

Terms of Reference

Research Consultancy: Synthesis Report on Inclusive Early Warning Early Action for the “Last Mile”

Organizational context

The [Global Disaster Preparedness Center \(GDPC\)](#) is a joint initiative of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) and the American Red Cross. The GDPC aims to enhance disaster preparedness capacities across the global Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) Network through a service-oriented, demand-driven approach. Its core areas of focus include knowledge management, technical assistance, and research.

Background

The [GDPC Small Research Grants Program](#) supports disaster preparedness research in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), addressing global knowledge gaps by generating evidence from often overlooked and under-researched contexts. The program provides grants of up to \$10,000 to university-affiliated scholars for small-scale research projects on critical preparedness topics such as extreme heat, early warning early action (EWEA), urban resilience, and more.

In 2023, the program supported the global Early Warnings for All (EW4All) initiative, prioritizing research on the inclusivity and accessibility of early warning systems (EWS) for last-mile communities. Last-mile communities are defined as geographically and/or socially isolated, marginalized, or underserved groups that are the hardest to reach and often the last to benefit from services and assistance. GDPC funded 15 research projects across 14 countries, with local university-affiliated researchers conducting community-based studies to examine barriers to inclusivity, accessibility, and actionability of EWS. The research explored challenges faced by last-mile communities, as well as existing solutions and indigenous methods that enhance the effectiveness of early warning and early action. The studies covered diverse last-mile groups, including persons with disabilities, ethnic minorities, people living in extreme poverty, and isolated and hard-to-reach communities, among others. Final research deliverables from the Small Research Grants Program can be [accessed on GDPC website](#).

The purpose of the consultancy is to synthesize the findings from these studies into a report with recommendations to enhance EWS advocacy and programming for the “last mile”. The report is intended for humanitarian practitioners — particularly National Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies — and other organizations working in the early warning early action space.

Objectives

The consultancy will produce a meta-synthesis report on EWEA for last-mile communities, summarizing key findings and providing actionable recommendations. The report will be primarily based on the **15 final research papers** from the GDPC Small Research Grants Program and **supplemented by**

additional literature for a broader and more comprehensive understanding of the issue, including case studies. The final output will help inform advocacy efforts and guide future programming on improving accessibility and inclusivity of EWEA.

Scope of Work

The consultant will conduct a desk-based meta-synthesis, analyzing existing research to identify barriers, enablers, and solutions to make early warning systems (EWS) for last-mile communities more effective. The work will include:

- Analysis and synthesis of the 15 research reports from the GDPC Small Research Grants Program to key trends, commonalities, and context-specific variations.
- Targeted desk review of additional literature on last-mile early warning early action delivery to further develop and validate GDPC findings, fill gaps in the research, or contextualize findings within global best practices. The consultant will be responsible for identifying relevant literature and defining the scope in consultation with GDPC to ensure feasibility within the timeline and alignment with the report objectives.
- Development of a narrative report and executive summary presenting findings and practical, evidence-based recommendations for improving last-mile EWS inclusivity.

The consultant will **conduct only desk-based research**; primary data collection (e.g., interviews or surveys) is not required. This is a **remote opportunity** with no travel obligations, and applicants may be based anywhere.

Expected Outputs

The consultant is expected to deliver the following:

- **Inception Report:** An outline with a draft literature review methodology and proposed framework/structure for the final report.
- **Draft Report:** An initial version of the report for GDPC review and feedback.
- **Final Report:** A revised and finalized report incorporating GDPC feedback.
- **Executive Summary:** A condensed version of key findings and recommendations for external audiences.

Payment will be made upon successful completion and approval of all deliverables.

Timeframe

The consultancy is expected to run from May – June 2025, with an estimated level of effort of 16–20 days, covering literature scoping, research synthesis, report drafting, and revisions.

Activity	Estimated Duration
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Literature Scoping & Inception Report Preparation	3–4 days
Literature Review & Synthesis, including draft report drafting	10-12 days
Revision & Finalization	3–4 days

Qualifications

The GDPC seeks a research consultant or a research team with the following qualifications:

1. Proven experience in conducting research, including secondary research and synthesis, with a track record of writing reports for humanitarian or development organizations.
2. Technical expertise in disaster risk reduction (DRR) and preparedness, particularly in the area of Early Warning Early Action (EWEA).
3. Strong analytical skills, with the ability to process large volumes of information and present findings in an accessible manner.
4. Fluency (written and spoken) in English is required.
5. Excellent written communication skills and the ability to produce structured, high-quality reports.
6. Familiarity with the Red Cross and Red Crescent (RCRC) network is an asset, particularly an understanding of its role in EWEA.

Application and selection detail

Application materials:

Proposals must include the **following six items**. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

1. One-page summary of relevant experience that relates to the required qualifications
2. CV(s) of all professionals involved in the consultancy.
3. Brief work plan, detailing proposed literature review approach and expected completion schedule.
4. Financial proposal in USD
5. At least 2 examples of previous research reports or similar knowledge products where the applicant was the primary or sole author/researcher.
6. Professional references – Two or three references from previous clients.

Application procedure

Submit applications to gipc@redcross.org, with the subject line: "Synthesis Report on Last Mile EWEA." Only complete applications will be reviewed.

Application Deadline: March 26, 2025, 18:00 EDT