Cluster Library Project
Ratnagiri & Palghar - Maharashtra

Outcome Evaluation (2027 – 2029)
Round 1 Assessment (2027)

Scope of Work for

External Agency Hiring

1. Organization Overviews

Founded in 2000 on the belief that World Change Starts with Educated Children®, Room to Read develops children's foundational literacy skills, as well as life skills that promote gender equality. As a leading implementer, Room to Read nurtures these essential skills in children by training and coaching educators, creating quality learning materials and spaces, and strengthening education systems – all while honoring the dignity of every child. We develop and deliver evidence-based materials and approaches directly and with partners. We are a valuable partner of choice for government, other system and program partners as well as investors focused on education. Committed to accelerating learning outcomes for more children, more quickly, Room to Read has benefited children across 29 countries, with more than 17 million children actively benefiting from our programming in 2025 alone. By the end of 2027, we aim to double the number of children and communities we support each year. Room to Read envisions a world free from illiteracy and gender inequality, where all children have room to read, learn and grow. Visit us at www.roomtoread.org.

Room to Read India was established in 2003 and has benefited more than 20 million children. It currently working directly with 12 state governments (Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi NCR, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Telangana, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh) to support young children unlock their full potential through education.

2. Project Background

In 2025, Room to Read India launched its cluster library program in Ratnagiri and Palghar districts[1] of Maharashtra, to promote children's habit of reading, supported by Citibank. Cluster library model is an innovative approach to address the scarcity of children's books at the school level, by establishing cluster libraries in partnership with the government. The intervention includes establishing a library in a school within a cluster (defined as cluster library) and school reading corners in other schools in the same cluster. The cluster holds a large variety of age- and grade-appropriate children's books. These books are used by the children in the (i) school having the cluster library, and (ii) other schools with school reading corners in the same cluster. Books are made available to these schools from the cluster library school within a cluster through a monthly book rotation process.

The cluster library project in Ratnagiri and Palghar districts of Maharashtra started with the notion that all the children from grades 1 to 5 in all 4,305 government primary schools of Ratnagiri (2,238 schools) and Palghar (2,067 schools) get exposed to an environment conducive for reading. This includes availability of age and reading level appropriate quality reading materials, access to dedicated reading space, and exposure to reading activities.
The overall program goal is to develop the habit of reading[2] among all primary grade government school children in the Ratnagiri and Palghar districts through system strengthening efforts. The program is built on four interconnected pillars that together create a school-based reading ecosystem across all supported clusters:

- **Curriculum & Content —** library books, manuals, registers, posters, and guidelines co-developed with the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT), District Institute of Education and Training (DIET) and relevant stakeholders.
- **Educator Training & Coaching —** capacity building of teachers, DIET officials, Master Trainers/Key Resource Persons (KRPs), Kendra Pramukhs (Cluster Heads), and government monitoring cadres.
- **Delivery Structure —** functional libraries, dedicated weekly library period where structured reading activities and book check in check out take place for each primary grade, joint monitoring visits, and district/block review meetings.

[1] The project geography covers 17 blocks — 9 in Ratnagiri (Mandangad, Dapoli, Khed, Chiplun, Guhagar, Ratnagiri (HQ), Sangameshwar, Lanja, and Rajapur) and 8 in Palghar (Talasari, Dahanu, Jawhar, Mokhada, Vikramgad, Palghar (HQ), Wada, and Vasai) — covering 4,305 government schools and reaching approximately 1,50,920 children in grades 1–5.

[2] Room to Read defines a habit of reading as reading that is done voluntarily and frequently. Children with a habit of reading read inside and outside of school during assigned reading times and during their free time.

- **Research & Insights —** process documentation, data-driven review, and independent third-party assessments.

3. Purpose of the RFP

This Request for Proposal (RFP) invites qualified agencies to submit proposals for providing data collection services for Room to Read's Habit of Reading Outcome Evaluation.

- Room to Read India will conduct a multi-year outcome evaluation (2027 - 2029) to assess children's reading habits of grades 3 and 5. Data will be collected from a sample of schools and will include information on children's Habit of Reading outcomes, as well as school- and teacher-level background characteristics.
- Data will be collected in two rounds: Round 1 in February 2027 during the early stages of cluster library implementation, and Round 2 in February 2029 when the program has reached a more mature stage of implementation.
- The purpose of this RFP is to engage a qualified agency to conduct data collection for Round 1 of the Habit of Reading Outcome Evaluation, scheduled for February 2027.

