

Request for Proposal

Evaluation of endline study of project, 'SnehAI: A Companion to Enable and Protect'

Terms of Reference

1. ABOUT POPULATION FOUNDATION OF INDIA

Population Foundation of India is a national civil society organization, which promotes and advocates effective formulation and implementation of gender-sensitive population, health and development strategies and policies. Bharat Ratna JRD Tata founded the foundation in 1970.

Population Foundation of India addresses population issues within the larger discourse of empowering women and men so that they can make informed decisions related to their fertility, health and well-being. We work with the government, both at the center and in states, and with other civil society organizations. Our areas of work include the following:

- Family planning
- Adolescent health, particularly sexual and reproductive health
- Community monitoring of public health services
- Women's rights, and especially ending violence against women

2. BACKGROUND

Population Foundation of India has been actively working to create a safe online environment for adolescents by utilizing SnehAI, an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-powered chatbot. This chatbot, integrated into Facebook, has served as a digital extension of their transmedia initiative called "Main Kuch Bhi Kar Sakti Hoon - I, A Woman, Can Achieve Anything" to offer verified information on sexual and reproductive health (SRH) to users in a secure and anonymous manner. Over time, the chatbot has engaged in more than 10.8 million interactions with around 186,000 users.

To address the issue of online child sexual exploitation and abuse (OCSEA), the Population Foundation of India expanded the capabilities of the SnehAI chatbot through a project named "SnehAI: A Companion to Enable and Protect," which began in 2020. This project aims to raise awareness and facilitate access to credible information concerning **online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) and digital safety for adolescents**. The bot is available both on Messenger and WhatsApp platforms.

The key components of the project are:

- i. Development of content on OCSEA for the SnehAI Chatbot.
- ii. On-ground promotion of SnehAI chatbot in schools and communities¹.
- iii. Online promotion and campaign on digital safety.

¹ To be planned

- iv. Development and dissemination of knowledge products such as policy briefs on issues related to adolescents' digital interaction and safety with a focus on online CSEA (such as Digital Safety; digital gaps among parents and children; online child rights; privacy, impact of COVID-19 on digital behavior amongst adolescents etc.) incorporating learnings from this project.

The anticipated outcome of the SnehAI chatbot is to expand adolescents' knowledge base regarding abuse, exploitation, violence, consent, and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR). By equipping them with the necessary information and resources, the chatbot aims to empower adolescents to identify and report instances of online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Implementation status –

After the baseline study and desk research, the content generation for the bot was done. Nine animation films have been developed, finalized and uploaded on the bot and website. The chatbot was launched on Facebook Messenger in April 2022. The chatbot was developed and launched on WhatsApp in October 2022. Social media promotions were undertaken to drive awareness for the bot. The bot has exchanged over 10.2 million exchanged with 186,000 users till 2022. A study on adolescents' interaction with the internet was also done in January 2023. In the final phase, further promotions of the bot are being planned along with an on-ground engagement and the endline assessment.

3. PURPOSE OF STUDY

The overall purpose of the assignment is to conduct an endline evaluation to determine the effect of exposure to Sneha AI Chatbot on adolescents' (10-19 years) knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural intentions related to online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (CSEA) and digital safety among adolescents.

Precisely, the endline study will focus on the following objectives (hereinafter Objectives) and their corresponding evaluation questions:

1. **Objective:** To assess shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural intentions on various aspects of OCSEA and digital safety, following exposure to the content on the chatbot among adolescents.

Key evaluation questions pertaining to objective-1

- 1.1 Has there been a measurable change in participants' knowledge of OCSEA and digital safety topics after interacting with the chatbot?
- 1.2 What are the specific areas of knowledge that have shown the most improvement?
- 1.3 Are there any differences in knowledge improvement based on participants' demographic characteristics (e.g., age, gender)?
- 1.4 Have participants' attitudes towards OCSEA and digital safety shifted after engaging with the chatbot content?
- 1.5 Are there observable changes in participants' behavioral intentions related to protecting themselves and others from OCSEA?

2. Objective: To assess reach and engagement with the OCSEA and digital safety content and understand user experience/ feedback.

Key evaluation questions pertaining to objective-2

- 2.1 How many adolescents have accessed the Sneha AI Chatbot and engaged with the OCSEA and digital safety content?
- 2.2 What are the patterns of usage and interaction with the chatbot content (e.g., frequency, duration, specific features utilized)?
- 2.3 Are there any differences in reach and engagement based on demographic characteristics?
- 2.4 What is the overall level of engagement with the chatbot content?
- 2.5 What are the strengths and weaknesses of the chatbot as perceived by the adolescents?
- 2.6 How user-friendly and accessible is the chatbot from the perspective of adolescents?
- 2.7 What improvements or modifications can be made to enhance the effectiveness and usability of the chatbot for adolescents?

The target group for the evaluation would be adolescents (10-19 years). Overall, the evaluation will provide insights into the effectiveness of the Sneha AI Chatbot in educating and raising awareness among adolescents regarding online Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and digital safety. The findings will help inform future improvements to the chatbot's content and delivery to better serve its target audience and enhance their knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions related to OCSEA and digital safety.

4. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

A mixed method evaluation is proposed – using (1) quantitative methods to assess objective 1 (shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural intentions); (2) analysis of platform data (to assess reach and engagement); and (3) qualitative methods (to understand the user experience).

