

## Request for Proposal for Consulting Services

**NATURE of SERVICES:** Risk Communications

**CONTRACTING ENTITY:** Helen Keller International

Helen Keller International is a global health organization dedicated to eliminating preventable vision loss, malnutrition and diseases of poverty. Co-founded by Helen Keller – and guided by her fierce optimism and belief in human potential – the organization delivers life-changing health and food security solutions to build resilience of vulnerable families where the need is great but access to care is limited. In the US, Africa, and Asia, Helen Keller’s proven, science-based programs empower people to create opportunities in their own lives and build lasting change.

**DURATION and TIMEFRAME**

May 1-June 30, for a total of 22 days. The level of effort (LOE) is calculated according to the designated tasks, noted below.

**PLACE of PERFORMANCE:** Flexible.

Vendor must be available to overlap with standard business hours in our Philippines office, on an as needed basis.

### BACKGROUND

Golden Rice (GR) is a variety of rice produced through genetic engineering to biosynthesize beta-carotene, a precursor of vitamin A, in the edible parts of rice. It is intended to produce a fortified food to be grown and consumed in areas with a shortage of dietary vitamin A and become an effective crop for targeting vitamin deficiency in rice consuming populations. In 2018, Canada and the United States approved golden rice for cultivation, with Health Canada and the US Food and Drug Administration declaring it safe for consumption. In 2019, it was approved for direct use as human food and animal feed or for processing in the Philippines.

Helen Keller International plans to conduct a study to evaluate the nutritional impact of GR in the Philippines. However, because GR is a genetically engineered crop, questions and concerns have been raised by various stakeholders. Helen Keller recognizes that people want and need clear answers to their questions about complex scientific issues related to GR. Helen Keller also recognizes that if key stakeholders at the national, provincial and local levels are well informed by the best and most up-to-date information about scientific or technical issues related to GR, they are in a better position to engage, exchange information, and communicate constructively about the study proposed to evaluate the nutritional impact of GR.

From October 2020 to January 2021, Helen Keller, in collaboration with an intern and colleagues from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health (JHSPH), (i) reviewed and synthesized the risk communication literature regarding Genetically Modified Foods (GMOs) in general and GR in particular; (ii) reviewed and synthesized the literature on stakeholder concerns related to GR already documented in the Philippines; (iii) identified and listed key questions and concerns related to the proposed nutritional impact evaluation study for GR; and (iv) reviewed, compiled and evaluated the content of answers provided for key stakeholder questions.

Helen Keller would like to build upon this initial work to produce “Message Maps” that are simple, factually stated, and consider the varying stakeholder perceptions, the communications landscape, Filipino culture and context. “Message Maps” are risk communication tools used to help organize complex information and make it easier to express current knowledge. The development process distills information into clear and easily understood messages

## TASKS & DELIVERABLES

Develop a risk communication toolkit that draws on already compiled stakeholder questions and answers related to GR and the study planned to evaluate its nutritional impact. The toolkit will include a set of answers to important stakeholder questions about Golden Rice and will be presented in a format called a “message map.” A message map is a science-based risk communication tool used to help organize complex information and make it easier for information to be shared.

The RCC will distill information relevant to Top Questions re Golden Rice into a series of layered messages, from basic to more complex. Messages — e.g., answers to questions — will be presented initially in a few bullets that convey key messages, ideally using the least number of words possible. These Message Maps will be compiled in a single document entitled, “Golden Rice: Simple Answers to Top Questions”, in the form of a few bullets and long answers. Messages shall be presented initially in no more than 3-5 short sentences and convey 3-5 key messages, ideally in the least number of words possible. The approach is based on surveys showing that lead or front-page media and broadcast stories usually convey only the soundbite: 3-5 messages usually in less than 9 seconds for broadcast media or 27 words for print. Each primary message normally has 3 to 5 supporting messages that can be used when and where appropriate to provide context for the issue being mapped.

The Risk Communications Consultant will work closely with the Helen Keller office in the Philippines, as well as the two co-Principal Investigators (PIs) for the Golden Rice nutritional evaluation study, and others as designated by the PIs. Details of the tasks required under this consultancy are outlined below:

1. Review key documents on Golden Rice, Philippine Stakeholders, and the planned nutrition evaluation study for GR.
2. Draft “Message Maps” for the 18-High Priority Questions and Answers for Golden Rice. Answers to each question will take the form of (i) a few bullet points, and (ii) a longer answer, and will consider the varying stakeholder perceptions.
3. Compile the answers to the 18-High Priority Questions a single document entitled. Messages shall be presented initially in no more than 3-5 short sentences and convey 3-5 key messages, ideally in the least number of words possible. Each primary message will have 3 to 5 supporting messages that can be used when and where appropriate to provide context.

**Deliverable:** A draft document entitled, “Golden Rice: Simple Answers to Top Questions” which compiles the message maps to the 18-High Priority Questions.

## REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS and EXPERIENCE

Bachelor’s degree, with preference given to those with a concentration in communications, anthropology, or sociology.

- Experience in preparing risk communications strategies and materials, including “message maps”.

- Excellent writing skills including the demonstrated ability to convey complex technical information in clear prose.
- Previous work and/or consulting experience working with a team and ability to work effectively across cultures, languages, and working styles.

### **SPECIFIC REQUESTS for INFORMATION**

Please describe the nature of your education and experience and why it is well suited to the nature of the work described above. In particular, please be sure to address the qualifications and experience listed above and comparable project work.

In addition, please provide:

- Your CV
- Sample work product
- Three references who may be contacted by Helen Keller Intl. These references should be clients or employers for whom you have provided similar services.
- Pricing/Price Sheet: a pricing list for the services that you/your company is interested and able to offer based on the activities listed above.

Please submit your proposal to [consultants.recruitment@hki.org](mailto:consultants.recruitment@hki.org) noting the title “Risk Communications Consultant” in the subject line.

### **EVALUATION and AWARD PROCESS**

This RFP is open to all persons or entities that are deemed capable of implementing the scope of work, with a solid record of integrity and business ethics.

The award will be made to the Seller representing the **best value** to the project and to Helen Keller. For the purpose of this RFP, price, delivery, technical and past performance are of equal importance for the purposes of evaluating and selecting the “best value” awardee.

**In the spirit of our founder and namesake,  
Helen Keller places diversity and partnership at the core of our work.**

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**We encourage small minority, women, or veteran-owned businesses to submit proposals.**