

# Lessons Learned from the Call for Proposals (CFP) Process - joint vision and hearing programme and AT provision for school-aged children

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## Executive summary

In November 2023, ATscale introduced a new country approach that is demand-based and bottom-up. The approach consists of two phases: 1) Expression of Interest and 2) Call for Proposals (CFP). The ATscale Secretariat started implementing the approach for a joint vision and hearing programme and AT provision for school-aged children in low- and middle-income countries. This report presents lessons learned from the CFP phase gathered through an online survey and focus group discussions with various stakeholders, including local and international NGOs, UN agencies, Organizations of Persons with Disabilities, and government officials directly or indirectly involved in submitting proposals.

37 respondents completed the online survey, and seven participated in the online focus group discussion. Key insights indicate that early and clear communication by ATscale was effective in reaching stakeholders, though innovative outreach to smaller local partners remains an area for improvement. The CFP process received generally positive feedback, with respondents appreciating the straightforward guidelines, fair scoring system and support from government focal points in proposal development. However, some participants noted challenges, such as the need for more capacity-building support for local organizations and expanded guidance on forming consortia. ATscale's in-country sessions were particularly valued, fostering collaboration and providing unique opportunities for engagement between partners and government.

Moving forward, recommendations from the participants focus on enhancing communication with smaller local partners, improving accessibility through digital submission platforms and continuing to refine support mechanisms for both applicants and government stakeholders. ATscale Secretariat will incorporate select recommendations in upcoming CFP rounds while evaluating the feasibility of the rest of the recommendations to optimize future processes.

## Background

The ATscale Board approved a new country approach that is demand-based and bottom-up, and the ATscale Secretariat started implementing it in November 2023. The approach includes two phases:

- Phase 1: Expression of Interest (EOI)
- Phase 2: Call for Proposals (CFP)

The ATscale Secretariat implemented the approach for an initiative for school-aged children's joint vision and hearing programme and AT provision in low- and middle-income countries from the regions of East and West Africa, North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. Phase 1, spanning from November 2023 to January 2024, sought interest from the governments of 48 eligible countries governments from the regions mentioned above for catalytic funding support to scale up the initiative in their countries. After selecting countries, the ATscale Secretariat collected lessons learned after the EOI phase.

Phase 2, from April to July 2024, was implemented to identify in-country coordinating partners in the selected countries to support their governments in implementing the programme. ATscale launched two CFPs focused on programme management, coordination, and support for the countries' governments for the concerned programme. The targeted countries were Ethiopia, Egypt, Jordan, Nigeria, Pakistan, the State of Palestine, the United Republic of Tanzania and Indonesia (also included mobility as a part of separate CFP). The proposal evaluation is in its final stages, and outcomes will be communicated at the upcoming Board meeting.

## Methods

With an objective to improve the CFP process, ATscale Secretariat embarked on collecting lessons learned from the process. Lessons learned were collected through three means: first, an internal group discussion with all ATscale Secretariat personnel involved in the CFP process. This was followed by the following data collection with:

1. Online survey
2. Online focus group discussion

Participation in the online survey and focus group discussion was voluntary and anonymous. Participants were informed that their participation would not impact their current or future relationship with ATscale.

The online survey was intended for potential implementing partners and other stakeholders, such as local non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), UN agencies, and civil society at the global, regional and national levels involved directly or indirectly in submitting proposals. The survey was also shared with the government focal points for information purposes - as they did not submit CFPs, we did not ask them to respond to the survey. The online survey was circulated to potential participants via email. It included questions on the overall CFP process (timeline, content, communication with ATscale), support from ATscale and

the government, challenges, and recommendations. Please refer to the questionnaire enclosed in Annex 1 for more details.

The online focus group discussion was intended for potential implementing partners (INGOs and UN agencies). INGOs and UN agency participants were mainly headquarters representatives. A few representatives from country offices also participated in the discussion. It focused on seeking their experiences and feedback related to the CFP dissemination process, evaluation criteria, engagement of regional and headquarters offices, government role in the process, co-financing requirements, galvanising interest among partners, challenges and recommendations. Please refer to the FGD guide enclosed in Annex 2 for more details.

The online survey was published in September 2024, and the online focus group discussion took place in October 2024. This paper summarises the findings of the survey and focus group discussion, and highlights recommendations for improving the CFP process further.

## Results

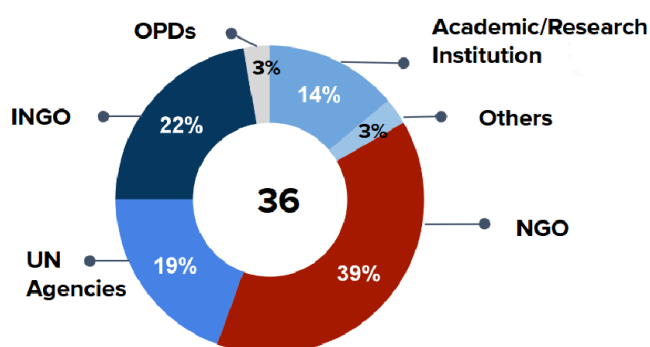
### i. Survey and focus group participants

A total of 37 participants completed the online survey. Most respondents represented local NGOs (39%), followed by INGOs (22%), UN agencies (19%), academic/research institutions (14%), OPDs (3%), and others (3%)<sup>1</sup>.

