

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)

English Annotation of Student Voice Recordings from Uttarakhand

Closing Date for Submission
<Oct 2nd, 2026>

I. INTRODUCTION

LEHS is a charitable organization in India whose purpose is to offer basic health and education for the poor. LEHS in furtherance of charitable objectives through its flagship programs, Wadhwani AI, which aims to build equitable and sustainable systems by making quality primary healthcare available and accessible to the underserved population, and to bring the benefits of modern AI technology to underserved populations by building and deploying AI solutions for social impact across domains such as healthcare, agriculture, governance, and education in India. LEHS aims to promote the integration of technologies, particularly in emerging domains like artificial intelligence and innovations into the Indian mainstream primary healthcare, education, and agriculture systems through a partnership with the State and National Government, apex institutions, international agencies, and private sector partners e.g. innovators, social enterprises and other ecosystem contributors in line with its stated objectives for the betterment of society particularly focusing on projects of national and social significance.

Wadhwani AI, a unit of LEHS, focuses on developing, deploying, and evaluating artificial intelligence solutions to address critical social challenges in India, particularly in domains such as healthcare, agriculture, and education.

LEHS aims to promote the integration of technologies, particularly in emerging domains like artificial intelligence and innovations into the Indian mainstream primary healthcare, education, and agriculture systems through a partnership with the State and National Government, apex institutions, international agencies, and private sector partners e.g. innovators, social enterprises and other ecosystem contributors in line with its stated objectives for the betterment of society particularly focusing on projects of national and social significance. In line with its mission to support projects of national and social significance, LEHS also undertakes rigorous monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) activities to assess the impact, usability, and scalability of different programmatic interventions.

II. BACKGROUND

A significant number of students in Indian public schools (Grades 1–8) lack foundational reading skills, impacting their academic progression across all subjects. This challenge is compounded by the absence of scalable, data-driven tools for assessing reading in diverse languages and for identifying specific proficiency levels to enable targeted interventions.

In response, Wadhwani AI has developed an AI-powered tool that **automates the assessment of foundational reading skills**. The tool leverages highly contextualized and

fine-tuned Automated Speech Recognition (ASR) models to analyze word and paragraph reading, generating key performance metrics and identifying specific reading miscues. Our solution also applies an intelligent layer to cohort students into reading levels, providing teachers with actionable insights for planning targeted classroom interventions.

To date, Wadhwani AI has assessed **over 9.8 million students in Gujarat, Rajasthan and Haryana** for the Gujarati and Hindi languages. We are now adapting the tool for English in Uttarakhand and to build a highly contextualized ASR model for English, we need human-generated transcripts of students' voice recordings collected from schools across Uttarakhand in partnership with the Uttarakhand Government.

III. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

To create timestamped human transcriptions of student voice recordings from Grades 1–8, covering reading sets of letters, words, and paragraphs in English collected from select schools in Uttarakhand. For Grades 1–8, each individual word or letter heard in the recording must be timestamped and transcribed verbatim, exactly as heard by the human annotator (with no corrections for grammar, spelling, or pronunciation), in accordance with the data annotation protocol(s) that will be shared by Wadhwani AI.

- Audio Files: Recordings of students reading English letters, words and paragraphs.
- Reference Text: The exact English text the student was instructed to read; this text will be used to identify miscues.

IV. SCOPE OF WORK

Summary of Activities

S.No	Activity Description	Timeline
1	Co-Working & Onboarding Phase	Nov 1st - Nov 30th
2	Data Annotation for ASR: Create timestamped human transcriptions of the collected data following Wadhwani AI's finalized data annotation protocol.	

1. Co-Working & Onboarding Phase

The selected partner shall participate in a structured co-working and onboarding phase during the first week following contract finalization. Participation in this phase is mandatory and is a prerequisite for commencing full-scale annotation.

The objective of this phase is to establish end-to-end operational alignment between Wadhwani AI and the partner prior to full-scale annotation, including a demonstration of the annotation tool by the partner, an overview of the [English annotation protocol](#), and alignment on quality assurance and review processes.

Full-scale annotation may commence only after formal readiness sign-off by Wadhwani AI. Failure to satisfactorily complete this phase may result in delays to full scale annotation or reconsideration of the engagement.

2. Data Annotation for ASR

Create timestamped human transcriptions of the student voice recordings, following Wadhwani AI's finalized data annotation protocol, including verbatim transcription, word-level and sub-lexical timestamping, and application of defined labels.

Total Number of Hours to be annotated: ~115 for English
Data Annotation Volume:

Item Type	English
Letter reading	~10 hours
Word reading	~5 hours
Paragraph reading	~100 hours
All item types	~115 hours

* can expect some buffer on the durations.