4. Study Objective

The broad objectives of the Round 1 Assessment are:

1. **Implementation Fidelity and Outputs:** Assess the availability and utilization of library resources, as well as the overall functionality of the Cluster Library Model during the implementation period and examine changes over time.
2. **Program Outcome:** Assess children's reading habits during the implementation period and examine changes over time.
3. **Contributing Factors:** Identify school-, teacher-, child-, and other program-specific factors that influence the development of children's reading habits.

5. Study Design

This section describes the study methodology, sampling, and various survey instruments to be used to carry out the study.

5.1 Methodology

The study will follow a repeated cross-sectional design and employ a quantitative research approach. Data will be collected using the SurveyCTO platform from school headteachers, teacher responsible for library activities in the school, and children from Grades 3, and 5.

5.2 Sampling

The proposed child sample size has been calculated using standard assumptions, including a 95% confidence level, a 5% margin of error, a 1% non-response rate and design effect of 1.5 using the finite population correction method. Based on these assumptions, the proposed sample size for the study is approximately 1,200 children (590 from Ratnagiri and 610 from Palghar), drawn from 120 schools (59 in Ratnagiri and 61 in Palghar).

Schools will be selected from 9 of the 17 project blocks (5 of the 9 blocks in Ratnagiri and 4 of the 8 blocks in Palghar). Probability Proportional to Size (PPS) sampling will be used to determine the number of schools selected from each block based on the total number of project schools, resulting in a sample of 120 schools.

In each sampled school, five children from each grade 3 and 5 will be randomly selected on the day of assessment, resulting in 10 children per school and a total sample of 1,200 children.

Table 1: Sample Distribution

District	Block	Sampled Schools	Head Teachers (For school Background)	Teachers* (For Library Functionality)	Children (10 per school; 5 children grade)
Palghar	Dahanu	20	20	40	200
Palghar	Jawhar	10	10	20	100
Palghar	Palghar	18	18	36	180
Palghar	Wada	13	13	26	130
Palghar total	**4 blocks**	**61**	**61**	**122**	**610**
Ratnagiri	Dapoli	10	10	20	100
Ratnagiri	Khed	13	13	26	130
Ratnagiri	Lanja	9	9	18	90
Ratnagiri	Ratnagiri	13	13	26	130
Ratnagiri	Sangmeshwar	14	14	28	140
Ratnagiri total	**5 blocks**	**59**	**59**	**118**	**590**
Grand Total	**9 blocks**	**120**	**120**	**240**	**1200**

* The minimum number of teachers could be 120 (same teachers for grade 3 and 5), and the maximum could be 240 (separate teachers for grade 3 and 5) in each school.

5.3 Study Tools

There will be three tools used to carry out the study:

i. ***School Background Tool:*** Collect information on school facilities and infrastructure, school environment, enrolment and attendance of grades 3 & 5, and condition of the cluster library and school reading corners.

ii. ***Library Functionality Tool:*** Collect information on the utilization of cluster libraries and school reading corners, availability of room to read's learning materials etc.

iii. ***Children's Habit of Reading Assessment:*** The tool will be administered to children selected from Grades 3, and 5 and collects information on Child Background (age, gender, home language, economic status), Habit of Reading including: (a) reading behaviour (frequency, title familiarity, library use) and (b) joy of reading; and (c) reading motivation (covering intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and self-efficacy in reading).

Table 2: Details of the study tools

Tool	Respondent	Estimated administration	Sample
School Background	School Headmaster	25-30 mins	120

Library Functionality	Library Point teacher from the school	10-15 mins	240*
Children's Habit of Reading Assessment	Children from both Grades 3, and 5.	20-25 mins	1200 (590 from Ratnagiri and 610 from Palghar)

* The minimum number of teachers could be 120 (same teachers for grade 3 and 5), and the maximum could be 240 (separate teachers for grade 3 and 5) in each school.

6. Role of the Agency

The study will take place between **Jan 2027 to Mar 2027**. The agency is required to undertake the following activities timely:

6.1 Tool Translation

The agency will be responsible for translating the assessment tools from English to Marathi, preparing bilingual (English-Marathi) versions where required, integrating Marathi translations into the SurveyCTO programming files, and thoroughly testing the tools before training and data collection. All translations will be reviewed and validated by the Room to Read program team before finalization.