Interestingly, **11%** of the survey respondents were from organizations that did not submit proposals. A lack of direct partnerships with key ministries and insufficient budget allocation to the programme, were among the key reasons for not submitting a proposal.

A total of seven persons representing five different INGOs and UN agencies participated in the focus group discussion.

Composition of online survey respondents



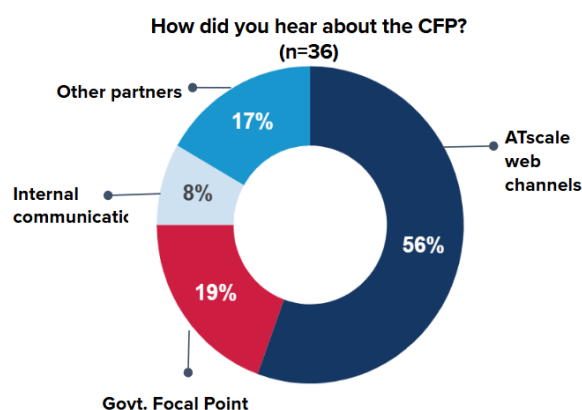
### ii. CFP dissemination

**Observations 1.** Effective and early communication; suggested identifying innovative ways to reach small local partners

About **95%** of the online survey respondents were satisfied or fully satisfied with ATscale communication regarding the CFP announcement.

Most respondents reported being informed of the CFP through ATscale web channels (email, UNGM, ATscale website, LinkedIn, GATE). **Government focal points** were the second most effective communication channel through which 19% of respondents were informed of the CFP. This may

<sup>1</sup> Other organizations - included participants from industry federation and professional associations



show a desirable outcome of the EOI phase, where government focal points become actively engaged in the process.

The focus group discussion confirmed the above outcomes. Participants unanimously highlighted “efficient CFP communication” and the “right platforms were used” to ensure all stakeholders were aware of the CFP. Further, EOI submission by the governments, the announcement of EOI selection, and the next steps ahead of the official launch of the CFP were described as a “unique” and “very positive” experience. This helped potential

implementing partners start conversations with government focal points and other partners in anticipation of and preparation for the CFP. Early communication also helped the government take ownership of the programmes in some countries.

It was also highlighted that several partners in the vision care sector have good networks and that information spreads quickly at the country level. However, the situation is different in the hearing care sector, with small local partners that are not necessarily known to government focal points and INGOs. Such local organizations, especially those active in rural areas, risk not accessing CFP information through existing communication channels. There is a need to identify innovative ways to reach such partners and ensure their participation in the CFP process.

## 1. Suggestions from the respondents:

**1.1** Encourage governments to increase their role in broadcasting information widely, especially to small local partners - **will be implemented by the ATscale secretariat**

**1.2** Use print media, including national newspapers and magazines, especially at the country level, to reach partners in rural areas - **ATscale secretariat to explore the feasibility**

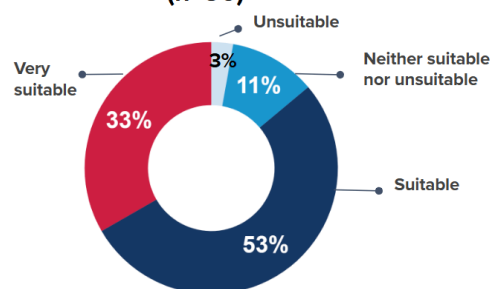
**1.3** Disseminate any CFP to professional associations at the headquarters and country levels for wider reach - **will be implemented by the ATscale secretariat (global headquarters)**

### iii. CFPs process (duration, mode of submission)

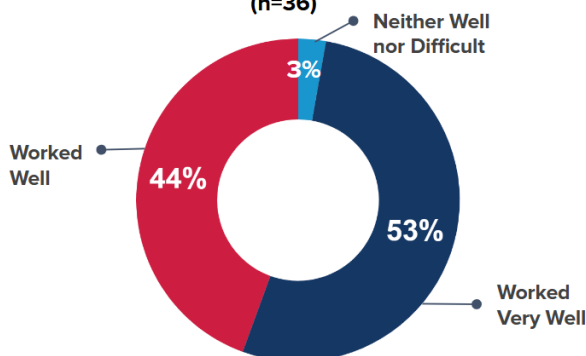
**Observations 2.** Overall satisfaction with the CFP process, longer submission period, and user-friendly digital submission platform suggested by some

Implementing partners were given three months to submit their proposals. About **86%** of survey respondents confirmed that this period was suitable or very suitable. However, the qualitative comments collected in the online survey revealed that some participants faced challenges meeting the deadline. A three-month period was insufficient for them due to the complexity and length of information to submit.

**How suitable was the 3 months duration to submit proposals? (n=36)**



**How well the proposal submission mode worked for you? (n=36)**



Although **97%** of respondents declared that the email submission mode worked well or very well, suggestions were made to use a digital platform for a smoother submission process and facilitate easier monitoring of the application status post-submission by the applicants.

