaluation process.

A non-disclosure agreement shall be signed by the parties to protect sensitive information. MLI will provide the consultant with access to relevant data and documentation, and GJF will assist the consultant with access to project sites and beneficiaries.

4. Deliverables

- Develop an **inception report** presenting the full and detailed evaluation methodology, including sampling design, data collection tools, survey and questionnaire tools, interview protocols, and the detailed methodology to data collection;
- Include a brief ethics and protection statement within the inception report outlining risk mitigation measures for data collection and management;
- Review existing data collection instruments and provide recommendations for improvements and/or alternative data collection methods;
- Oversee data collection for the midterm and final evaluation, including, but not limited to: interviewing program participants, facilitating focus group discussions, reviewing participant case records, developing data management procedures and tools, entering and cleaning data, and conducting analysis;
- Assess the internal evaluation process adopted to support the project implementation;
- Conduct assessment visits, as needed, to project locations in Iraq (anticipated: 1-2 visits per evaluation phase, subject to security conditions);
- Provide clear, evidence-based recommendations for project improvement following the midterm evaluation to MLI and the project partners;
- Produce and submit **midterm** and **final evaluation reports**;
- Collaborate closely with the MLI Program Director and project partners throughout the evaluation process.

The deliverables will be provided according to the following timeframe, subject to contract signature and approval of the inception report. The proposed timeline may be adjusted in consultation with MLI to account for access constraints, security considerations, or programmatic developments.

Inception report	On/around May 2026
Midterm evaluation	By September 1, 2026
Final evaluation	By April 30, 2027

5. Skills and experience

- At least 10 years of experience conducting monitoring and evaluation;
- Demonstrated experience designing and leading external, independent evaluations.
- Familiarity with international evaluation standards and approaches.

- Experience working on programs related to social justice, early childhood development, caregiving, and reintegration processes, particularly with vulnerable populations.
- Experience working in Iraq or the MENA region; or in fragile or conflict-affected settings.
- Proven experience applying Do No Harm, safeguarding, and ethical research standards.
- Experience using gender-responsive and child-sensitive evaluation approaches.
- Experience developing consent procedures and data protection protocols.
- Strong project management and coordination skills;
- Demonstrated ability to conduct rigorous quantitative and qualitative analysis using appropriate analytical methods;
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, with attention to detail;

6. Language requirements

For team applications, language requirements may be met collectively across team members.

- English (required)
- Arabic (required)
- Kurdish (preferred)

7. Compensation

The maximum available budget for this assignment is **USD 36,000**. This budget covers the consultant's fee for the assignment and any associated travel expenses to project locations in Iraq.

8. Application instructions

Interested applicants should submit a complete application package by **March 9, 2026**. Application packages should be sent by email to info@marshall-legacy.org and must include the following:

1. Curriculum Vitae (CV)

- Individual applicants: one CV.
- Team applications: CVs for each proposed team member, clearly indicating their role in the evaluation.

2. Technical Proposal

- Brief statement demonstrating understanding of the evaluation purpose and context.
- Proposed evaluation approach and methodology, including data collection and analysis methods.
- Indicative work plan and timeline for the midterm and final evaluations.
- Description of how protection, ethical considerations, and the Do No Harm principle will be integrated into the evaluation design and implementation.

3. Financial Proposal

- Fixed-price budget for the full assignment (not exceeding **USD 36,000**).
- Brief budget narrative explaining major cost components (e.g., professional fees, travel, and other anticipated expenses).

4. Sample of Previous Work

- One example of a previous evaluation report or similar analytical product.
- Samples may be redacted or anonymized to comply with confidentiality obligations.

5. Professional References

- Contact details for at least three (3) professional references.
- At least two (2) references must relate to prior monitoring and evaluation assignments.

Additional Information:

- All materials must be submitted in English.
- Applicants should submit their complete application package as a single email.

- Attachments should be in PDF format (Word documents are acceptable if necessary) and clearly labeled.
- The email subject line should read: **“External Evaluation Application - [Applicant Name or Team Name]”**.
- For questions or clarifications before the deadline, applicants may contact info@marshall-legacy.org.
- Applicants will receive confirmation of receipt upon submission.

Incomplete applications may not be considered. Only shortlisted candidates will be contacted.

9. Selection process

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria: submission of all requested documentation; relevant prior experience; proposed monitoring and evaluation methodology; references; and financial proposal.

The selection process will occur in two rounds:

- Round 1: Technical review of submitted applications.
- Round 2: Interviews with shortlisted applicants.

MLI may request additional interviews if deemed necessary.