The selected partner is expected to provide:

Human Transcription

- Each individual student recording needs to be transcribed with timestamps for each individual character and/or word.
- **Crucial** **Note:**
 - **The transcription must reflect the speech exactly as heard (verbatim).** Annotators must NOT correct grammar, fix pronunciation, fill in intended words, or infer meaning.
- **Timestamping:**
 - For all item types, the transcription must include precise timestamps (e.g., HH:MM:SS:MS) for each character/word. Where words are broken down sub-lexically, timestamps must be provided for the sub-lexical portions.

Labels

- In addition to the speech transcript, wherever applicable, labels are to be added to denote the presence of Unintelligible Speech, Fillers and Pauses, Background Noise, Adult voice, etc.
- The definitive labels for English annotations will be provided by WIAI in the detailed **data annotation protocols**.
- For every batch delivered, the vendor must submit a report containing: reviewer ID and a structured diff between the AI-generated draft and the post-review (human-reviewed) version. Batches delivered without this report will be considered incomplete and returned without QC review.

System, Data & Model Governance

- **Agency Restrictions:** The partner is strictly prohibited from downloading, storing, or retaining Data on local systems. All annotation activities must be conducted exclusively via secure APIs within the LEHS-provided cloud environment, with no local data storage or retention permitted.
- **AI & Model Usage:** All transcription, Quality Control (QC), and AI models used by the partner must run locally within the partner's secure environment. Transmission, sharing, or processing of data through any third-party services or external APIs is strictly prohibited.
- **Usage Restrictions:** The partner shall not use Sample Data or derived outputs to train, fine-tune, or improve proprietary models. Models utilized for annotation must

be restricted exclusively to this project.

- **Compliance & Data Sovereignty:** All data must remain within the territorial jurisdiction of India at all times in strict compliance with the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act. The partner acknowledges that data contains PII and proprietary information, prohibiting its use for internal AI operations beyond this scope.

AI Tooling Disclosure

- Vendors must disclose whether any AI/ASR-assisted transcription tool is used at any stage of the annotation workflow.
- If AI-assisted, the vendor must specify the model/tool name and version, whether it is open-source, licensed, or proprietary, and confirm it is deployed locally within the partner's secure environment in compliance with the AI & Model Usage clause above.
- Vendor must confirm the model is used exclusively for this project and has not been fine-tuned or trained on any data outside this project's scope, per the Usage Restrictions clause.

Tool Demonstration & Selection Process for Shortlisted Agencies

- **Tool Walkthrough & Live Samples:** As part of the selection process, the shortlisted partners must meet with the project team, demonstrate their annotation interface, and successfully complete live sample annotations to verify workflow compatibility and speed prior to formal readiness sign-off.

Quality Review

- An internal system of quality checks should be in place for every transcription, both for the quality of transcription and for the quality of labels.
- In addition to the full human review required for every item, **the partner must conduct a second, independent quality check on a subset of reviewed items from each batch prior to delivery.** The reviewer conducting the super-check must be different from the annotator who performed the initial review for that item. The partner is responsible for selecting the subset for super-check and must ensure this tier is applied consistently across every batch delivered, not only during the onboarding or pilot phase.



- The transcripts should be delivered to Wadhvani AI in batches of ~15 hours each, and two rounds of quality check feedback might be given by Wadhvani AI on each batch. WIAI's review will include a review of transcriptions as well as a review of labels.
- Vendors must submit a minimum of 5–7 hours of annotated audio within the 3 days of contract commencement, ahead of full-scale delivery. This pilot batch will be used by Wadhvani AI to conduct early QC and identify any process, quality, or calibration issues before scaling volume. Continuation to full batch delivery is contingent on the pilot batch meeting quality expectations set out in the QC protocol.
- WIAI will utilize an acceptance sampling plan to assess the quality of the delivered batches. A statistically significant sample (sample size determined using the standard formula of estimating proportions) from each batch will be inspected. Should 5% or more of the reviewed sample fail to meet the required quality standards, WIAI reserves the right to reject the entire batch.

Data Policy

- Wadhvani AI will share anonymized data, stripped of PII, uploaded in a GCP/AWS bucket with the selected partner, from the data collected.
- The partner needs to have processes in place to prevent the download of data by individual annotators.
- The Partner is required to sign an undertaking guaranteeing that this voice data will **not be used for any proprietary purposes** outside of this contractual agreement.

Tool for Annotation

- The responsibility for providing or procuring a suitable annotation tool rests with the partner. The selected tool must fully support all required transcription and labeling functionalities outlined above, including accurate timestamping, word-level segmentation, and tag application in accordance with the defined annotation protocol.