## 2. Suggestions from the respondents:

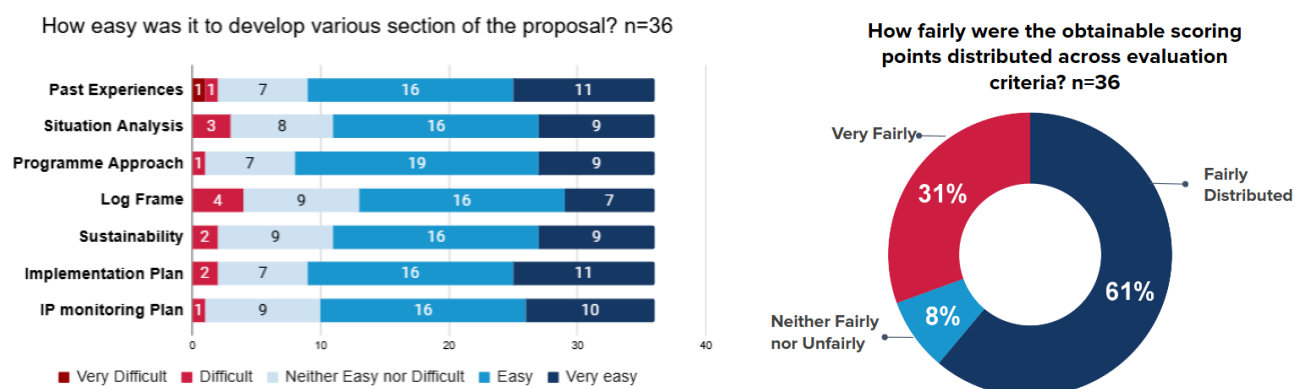
**2.1.** Implement a digital submission platform with automated submission confirmation and a tracking system for the applicants to monitor application status post-submission - **ATscale secretariat to explore the feasibility**

### iv. CFP content (submission guidelines on eligibility, scoring criteria and technical sections)

**Observation 3:** Clear submission guidelines around consortia helped build consortia; scores were fairly distributed and helped develop strong technical proposals; limited capacity of local organizations to develop technical proposals.

ATscale encouraged potential implementing partners to create a consortium and maximize the existing organizations' comparative advantages. The submission guidelines detailed the expectations of each section of the technical and financial proposal and their corresponding scoring criteria. It was clearly described that ATscale would sign the agreement with any consortium's lead

partner. About **92%** of respondents confirmed that CFP scoring was distributed fairly across the various sections. This was also confirmed by the focus group discussion, where participants described scoring across the proposal sections as having a ‘fair distribution.’ The participants from the focus group discussion highlighted that it helped them develop a strong technical proposal.



The submission guidelines were clear to all the respondents from the online survey: **clear (42%) or very clear (58%)**, which was also reinforced in the focus group discussion. In the survey qualitative feedback, a few respondents suggested giving more preference to local organizations over international organizations and providing more information about consortium arrangements.

The focus group discussion participants described that the ‘consortium approach’ played a critical role in bringing the organizations working in two different domains (vision and hearing together). This also facilitated discussions at the organizations’ headquarters, a ‘welcomed step’ for the integration needed within the sensory domains. Nonetheless, some participants reported that the consortium approach led to clashes between consortium members for resources; therefore, additional guidance from ATscale could improve this aspect further.

With the guidance provided in the CFP, **92%** of respondents reported that developing the technical proposal was easy or very easy. A few respondents found difficult or very difficult the development of the logical framework (11%) or the situational analysis (8%). This was attributed mainly to a lack of national assistive technology data and information about the quantitative targets expected from each country.

### 3. Suggestions from the respondents:

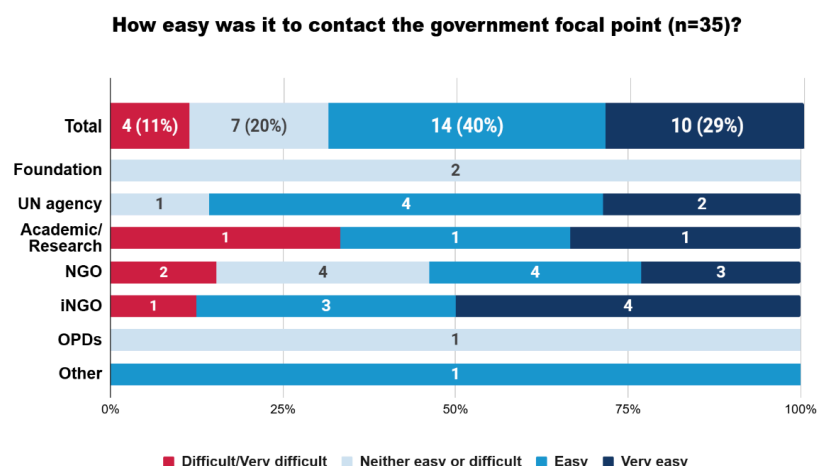
**3.1** Provide additional guidance on the composition of consortium partners, responsibility structures, rules, number of partners and maximum budget per consortium partner - **ATscale secretariat to explore the feasibility**

**3.2** Prefer local partners over international NGOs or other international partners in CFP evaluation scoring or overall selection criteria - **ATscale secretariat to explore the feasibility**

**3.3** Provide capacity-building support to local organizations in developing the technical proposal - **ATscale secretariat to explore the feasibility**

## v. Support from the government focal point

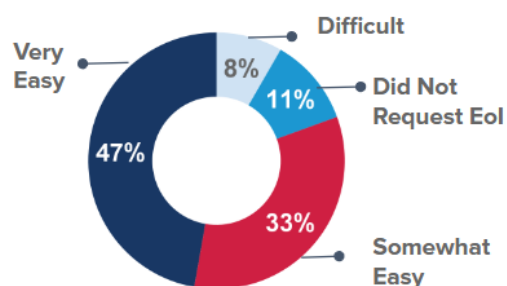
**Observation 4.** Government guidance was extremely helpful in proposal development; some challenges were encountered in reaching out to the government focal points, mainly by small local NGOs.