6.2 Selection of the Data Collectors

The agency will recruit experienced data collectors and supervisors, requiring a minimum of a graduate degree. Data collectors should have at least 3-4 years of relevant experience in conducting surveys, while supervisors should have a minimum of 4-5 years of experience. **Proficiency in Marathi is mandatory, and familiarity with the local language or dialect is highly preferred**. Additionally, the agency is required to train about 10–20% more data collectors than the number ultimately needed for fieldwork. This will allow for a competitive selection process to ensure only the most competent data collectors are engaged in the main data collection, and to maintain a pool of trained back-ups in case of attrition or unforeseen circumstances.

6.3 Training

There will be **five days** of in-person training in Ratnagiri or Palghar, which will include two days of field practice with the study tools. The agency will be responsible for conducting the training, with members from Room to Read will also be present throughout the training. The agency will manage all logistical arrangements for the training of data collectors.

During the training, data collectors will be trained in the administration of the study tools (as mentioned in Table 2). Throughout the data collection process, the data collectors must be sensitive to children and strictly adhere to Room to Read's child protection protocols. Data collectors are advised to take time to help the children feel at ease before beginning the assessment, as primary grade children are very young and may feel intimidated by external assessors. The agency should consider these factors when selecting and training data collectors and supervisors. Furthermore, all trainees will be required to sign an agreement to comply with the Room to Read's Child Protection Policy.

6.4 Data Collection

The agency will be expected to plan all logistics support required for data collection and ensure that the data collection team arrives at school before the scheduled time. It is preferred that the survey firm provides an adequate number of tablets for use during training and data collection. The agency will collect data from the suggested sample as mentioned in Table 1.

6.5 Data Quality Measures

The agency will be responsible for monitoring the quality of data being collected and cleaning up any inconsistency found in the data. Agency should appoint appropriate number of supervisors who will be responsible for data quality. This includes coordination with school point person to secure necessary support for data collection for each site; monitor data collection; conduct data quality checks; provide

necessary on-field technical support to the data collectors during data collection etc. During the training, the performance and selection of data collectors and supervisors will be based on (a) participation and engagement during the training; (b) Inter-Rater Reliability (IRR) assessments; and (c) observations from the field practice. The final selection of data collectors and supervisors will be mutually decided among the agency technical team and Room to Read's technical team. After the training, supervisors and data collectors will be evaluated based on their understanding of the study and their ability to correctly interpret and record data. Agency must conduct at least 20% periodic spot checks and back checks to ensure accuracy and consistency throughout the data collection period. The agency will monitor the data coming in daily to identify any data entry errors or other issues and promptly address them. In case of any inconsistencies, supervisors are expected to take corrective actions, in consultation with Room to Read. Additionally, the agency must: (a) cooperate with Room to Read's monitoring officers during the data collection phase, and (b) work with the country monitoring team to cross-verify 100% of the data before submitting it to Room to Read's country office. Additionally, all assessments/interviews completed below the minimum expected duration must be immediately flagged for quality review.

7. Role of Room to Read

- Room to Read will provide all the relevant documents to undertake the study, such as, program document, permission letters, parental consent forms, list of sampled schools, copy of Room to Read's Child Protection Policy, etc.
- Room to Read will provide the digitized tools. The agency will be given restricted access to SurveyCTO to conduct the study.
- The technical study members from Room to Read will support the agency in orienting the data collectors on data collection during the training.
- In addition to agency's supervisors, Room to Read will collaborate and participate in the Data Verification/Data Quality Measurement process.

8. Requirements and Evaluation Criteria for Selecting the Agency

8.1 Round 1: Evaluation of Technical Proposals

- The agency should have at least **5 years** of experience in the field of education. Experience in foundational literacy assessments will be preferred.
- Technical proposals should not be more than **10-12 pages**. The technical proposals must be submitted as per the prescribed format in Annex A below.
- **Individual technical proposals will not be accepted** for this study.