Formatting & Delivery

Delivering transcriptions in a JSON format as specified by Wadhvani AI

```
□{  
  "id": <int>,
```

```

    "file_name": "<string>",           // audio file name, e.g.
en_4_2296_7442973.wav
    "annotator_name": "<string>",       // NEW: name of annotator
    "annotation_version": "<string>",   // NEW: "Reviewed" (default)
or "Reworked"
    "annotations": [
        {
            "start": "H:MM:SS.mmm",    // start timestamp
            "end": "H:MM:SS.mmm",      // end timestamp
            "Transcription": [
                "<string>"             // word transcription with
tags (as before)
            ]
        }
        // ... repeated per word, covering the full audio duration
    ]
}

```

□

Note: Transcriptions should **strictly** adhere to the terminology provided in this JSON format. **Entries will be rejected if not compliant.** Any non compliance and multiple change requests will lead to penalties.

Regional Representation

- Annotators should be native or fluent English speakers with the ability to accurately recognize influences of different Uttarakhand accents in English.

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- Annotators should be native or fluent English speakers with the ability to accurately recognize different **Uttarakhandi-influenced English** accents.

Sample reference text, which will be shared:

Letter	k,l,m,n,o
Word	fox, hen, lip, bat, cub, pet, run, pot, jam, milk, hand, nest, trip, plug, case
Paragraph	Waterfalls are natural wonders where rivers drop suddenly from a height, creating rushing water and mist. They form when rivers flow over layers of hard rock that resist erosion, while softer rock beneath wears away. Famous



waterfalls like Niagara and Angel Falls attract visitors worldwide. Animals and plants near waterfalls thrive in moist conditions, such as mosses, ferns, and fish that leap upstream. Waterfalls also provide hydroelectric power when engineers build dams nearby. Tourists enjoy their beauty, while scientists study erosion, flow speed, and surrounding ecosystems. Seasonal rainfall changes the size and strength of waterfalls, sometimes turning a trickle into a roaring cascade. Legends and folklore often surround waterfalls, showing their importance in culture and imagination. Standing near one, people can feel the force of nature, hear the thunder of falling water, and see rainbows forming in the spray.

Proposals should clearly outline the methodology, an overview of the data annotation tool, data policy, team expertise, and pricing.

The selected partner is expected to complete the transcription activity within 4 weeks and **submit the first batch of at least 5-7 hours within the first 3 days of finalisation of the contract.**

Payment eligibility will be linked to the successful submission of the entire scope of work. The partner may raise a single consolidated invoice after delivery. Additionally, the partner will be required to participate in weekly progress reviews to ensure timely completion and adherence to quality standards.

V. ANNOTATION METHODOLOGY AND QUALITY COMPLIANCE FOR AI FIRST VENDORS

Vendors utilizing AI-assisted workflows (including ASR pre-annotation, LLM drafting, or auto-suggestion tools) are subject to specific disclosure, audit, and quality gating standards. Vendors must comply with the following mandatory requirements:

- **Mandatory Disclosure of Methodology:** Vendors must explicitly declare, prior to contract award, whether any AI/ASR pre-annotation, LLM-assisted drafting/transcription, or auto-suggestion tools will be used at any point in the annotation pipeline. Vendors must clearly detail where human review occurs relative to AI output (e.g., blind human transcription vs. human review of AI draft). Non-disclosure of AI-assisted methods discovered post-award constitutes a material breach of contract.

- **Binding Verbatim Compliance:** Transcriptions must strictly follow the verbatim rubric that will be shared with the agency (preserving disfluencies, false starts, self-corrections, non-standard or dialectal pronunciations, and code-mixing without normalization). The vendor's Quality Control (QC) sign-off must certify compliance against this binding annex specifically, rather than a generic accuracy baseline.
- **Rejection Rates & Remediation:** AI-assisted discount workflow payments are tied directly to category-level QC pass rates rather than raw delivery volume. Batches failing category-specific thresholds will be returned for re-annotation strictly at the vendor's expense. A maximum of **3** re-annotation attempts will be permitted before Wadhvani AI may terminate the SOW for that specific batch.
- **Audit Access:** Wadhvani AI retains full rights to audit raw audio-to-transcript mappings, tool-exposure logs, and annotator-level metadata for any delivered batch, on demand, throughout the contract term and for **6** months post-contract completion.

Annotation Workflow Requirements for AI first Agencies

Vendors must execute and document annotation delivery through the following five-step pipeline. Each step's outputs, listed below, **are mandatory deliverables** and must accompany every batch handover.

1. Step 1: AI-Assisted Draft

Vendor may use AI/ASR-assisted tooling of their choice to generate an initial draft transcript.

2. Step 2: Full Human Review

Every item must be reviewed by a human annotator against the source audio prior to delivery. This review is mandatory for 100% of items in each batch, with no exceptions.

3. Step 3: Super-Check on Subset

A subset of reviewed items, to be selected by the vendor, undergoes a second, independent quality check by a reviewer separate from the Step 2 reviewer.

4. Step 4: Handover

Vendor delivers the final annotated JSON for the full batch, along with the batch report specified below.