The proposal development process involved contacting the government focal point for strategic guidance and referring to the EOI submitted by the government. ATscale provided the contact details of the focal point to the potential applicant individually and based on their specific requests. Sixty-nine percent of the respondents declared it was easy or very easy to contact the government focal point. The chart above illustrates how this experience differed per type of organization.<sup>2</sup>

Some respondents faced more challenges than others in reaching out to the government focal points. UN agencies (86%) and INGOs (89%) reported it was easy or very easy, compared to NGOs (54%). About 35% of respondents, mainly small local NGOs, reported that reaching out to the government focal point was more challenging. In comparison, 65% of respondents (mainly from international NGOs and UN agencies) reported that reaching out to the government focal points was easy.

**How easy was it to align the proposal with the government's priorities as reflected in EOI? (n=36)**



Challenges were attributed to difficulties in accessing the focal point contacts and delays from the government in addressing any request for support and queries from applicants.

About **96%** of the respondents who received government guidance reported that it was extremely useful in drafting the proposal and setting targets. The focus group discussion also confirmed that government guidance played a 'significant role' in

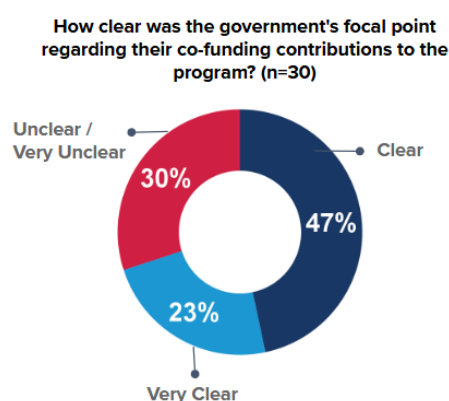
<sup>2</sup> Other organizations included federation/professional association



working out consortia and identifying the geographies and focus of the programme activities.

Most respondents (80%) accessed the government EOI and found it easy to align their proposal with the priorities mentioned in the EOI. About 47% of respondents had access to the EOI from the beginning of the CFP process, and the remaining 33% obtained access after requesting the EOI from the government. A few respondents (8%) reported that they could not access the EOI despite requesting it from the government focal point. Indeed, a few small local NGOs without a previous relationship with the government, witnessed some challenges in contacting government focal points and accessing the EOI during the CFP stage. However, when some of the small local NGOs approached ATscale, the secretariat facilitated linkages with the government focal points during the CFP process. In addition, ATscale facilitated participation of small NGOs in the country sessions (see vi for details).

**Observation 5.** The government focal points provided clear guidance on co-funding contributions from the government, other competing priorities' and 'government budget already allocated for the year' limited financial contributions from governments



Most respondents (**70%**) reported that the government focal point was clear or very clear regarding their co-funding contributions to the programme. However, some respondents mentioned that co-funding contributions from the government lacked clarity. The focus group discussion participants highlighted that EOI submission helped trigger co-funding discussions within the government and implementing partners even before the CFP phase.

During the CFP phase, it was difficult for governments to commit to co-financing contributions in cash; however, governments showed willingness to provide in-kind

contributions. The competing priorities and different budget cycles at the country level made it challenging for governments to commit to additional financial resources. Also, there was no written agreement between the government and ATscale to mandate the government to contribute financially to this programme.

#### 4. Suggestions from the respondents:

**4.1** Include EOI in the CFP document while publishing - **will be implemented by the ATscale secretariat**

**4.2** Include government focal point contact details directly in the CFP, and consider identifying several government focal points per country - **ATscale secretariat to explore the feasibility**

**4.3** Encourage government focal points to write down a list of government priorities and circulate the list among interested partners- **ATscale secretariat to explore the feasibility**

**4.4** Provide a checklist annexed to the CFP for government focal points to complete and submit along with the proposal to ensure government commitment to the programme - **ATscale secretariat to explore the feasibility**

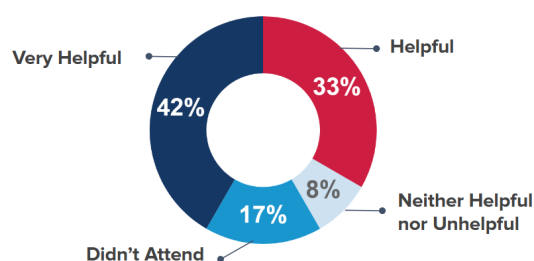
**4.5** Implement more formal arrangements between governments and ATscale to ensure government commitment to co-financing - **ATscale secretariat to explore the feasibility**

#### vi. ATscale support during the CFP process

**Observation 6:** ATscale support throughout the CFP process was very much appreciated; in-country sessions were quoted as ‘unique’ and ‘extremely useful’ from many perspectives; some applicants were unaware of the in-country session.