- **The technical proposals will be evaluated based on the following (but not limited to)**: (a) experience in Education field/similar domain and conducting similar studies; (b) suggested study team, including data collectors, supervisors, other technical members; along with their qualification and experience; (c) understanding of the scope of work; (d) training and data collection plan; (e) process and steps of data quality assurance, including data quality measures taken during the trainings for selection of the data collectors, data collection monitoring, troubleshooting mechanisms etc; (f) timelines of sub-activities as per main activities listed in Table 4 below. The details of the technical evaluation criteria are given below (Table 3).

Table 3: Technical evaluation criteria for shortlisting the proposals

S No.	Evaluation Indicators	Scoring
1.	Experience in education field/similar domain and conducting similar studies	25
2.	Study team qualification and experience	15
3.	Understanding of the scope of work	25
4.	Training and data collection plan	10
5.	Process and steps of data quality assurance	15
6.	Timelines of the activities	10

Table 3: Technical evaluation criteria for shortlisting the proposals	
TOTAL SCORE	**100**

- Agencies scoring **at least 75 out of 100 marks** on the technical proposal will be shortlisted for Round 2 (Technical Presentation).

8.2 Round 2: Technical Presentation

Shortlisted agencies will be invited to deliver a technical presentation (in-person or virtual). Each agency will be allotted 45 minutes:

- 30 minutes for presentation
- 15 minutes for Q&A

Round 2 is intended to gain a better understanding of the agency's proposed approach, including training and data collection plan, data quality assurance measures, experience with digital data collection, and team composition, as well as to clarify any points identified during the proposal review. These parameters are aligned with the criteria used for assessing technical proposals. Agencies scoring **at least 75% in the technical presentation (Round 2) will be shortlisted for the next stage (final round of selection).**

9. Confidentiality and Ethics

During the data collection, the data collectors are expected to be sensitive to children and strictly adhere to Room to Read's Child Protection Protocols. It is suggested that data collectors take time to make the children comfortable before administering the assessment tool. Room to Read will minimize the collection of Personally Identifiable Information (PII) and take appropriate measures to anonymize data.

4. Key Deliverables and Timelines for Agency

Table 4: Key Deliverables and Timelines for Agency			
Deliverable	**Description**	**Estimated Timeline**	**Payment Tranches (%)**
1	**Submission of Inception Report**, including (not limited to): Agency's understanding of the study includes study objectives, field activities and data collection timelines, training plans, etc. Detailed work plan for all the activities as prescribed in the Scope of Work Data quality assurance process List of key people (data collectors, supervisors, central team members and their roles etc.) who will be engaged with the study	By 1st week of Jan'27	20%
2	**Training and Launch of Data Collection** as prescribed in Scope of Work, including: Completion of training as prescribed in the Scope of Work Detailed field plan Duly signed Child Protection Policy by all the field staff	By 3rd week of Jan'27	30%
3	**Completion of Data Collection** Daily field work update Field work completion report Raw data (CSV and Stata format downloaded from the SurveyCTO)	By 2nd week of Feb'27	30%
4	**Final Data and Data Quality Monitoring Report** including: Clean data Data quality monitoring report	By 4th week of Feb'27	20%

Annex A
Technical Proposal Template

Technical Proposal	
Content (Maximum page length or range)	**Details**
Organization Details (1 page max.)	• Organization overview, including management structure. • Summary of incorporation/legal status.
Agency's Understanding (1-2 pages max.)	Brief narrative outlining the Agency's understanding of the proposed activities.

Relevant Experience
(2 pages max.)
	Summary of relevant project experience focused on the following:
	• Experience conducting similar assessments/studies.
	  ○ Recruitment and supervision of well-qualified data collectors.
	  ○ Enumerator training design and delivery.
	• Experience tablet-based data collection using SurveyCTO.
	  ○ Securing access to schools for data collection in a timely and appropriate manner; and
	  ○ Data Management & Cleaning
	Project Summaries for up to 5 most relevant assignments in the last 3 years should be included at the end of this section.

Comments and Suggestions (1-page max.)	List of observations or suggestions (if any) on the RFP and scope of work.