Objective 1 - To assess shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and behavioural intentions on various aspects of OCSEA and digital safety, following exposure to the content on the chatbot	
<p>Quasi-experimental design using <i>groups of users exposed to chatbot and those not exposed</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recruitment drive is undertaken within both the existing user base & through other means and respondents are recruited for the evaluation • The recruited respondents are randomized into ‘intervention’ and ‘control’ groups • The ‘intervention’ group is exposed to content on OCSEA, while the ‘control’ group could be exposed to other content • On completion of each module/ or after viewing each content piece, a set of questions will be asked to the respondent – self-filled through the App. In order to see the recall, the same set of questions will be asked to the respondent after one week of completion of a module/viewing content piece.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The same set of questions will be given to the respondents in the 'control' group as well. • At the end of a period, the difference in knowledge and attitudes/perspectives among the intervention and control groups will be assessed <p>In this approach, owing to pre-exposure to Snehai, it is assumed that the respondents may already have a pre-existing knowledge on SRHR, and perhaps even OCSEA.</p>
Objective 2 - To assess reach and engagement with the OCSEA and digital safety content, and understand user experience/ feedback	
Reach and engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analysis of platform data – to assess the reach of the OCSEA and digital safety content and engagement with it • Engagement data for those in evaluation group will be specifically analyzed to understand any differences in knowledge levels, given different levels of engagement with the content
User experience/ feedback	Qualitative interactions – KIs with select users/ purposively selected. Case studies from the interactions

Specific Tasks:

- i. Undertake secondary research on available literature and reports on the online CSEA and digital safety
- ii. Design/finalise the endline study methodology and tools focusing on the aforementioned objectives
- iii. Seek Ethical Review Board (ERB) approval for the study
- iv. Recruit respondents from adolescent age groups (active on social networks) for the interviews – for both intervention and control groups
- v. Plan and coordinate the necessary logistics to collect the data in accordance with finalized methodology
- vi. Submit the detailed work plan for the study
- vii. Develop tools and techniques in consultation with the PFI staff to carry out the quantitative and qualitative interviews
- viii. Pilot testing of the tools
- ix. Implement and supervise the data collection and data entry
- x. Share the analysis plan and report outline
- xi. Submit the data analysis outlining key findings and share with Population Foundation of India for review
- xii. Submit a final report with recommendations and a powerpoint presentation incorporating feedback from Population Foundation of India.

Limitations and areas that the proposed evaluation will not cover:

- i. **Generalizability:** The evaluation will focus on a specific group of respondents, namely adolescents active on social networks. The findings may not be generalizable to other populations or age groups.
- ii. **Long-term effects:** The evaluation measures shifts in knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions immediately after exposure to the content. It does not assess long-term effects or behavior change over an extended period.
- iii. **Recall bias:** The evaluation relies on self-filled responses from respondents. There may be recall bias as participants might struggle to accurately remember their previous knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions.
- iv. **Social desirability bias:** Respondents may provide answers that they perceive as socially desirable rather than their true knowledge, attitudes, and behavioral intentions. This bias could impact the validity of the findings.
- v. **Limited scope of platform data analysis:** The analysis of platform data focuses on reach and engagement with the OCSEA and digital safety content. It may not capture a comprehensive understanding of the users' experience or the reasons behind their engagement levels.
- vi. **Lack of comparison with alternative interventions:** The evaluation compares the intervention group exposed to OCSEA content with a control group exposed to other content. However, it does not compare the effectiveness of the OCSEA intervention with alternative interventions or approaches.

These limitations highlight the need to interpret the evaluation findings with caution and consider the context and scope of the study when applying the results.

5. DELIVERABLES

- i. Inception report with timeline.
- ii. Tools and techniques used in the study
- iii. Raw data and transcripts of interviews
- iv. Draft report of the study
- v. Final report incorporating inputs from PFI
- vi. A deck/powerpoint presentation on key findings from the assessment.

6. DURATION

The study should complete within 90 days of contract signing with the agency.

- Inception report and tools – 15 days
- ERB approval – 15 days
- Data collection – 15 days
- Data analysis and chapterization plan – 10 days
- Draft report – 10 days
- Feedback from stakeholders – 15 days
- Final report incorporating feedback – 10 days

7. GENERAL TERMS AND CONDITIONS

- i. PFI requires the agency to uphold and demonstrate best practices in Safeguarding and Child protection. Agency will confirm that it will comply with PFI's Safeguarding and Child protection policy requirements.
- ii. The evaluations will follow the UNEG Norms and Standards for evaluation (<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/1914>) as well as the ethical guidelines (<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/2866>) and UNEG Guidance on Integrating Human Rights and Gender Equality in Evaluation (<http://www.uneval.org/document/detail/980>).
- iii. The Agency will coordinate with PFI's authorized personnel for this project for all related activities under this assignment.
- iv. The end-deliverables should be approved by authorized personnel of PFI for release of payments.
- v. All work/ reports developed/prepared under this assignment are the intellectual property of the office of PFI and cannot be used, published, copied, or otherwise disseminated without written approval from PFI. The agency would never share and use the data for any other purpose.

8. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- i. The agency should have experience in the design and implementation of baseline surveys, evaluations, and assessments including qualitative and quantitative data collection for digital surveys in the areas of child/human rights and child protection issues,.
- ii. The agency should have experience in gathering and systematizing large amounts of data.
- iii. The agency should have experience in conducting studies in the subject of the intervention.
- iv. The proposed team should be gender-balanced and culturally diverse.

The contract will be awarded to the successful bidder following completion of all evaluation including negotiation, if necessary. The successful bidder will have to sign a contract with the PFI to undertake the assignment.

Requirement to Apply:

Detailed technical and financial proposal separately, along with company profile and team biodata, should be submitted by **EOD 4th July 2023** to ma.jose@populationfoundation.in

In case you have any technical queries before submitting the proposal, you may write to Mr. Ritesh Laddha at rladdha@populationfoundation.in before the last date.