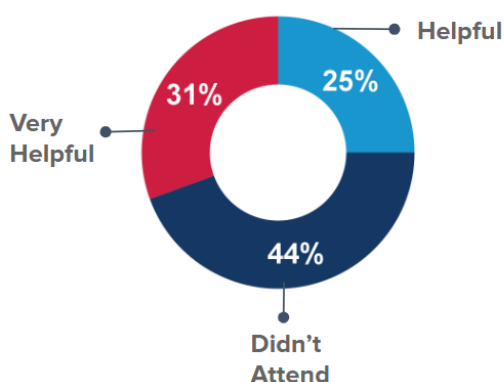
ATscale supported the CFP process by providing any necessary information and answers to applicants’ queries through officially established channels. Pre-submission information sessions, as well as in-country sessions in collaboration with the governments, were organized. In addition, the ATscale Secretariat received and addressed applicants’ queries through emails on a rolling basis. A Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) explaining the frequently asked questions and responses was also included in the CFP document.

How helpful were the pre-submission information sessions in addressing your queries? (n=36)



The ATscale Secretariat organized two pre-submission sessions (the time and link were indicated in advance in the CFP) and invited all potential applicants to ask their questions regarding the CFP process and/or the proposal content. The partners appreciated these sessions; **83%** of survey respondents attended one or more pre-submission information sessions, and **90%** of them reported that the sessions were helpful in understanding the expectations and addressing their queries.

How helpful was the in country session in addressing your queries? (n=36)



The ATscale Secretariat, in collaboration with the government, organized an in-country session in each programme country. The participants were given clear information about CFP requirements and the government's role. Any questions were also addressed. The sessions aimed to resolve any queries, provide an opportunity to talk to the government and ATscale, and align expectations. Respondents were asked about their experience in seeking government support.

About **56%** of survey respondents attended an in-country session, which **100%** declared as helpful or very helpful. Some respondents mentioned that information about in-country sessions was unavailable. This issue was attributed to the lack of information

across the ministries, especially with those other than health. A few respondents also suggested finding innovative ways to improve the response time of the questions posed to ATscale.

The focus group discussion participants highlighted that in-country sessions were a ‘unique approach’ adopted by the ATscale Secretariat. The in-country sessions were extremely helpful as they provided a unique opportunity for potential implementing partners who did not have pre-existing relationships with the government to establish those. Some participants also reported that the in-country sessions brought together NGOs working in different sectors and ensured government ownership. It was advised unanimously that this activity should be continued for future CFPs.

#### **5. Suggestions from the respondents:**

**5.1** Encourage the government to use the NGO database, if any, or other information sources to share information related to in-country sessions - **will be implemented by the ATscale secretariat**

**5.2** Encourage government focal points to record in-country sessions and make them available widely - **will be implemented by the ATscale secretariat**

**5.3** A real-time online question-and-answer platform to address applicants’ queries - **ATscale secretariat to explore the feasibility**

#### **vii. Galvanizing interest among partners in the country**

**Observation 7:** The CFP effectively generated interest among potential partners and government, fostered collaboration, and provided valuable collaborative opportunities for participants.

The CFP process galvanised interest among other partners in the country: almost all the respondents (**97%**) reported that CFP helped generate interest among potential implementing partners to support the assistive technology sector. While respondents acknowledged that the eligibility criteria excluded some partners who did not meet the requirements, they also found value in learning from the experiences and ideas of other partners in the proposal development process. The focus group discussion participants highlighted that the CFP also increased government awareness of the importance of assistive technology and fostered collaboration between different teams within the same ministry who had never collaborated before.

#### **viii. Overall satisfaction**

**Observation 7:** CFP (process, content, guidelines, etc.) were very much appreciated; All the respondents expressed interest in applying for similar opportunities in the future.

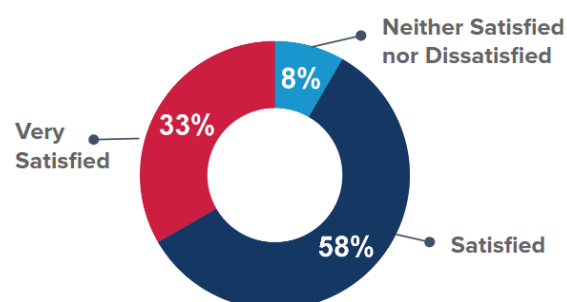
Respondents reported overall positive feedback on the CFP process. Overall, the CFP was well received by implementing partners, with **92%** of respondents reporting being satisfied or very satisfied with the CFP content and proposal submission process. The proposal development

fostered a common understanding among implementing partners, especially in cases where a consortium elaborated on the proposal together.

The focus group discussion pointed out that the CFP exhibited more sophistication and detail than traditional CFPs from other donors. Several participants welcomed the comprehensiveness of the CFP package and guidelines.

All the respondents (**100%**) are likely (17%) or very likely (83%) to participate again in a future CFP from ATscale when aligned with their work area.

How satisfied are you with the overall Call for Proposal content and proposal submission process? (n=36)



#### ix. Additional recommendations:

Additional recommendations were shared by survey and focus group discussion participants. These are summarised below. While valid, many of these would require significant **additional funding** to implement and are not entirely within ATscale's control.