Technical Approach and Workplan (3-4 pages max.)	Description of the Approach, Methodology, and Workplan proposed by the agency for successful execution of the activities listed in the RFP. More specifically:
	• Approach to collaborate with Room to Read on data collection planning and preparation.
	• Approach to fielding the data collection at the school level, while ensuring minimal disruption and maximum time and effort efficiency.
	  ○ Approach to working with school administration and children.
	  ○ Approach to recruiting and retaining sufficiently qualified data collectors.
	  ○ Approach to ensuring data quality, protection of data and PII and compliance with relevant respondent protection protocols.
	  ○ Approach to identifying, communicating, and addressing barriers during planning and implementation of data collection.
	  ○ Anticipated challenges for the above activities.
	  ○ Risk mitigation strategies for the above activities.
	  ○ A week-wise Gantt Chart summarizing the project plan with deliverables should be included at the end of this section

Project Staffing and Management Plan (1-2 pages max.)	Identify the project staffing plan and structure, essential staffing, and the percentage of the time each will spend on the activities listed in RFP: • Agencies should describe the proposed team structure in this section. • Agencies should clearly specify their proposed training and data collection staffing plan, including oversight/supervisory structures. • Agencies should include summary profiles of all candidates considered essential in this section. • Please include a resume for everyone considered essential for the successful implementation of this contract in the annex as per the specified format.

Annex B
Financial Proposal Template

Financial Proposal	
Budget Narrative	Narrative summary of the proposed budget including discussion and rationale for costing approach, major expenses, risks, and other considerations related to the budget.
Financial Proposal Details	The proposed budget and associated narrative will have sufficient detail to allow for a detailed evaluation of the costs proposed, **using the Budget Template attached along with the RFP.** Budgets should be submitted in Indian Rupees. Room to Read reserves the right to request any additional information to support the proposed budget.

<NAME OF FIRM>

Agency should carefully review this template and add any line items they feel necessary to complete the activities outlined in the RFP.

Cost Heads and Items	**Unit Cost**	**Persons/ Teams/ Units**	**Days**	**Total Units**	**Cost in INR**
***Labor* (*illustrative positions, please update according to your proposed plan*)**					
Survey Manager/Trainer	*<Insert daily rate>*				
Field Coordinator/Trainer	*<Insert daily rate>*				
Data Manager	*<Insert daily rate>*				
Supervisors - Training + Field Work	*<Insert daily rate>*				
Data Collectors - Training + Field Work	*<Insert daily rate>*				
Programmer	*<Insert daily rate>*				
Analyst and Report Writer	*<Insert daily rate>*				
Other…	*<Insert daily rate>*				
Other…	*<Insert daily rate>*				
Subtotal Labor					
Travel and Other Direct Costs					
Training					
Training Materials & Printing of Tools/Manuals (per person)					
Training Facility Rental (rooms/day)					
Transportation to/from training facility, if required (person/day)					
Accommodation, if required for out of town enumerators (persons/day)					
Lunch & Coffee Breaks during Field Staff Training (person/day)					
Document Translations - for training purposes only (if any)					
Other…					
Other…					
Subtotal Training					

Survey Administration					
Field Staff Equipment (ID cards, etc; per person)					
Transportation for team (team/day)					
Meal Allowance for Supervisors and Data Collectors (per person per day)					
Accommodation for Supervisors and Data Collectors (per person per day)					
Communications Allowance (per person)					
Meal Allowance for Field Management (per person per day)					
Accommodation for Field Management (per person per day)					
Transportation for Field Management (per car per day)					
Tablet rental (with GPS and WiFi capability)					
Document Translations - for survey administration purposes only (if any)					
Other…					
Other…					
Subtotal Survey Administration					
TOTAL COST (not including GST)					
GST					
TOTAL COST (including GST)					

HOW TO APPLY
Proposals are invited from the interested agency for the above assignment and the last date for receiving the proposal is **9th Dec 2026** at **procurement.india@roomtoread.org** **[do not copy anyone from RtR]**

Kindly submit two separate emails with the following subject lines:

o **EMAIL (1): TECHNICAL PROPOSAL** – CLP Outcome Evaluation – Round 1 (2027).
o **EMAIL (2): FINANCIAL PROPOSAL** – CLP Outcome Evaluation – Round 1 (2027).

Submission terms:

- All agencies are advised to thoroughly review the SoW ToR before applying.
- Technical and Financial proposals are to be shared in two different emails separately and not in a single email **(mandatory)**
- Incomplete applications or deviations from the prescribed process will result in automatic rejection.
- Proposals received after the prescribed deadline will not be considered.
- Only shortlisted agencies will be contacted and may be requested for face-to-face/online interaction/presentation.

For queries, please contact:
Vinod Kandwal
Vinod.Kandwal@roomtoread.org