VI. TIMELINE AND ROUNDS

S.No	Activity	Date
1	Release of the Request for Proposal (RFP)	Sep 22nd
2	Q&A and Clarifications	Sep 28th, 2026
3	Last date for submission of the complete proposal	Oct 2nd, 2026
4	Meeting with Shortlisted Agencies	Oct 13th-15th, 2026

VII. REQUIRED DELIVERABLES

The selected partner will be responsible for delivering the following within the agreed project timelines and quality standards:

- **JSON files of transcriptions of English recordings**
- **Each recording to have a separate JSON file, format as specified by Wadhvani AI**

VIII. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Your proposal must include:

1. Technical Proposal

- o Understanding of scope and deliverables
 - o Process and tools proposed to be used for the task
 - o Team composition and qualifications
 - o Quality assurance mechanisms
 - o Data Policy
 - o Annotation of the Sample Audios
- Sample 1** - [link](#)
Sample 2 - [link](#)
Sample 3 - [Link](#)
Sample 4 - [Link](#)
Sample 5 - [Link](#)
Sample 6 - [Link](#)
Sample 7 - [Link](#)

2. Financial Proposal

- o Detailed cost breakdown

- o Schedule of Payments Linked to Milestones Achieved
- o Applicable taxes and contingencies

3. Organizational Profile

- o Relevant project experience
- o Sample of similar work

Criteria for Application

Applicants must meet the following criteria.

- **Mandatory:** Demonstrated team capacity to provide transcriptions in English, demonstrable quality check process
- **Preferred:** Prior experience in transcribing English student speech.

Submission Details

- All proposals to this RFP must be received no later than **<Oct 2nd 2026>**. The proposal should be submitted only through e-mail in PDF format addressed to The Procurement Team at the below-given e-mail id: rfp.lehs@wadhwaniai.org. The email's subject line must contain the reference number and title of the RFP: **English Transcriptions of Student Voice Recordings of Reading - Uttarakhand (Name of the partner)**.
- Any proposals received by Wadhvani-AI after the deadline for submission of proposals prescribed in the timeline of this document are liable to be rejected.

IX. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

Criteria	Weightage
Understanding the scope	5%
Technical soundness of approach/methodology (including internal QC and tool being used) as well as samples received	35%
Data Quality Assurance	10%
Work plan and staffing	15%
Credentials of the organization in transcribing in the English language, including phonetic miscues.	25%
Credentials of the proposed team	10%
Technical Total	100%

Only participants in the RFP qualifying on the technical evaluation will be eligible for the financial evaluation. Financial proposals will be evaluated on criteria including total cost, cost breakdown, cost reasonableness, cost-effectiveness, payment terms, and financial stability of the participating organization. Also, the participants should show a demonstrated compliance with the provisions of the Digital Personal Data Protection (DPDP) Act, 2023, ensuring responsible collection, storage, and use of the students' personal data.

X. MANDATORY ENCLOSURE

Please submit the following as enclosures or attachments with your quotation. Bidders must provide all the information requested above in section VIII. Quotations that do not provide the required information and certificates, or do not follow the submission requirements, may not be reviewed.

- Company Profile, testimonials, work completion reports, purchase orders, and reference (NGOs).
- NGOs need to provide a valid CSR-1 issued in favor of the NGO by the MCA.
- GST registration certificate.
- PAN & TAN registration.
- Audited Financials for the last three years.
- Income Tax Return for the last three years.
- Cancelled cheque.
- Copy of registration documents/certificate and the most recent renewal as a legal entity.
- Preferably a Private Ltd company and has sound business records.
- Authorized signatory letter.
- Conflict of interest declaration.
- Contact person details.
- Memorandum of Association & Articles of Association (or Trust Deed / Bye-laws as applicable).
- List of Governing Body Members/Board Members of the organization.
- 12A and 80G Registration Certificates and Revalidation Document.

- PF, ESI, and Professional Tax Registration Certificates (if applicable).
- Finance Policy, HR Policy, Anti-Sexual Harassment Policy, Procurement Policy, and any other relevant internal policies.
- List of Pending Litigation/Cases against the Entity (if any).
- Latest TDS Return filed (Form 26Q and 24Q).
- GSTR filings for the last 3 returns (if applicable).
- Sample Audited Utilization Certificate (UC) submitted to any donor for CSR Funding.
- Audit Report in Form 10B/BB for the last 3 years.
- Foreign Contribution (FC) Audited Financials for the last 3 years (if applicable).
- FCRA Returns (FC-4) for the last 3 years (if applicable).
- AI Tool disclosure details

Note: Only shortlisted partners will be contacted for presentations or negotiations. If you do not hear from us within two weeks of submission, consider your proposal not selected. LEHS reserves the right to reject any or all proposals and to negotiate terms and conditions with the chosen partner.