##### 6. Suggestions from the respondents:

**6.1** While the programme under evaluation focused on hearing and vision, ATscale should also support programmes for other types of disabilities, such as mobility, cognition, and neurodivergence.

**6.2** The grant amount allocated per country should be increased to cover the full population, mainly in countries with negligible government assistive technology investments.

**6.3** Given the vast need to scale up access to assistive technology in low—and middle-income countries, a larger number of countries should be selected for such opportunities.

**6.4** Interactions between potential applicants and assistive technology suppliers should be facilitated during the CFP process for more realistic costs and supply-chain estimates related to assistive products' procurement.

**6.5** The grant should be comprehensive and cover the treatment costs of any condition identified as part of the programme, such as treatment of otitis media, infectious conjunctivitis, congenital cataracts, etc.

## Way Forward

The suggestions arising from the lessons learned will be presented to the ATscale Board. The next round of CFPs will address the suggestions for disseminating CFP information to professional

associations, encouraging the government to make its priorities widely available to the partners, recording and making in-country sessions widely available to the partners, etc., as indicated across the suggestion boxes. For the rest, the ATscale Secretariat will evaluate their feasibility and endeavour to incorporate them into future CFPs if possible. It will also continue to collect lessons learned to improve work processes systematically.

## Annex 1: Online Survey Questionnaire

This survey is part of the evaluation of ATscale's Call for Proposal process for the 'scaling-up implementation of vision and hearing programme for school-aged children' that took place from April to July 2024. It is aimed at potential implementing partners and other stakeholders, such as Government officials, UN agencies, International Non-Governmental Organizations, and Civil Societies at the global, regional, and national levels. The data this survey aims to collect is central to helping ATscale improve the effectiveness of its grant-making mechanisms.

Thank you for your time and cooperation. Completing the survey will take at most 20 minutes. The findings will be presented in an evaluation report and available for all stakeholders from November 2024 onwards. The deadline for survey completion is September XX

Disclaimer: The language of the survey is English. Participation is voluntary, and respondent confidentiality will be protected. Please do not mention yours as well your organization's name while providing your comments. Survey respondents will remain anonymous. Results will be shared in a way that does not allow for the identification of individual survey respondents. This evaluation is required to help ATscale improve the effectiveness of its grant-making mechanisms. Participating in the evaluation will not, in any way, influence the outcomes of the proposals submitted by the potential implementing partners. ATscale also encourages potential implementing partners who could not submit their proposals to complete this survey. If you have any challenges accessing the survey, please reach out to [anilk@atscalepartnership.org](mailto:anilk@atscalepartnership.org) or [akashyap@unops.org](mailto:akashyap@unops.org).

\*Mandatory fields to fill out in the survey:

### Section 1 - Introductory questions

Q1. \*Type of your organization (if you have several affiliations, select the organization that best represents your role in this Call for Proposal)

- ☐ Academic and/or Research Institution (including University and other Higher Education Institution)
- ☐ Civil Society Organization (including Organization of Persons with Disabilities)
- ☐ Foundation
- ☐ Institution and Federation
- ☐ International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO)
- ☐ National Non-Governmental Organization (NGO)
- ☐ UN agency
- ☐ Others, please specify

Q2. \*Did you submit a proposal/were you part of a consortium that submitted a proposal for the ATscale-supported program 'implementation of joint vision and hearing program for school-aged children'?

- Yes
- No

Q3. \*If the answer to the above is 'No', please describe briefly why you did not submit a proposal (relevant only for interested partners who started to discuss it with other potential partners or the government but could not submit it in the end-open-ended; max. 100 words)

### Section 2 - Communication around the CFP

Q4. \*Call For Proposal-related communication - How did you hear about the Call For Proposal?

- From Government Focal Point

- Via ATscale web channels (ATscale website, GATE website, social media, email, United Nations Global Marketplace)
- Through other partners
- Other, please specify

Q5. \*Call for Proposal-related communication—Call for Proposals were shared with partners and posted on several web platforms to spread the word widely. How satisfied are you with ATscale’s communication regarding the Call for Proposal announcement?

- Fully Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither Satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Unsatisfied

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve Call for Proposal announcement-related communication (max. 100 words):

Q6. \*Clarity of Call for Proposal Objectives - How clear were the grant/funding objectives defined in the Call for Proposal in terms of outlining the intended outcomes?

- Very Clear
- Clear
- Neither Clear nor Unclear
- Not Clear
- Not Clear at all

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve the grant/funding objectives (max. 100 words)

### Section 3 - Eligibility criteria and submission guidelines

Q7. \*How clear were the applicant eligibility criteria and proposal submission guidelines outlined in the Call for Proposal?

- Very Clear
- Clear
- Neither Clear nor Unclear
- Not Clear
- Not Clear at all

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve the applicant eligibility criteria and proposal submission guidelines (max. 100 words)

Q8.\*How clear were the evaluation criteria communicated in the Call for Proposal?

- Very clear
- Clear
- Neither clear nor unclear
- Unclear
- Very unclear

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve the clarity of the evaluation criteria (max. 100 words)

Q9. \*How fairly were the obtainable scoring points distributed across the evaluation criteria in the Call for Proposal?

- Very fairly

- Fairly
- Neither fairly nor unfairly
- Unfairly
- Very unfairly

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve the distribution of the obtainable scoring points across the evaluation criteria (max. 100 words)

Q10. \*Page Limit- How adequate was the page limit to provide sufficient space for conveying the information you deemed necessary?

- Very adequate
- Adequate
- Neither adequate nor inadequate
- Inadequate
- Very inadequate

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve the adequacy of the page limit (max. 100 words)

#### Section 4- Strategic Guidance from the Government and other stakeholders' collaboration

Q11. \*The proposal development process involved contacting the government focal point for strategic guidance. How easy was it to contact the government focal point?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult
- Not Applicable/Did not attempt to contact government focal point

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve the contact with the government focal point (max. 100 words)

Q12. (a) \* Did you receive guidance from the government on the proposal development process?

- Yes
- No

Q12. (b) \*If 'Yes' to the above, how helpful was the guidance provided by the government focal point?

- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Neither helpful nor unhelpful
- Unhelpful
- Very unhelpful
- Didn't attempt to contact government focal point for guidance

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve on this helpfulness of the strategic guidance from the government focal point (max. 100 words)

Q13. \*How easy was it to align the proposal with the government's priorities as reflected in the Expression of Interest (EOI) by the government?

- Very Easy (we had access to EOI from the start)
- Somewhat Easy (we only had access to the EOI after requesting for it)
- Difficult (despite asking, we did not have access to the EOI)
- Not applicable / Did not request the Expression of Interest or



- Unaware of the Expression of Interest

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve alignment with the government's priorities as reflected in the Expression of Interest (max. 100 words)

Q14. \*Strategic Guidance from the Government— How clear was the government's focal point regarding their co-funding contributions to the program?

- Very clear
- Clear
- Neither clear nor unclear
- Unclear
- Very unclear
- Not applicable/Did not contact government focal point

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve clarity regarding co-funding contributions of the government (max. 100 words)

Q15. \*Galvanizing Interest among Other Partners— How helpful was the Call for Proposal process in generating interest in potential implementing partners to support the assistive technology sector?

- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Neither helpful nor unhelpful
- Unhelpful
- Very unhelpful

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve how the Call for Proposal process can generate interest in potential implementation partners (max. 100 words)

#### Section 5- ATscale support during the Call for Proposal process

Q16. \*The ATscale Secretariat offered two pre-submission information sessions. How helpful were the pre-submission information sessions in addressing your queries?

- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Neither helpful nor unhelpful
- Unhelpful
- Very unhelpful
- Not applicable / did not attend any of the pre-submission information sessions

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve the pre-submission information sessions (max. 100 words)

Q17. \*The ATscale Secretariat jointly with the government organized an in-country session for partners to present the Call for Proposals. How helpful were these sessions in addressing your queries?

- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Neither helpful nor unhelpful
- Unhelpful
- Very unhelpful
- Not applicable / did not attend any of the in-country meetings

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve the in-country session (max. 100 words)

Q18. \*Response to Queries - Queries could be addressed to the ATscale Secretariat via the bid email ID. How satisfied were you with how the ATscale Secretariat addressed your email queries?

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied
- Not applicable / did not send any queries

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve how satisfactorily queries are addressed (max. 100 words).

#### Section 6 - Call for Proposal process

Q19. \*The proposal period submission was three months in duration. How suitable was the duration for submitting the proposal?

- Very suitable duration
- Suitable duration
- Neither suitable nor unsuitable duration
- Unsuitable duration
- Very unsuitable duration

Please provide any specific suggestions on how to improve the suitability of proposal duration (max. 100 words)

Q20. \*Ease of Proposal Submission - The proposals were to be submitted via email. How well does this mode (via email) of proposal submission work for you?

- Submission mode worked exceptionally well when submitting the proposal.
- Submission mode worked well when submitting the proposal
- Submission mode neither worked well nor was difficult
- Submission mode didn't work well
- Submission mode made it difficult to submit the proposal

Please provide any specific suggestions on how to improve the mode of proposal submission further (max. 100 words)

#### Section 7 - Annexes for the Technical Proposal

Q21 (a). \* How easy was it to understand the Annexes (Call for Proposal Annexure 2-8 except Annexure 3) provided to write the different technical proposal sections?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult
- Very difficult

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve the ease of understanding of the annexes (max. 100 words)

Q21 \*(b)- How would you rate your level of difficulty in filling up the following sections of Annex 1

	Very easy	Easy	Neither Easy nor Difficult	Difficult	Very Difficult	Please provide any specific suggestions to improve Annex 1
Section 2, Past experience (similar agreements, ongoing and committed to start)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Section 3.2, approach and methodology: Situational analysis	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Section 3.3, approach and methodology: Programme approach	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Section 3.3, approach and methodology: logical framework	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Section 3.4, approach and Methodology: sustainability and post project plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Section 4, Implementation plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Section 5: Implementing Partner Monitoring Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Q21 (c) - Please describe the difficulties you faced for each section of the technical proposal as per your previous answer. Please provide any suggestions to improve Annex 1.

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#### Section 8 - Annexes for the Financial Proposal

Q22. \*How easy was it to follow Annex -3 (Excel sheet) and Annex A (Guidance Note To Categorize Programme Costs) provided to populate the proposal budget?

- Very easy
- Easy
- Neither easy nor difficult
- Difficult

- Very difficult

Please provide any specific suggestions to improve the annexes related to the proposal budget (max. 100 words)

#### Section 9 - CFP content and process overall satisfaction

Q23. \*How satisfied are you with the overall Call for Proposal content and proposal submission process?

- Very Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

Should you wish to, you are welcome to elaborate on your response (max. 100 words):

Q24. \*Likelihood of Future Participation- Should a future Call for Proposal from ATscale align with your work area, how likely are you to submit a proposal?

- Very Likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely

Should you wish to, you are welcome to elaborate on your response (max. 100 words):

#### Section 10 - Challenges in CFP content development and submission process

Q25. Please share any challenges you encountered during the proposal development and submission process (open-ended; max. 100 words)

Q26. Please suggest any additional support ATscale could offer to ease the proposal development and submission process (open-ended; max. 100 words)

#### Section 11- Conclusion

Q27. Please suggest any lessons learned from participating in the Call for Proposal process that could be utilized to enhance similar processes in the future (open-ended; max. 100 words)

Q28. Additional Comments - Please share any additional comments or feedback regarding the Call for Proposal content or process (open-ended; max. 100 words)

## Annex 2: Focus Group Discussion Topic Guide

### Introduction

This focus group discussion is part of the evaluation of ATscale's Call for Proposal process for 'scaling-up implementation of vision and hearing programme for school-aged children'. The Call for Proposals took place from April to July 2024. Evaluating Call for Proposal processes is central to helping ATscale improve the effectiveness of its grant-making mechanisms. The ATscale Secretariat has already circulated a survey to potential implementing partners and other stakeholders. Today's focus group discussion will complement the data collected through the survey. The evaluation results will be presented in a report to be published later this year.

*Satish and Anil introduce themselves if needed – perhaps a short round of introductions (just name and organization) of participants if needed.*

Before we start the focus group discussion, we would like to share some housekeeping information. We will be asking some questions and we are interested in your answers. Please ensure that your location allows you to speak freely. It is important for us to hear from all of you today. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions we will ask, only several experiences and points of view that, whilst being different, are equally valuable for us. We are just as interested in aspects of the Call for Proposal process that work well as suggestions for improvement.

By participating, you agree to the discussion being recorded. This is just so we can go back to ensure we will capture all your valuable inputs. The recording will not be shared. The focus group discussion will be summarized and de-identified, so that any viewpoint will not be able to be traced back to a specific individual nor organization.

As I am sure you can understand, participating in this focus group discussion will not influence the outcomes of the proposals submitted by the potential implementing partners.

### Topic guide

Main topics	Specific prompts/subtopics
1. Think of how the CFP was shared and whether it reached relevant partners... (7 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How do you think relevant partners have mostly heard about the CFP?</li><li>• How well do you feel the CFP has reached relevant partners? Do you know of relevant partners that future CFPs should better reach?</li><li>• How could the CFP have reached even more relevant partners?</li><li>• What communication channels should be prioritized for sharing future CFPs?</li></ul>
2. Think of the applicant eligibility criteria, the submission guidelines, and the evaluation criteria... (7 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How clear were the applicant's eligibility criteria? How could they be clearer in future CFPs?</li><li>• How appropriate were the applicant's eligibility criteria? How could they be more appropriate in future CFPs?</li><li>• How clear were the submission guidelines? How could they be clearer in future CFPs?</li><li>• How appropriate were the submission guidelines? How could they be more appropriate in future CFPs?</li><li>• How clear were the evaluation criteria? How could they be clearer in future CFPs?</li><li>• How appropriate were the evaluation criteria? How could they be more appropriate in future CFPs?</li></ul>
3. Think of the involvement of your organization in the CFP process.... (10 min)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How was your organization involved in the CFP process? Whom from your organization was involved in the CFP process? When was your organization involved in the CFP process, and how much was it involved?</li><li>• How satisfied are you with the involvement of your organization in the CFP process? Why?</li></ul>

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- How could your organization's involvement be improved in future CFPs? Why? What benefits could the suggestions potentially lead to? What limitations could the suggestions potentially lead to?
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4. Think of the involvement of the government in the proposal development process, which was a requirement for this CFP, and the co-funding contribution of the government...
- How much is the required involvement of the government in the proposal development process contributing to activities that are aligned with government priorities?
  - How much is the government's required co-funding contribution to activities aligned with government priorities?
  - What other mechanisms could be considered in future CFPs to align activities with government priorities?

(15 min)

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5. Think of the role of the CFP process in convening and galvanizing interest amongst potential implementing partners to support the AT sector in the selected countries...
- How successful is the CFP process in convening and galvanizing interest amongst potential implementing partners to support the AT sector in the selected countries?
  - How could future CFPs further convene and galvanize interest amongst potential implementing partners to support the AT sector in the selected countries?

(15 min)

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6. Think of the CFP process overall...
- What were the main benefits and limitations of the CFP process?
  - How could future CFP processes be improved?
  - Do you have any further comments?

(15 min)

- o What is the one strongest aspect of the CFP process
  - o What is the one suggestion for future CFP processes that you would most like to see
-