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# REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

## RFI SOLICITATION NUMBER: RFI-APPHC MADAGASCAR-2020-001

Advancements in Post-Partum Hemorrhage Care: Case studies on maintaining essential maternity services in the context of COVID-19

DATE OF ISSUE: August 10, 2020

CLOSING DATE AND TIME FOR APPLICATIONS:

**August 24, 2020**

**5:00 PM (UTC+3)**

Applications must be emailed to: [heard@urc-chs.com](mailto:heard@urc-chs.com)

Deadline for Questions: **August 14, 2020, 5:00 PM (UTC+3)**

Questions by email ONLY to: [heard@urc-chs.com](mailto:heard@urc-chs.com)

Contact Person: Danielle Charlet, M.D., Ph.D.

Issuance of this RFI does not constitute an award commitment on the part of URC, nor does it commit URC/HEARD or the US government to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. URC may reject any submission that does not fully comply with requirements of the RFI. Furthermore, funding of successful proposals is contingent on the availability of funds from USAID.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Table of Contents .....	i
<b>1. Purpose of the RFI/A .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>2. Overall Objectives .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>3. Successful Applicants.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>4. Time Frame.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>5. Expected Activities .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>6. Instructions for Responses.....</b>	<b>2</b>
6.1 Eligibility Criteria .....	2
6.2 General Instructions .....	2
6.3 Content of Technical Application .....	3
6.4 Format Requirements for Technical Application .....	3
<b>7. Review and Notification Process .....</b>	<b>4</b>
7.1 Technical Review .....	4
7.2 Review Criteria for Technical Application.....	4
7.3 Strategic and Operational Review .....	4
7.4 Notification Process .....	4
7.5 Considerations for an Award.....	4
<b>8. Background.....</b>	<b>5</b>

## 1. PURPOSE OF THE RFI

The purpose of the RFI is to **identify partner institution(s)** to conduct case studies that document and help understand adaptations related to maintaining essential maternity services that are taking place in Madagascar in response to and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

USAID's Health Evaluation and Applied Research Development (HEARD) project, managed by University Research Co., LLC, expects to make 1-5 awards in the range of 5,000-10,000 USD to create implementation research (IR) case studies that explore how essential maternity services, with a focus on post-partum hemorrhage (PPH), are being maintained in the context of COVID-19. These case studies relate to the portfolio of work being undertaken by the Advancements in Post-Partum Hemorrhage Care (APPHC) partnership (see Section 8: Background).

## 2. OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The HEARD Project aims to partner with researchers in Madagascar to develop case studies related to maintaining essential maternity services, with a particular focus on obstetric emergencies and PPH in Madagascar in the context of COVID-19.

Case study topics may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Operationalization of the “Plan de continuité des services de santé maternelle, néonatale, infantile, de l'adolescent et nutrition face à la pandémie de COVID-19 à Madagascar ”
- Approaches/adaptations to maintaining essential maternity services (e.g. facility deliveries)
- Understanding trends in and factors affecting maternity service usage
- Sustainability and value of adapted service delivery approaches beyond COVID-19
- Health system resiliency – factors contributing to resiliency to system shocks to be able to maintain essential maternity services

A case study is “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-life context” (Yin, 2013, Case Study Research: Design and Methods, 5<sup>th</sup> Edition). For this project, we are seeking an in-depth exploration of the subject above to capture and understand what is being done, what is working, how is it working, what can still be improved, and what can be applied elsewhere (and how) to improve PPH prevention and management.

## 3. SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Successful applicants will meet the eligibility criteria below (Section 6.1) and have:

- a. A clear proposal for one or more case study topic(s) and approach(es);
- b. Demonstrated technical expertise related to post-partum hemorrhage, maternal health, and health systems in Madagascar;
- c. Demonstrated success in conducting mixed methods research studies in Madagascar; and,
- d. Strong institutional financial and management capacities.

## 4. TIME FRAME

Activities are anticipated to start in September 2020 and are projected to continue for approximately four (4) months.

## 5. EXPECTED ACTIVITIES

It is anticipated that the activities to be carried out by the successful applicant(s) will include:

1. Develop case study protocol(s) and tools;
2. Manage in-country ethics review submission, if needed;
3. Implement data collection and analysis;
4. Produce a final case study report and policy brief; and,
5. Participate in periodic Country Working Group meetings during the course of research implementation.

The anticipated activities may be undertaken by one or more researchers and organizations identified through this RFI. Researchers are encouraged to include students (Master's or Doctoral level) in the proposed research team.

## 6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONSES

### 6.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Researchers in technical organizations **based in Madagascar** are invited to apply. The applicant must be affiliated with an organization of one of the following types:

1. Institutions of higher education;
2. Non-profit organizations (if a US organization, it must be a 501(c)(3) certified non-profit); or
3. For-profit research organizations (no fee or profit will be allowed).

Responses from organizations that do not meet the above eligibility criteria will not be reviewed and evaluated.

### 6.2 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

#### Key Information

- Due date for questions about RFI: August 14, 2020
- Due date for applications: August 24, 2020
- Number of award(s) expected: one to five
- Maximum page length of technical response: three pages maximum (not including Cover Page, Annexes)
- Language for technical response: French or English only

All responses received by the deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in Section 6. Applications may be judged as nonresponsive if they do not follow the instructions in the RFI. Section 7 addresses the technical evaluation procedures and criteria for the responses. Applicants are advised to carefully read the instructions.

Questions about the RFI must be written in French or English and emailed [heard@urc-chs.com](mailto:heard@urc-chs.com) by **August 14, 2020**.

Responses to the RFI must be submitted in French or English and emailed to [heard@urc-chs.com](mailto:heard@urc-chs.com) by **August 24, 2020**.

### 6.3 CONTENT OF TECHNICAL APPLICATION

The technical application must be specific, complete, and presented concisely, demonstrating the applicant's **Technical Expertise** and **Individual and Organizational Capabilities** with respect to achieving the activities described in the RFI. The applicant's Technical Application must include the following:

- Section 1. Case Study Proposal(s): Describe the case study topic(s), research question(s), design(s), and methods (including feasibility of proposed approach in the current COVID-19 context (e.g. if primary data collection is proposed, versus secondary analysis of existing data, please describe how it will be feasible in the COVID-19 context); (**limit 1.5 page**),
- Section 2. Statement of methodological and subject matter expertise of the research team related to post-partum hemorrhage, maternal health, and/or health systems research (**limit 0.5 page**);
- Section 3. Statement of experience and expertise of the research team in managing research activities in Madagascar (**limit 0.5 page**); and,
- Section 4. Statement of institutional financial and administrative management capacity (**limit 0.5 page**).

### 6.4 FORMAT REQUIREMENTS FOR TECHNICAL APPLICATION

- a. The **technical application** should be:
  - Written in French or English
  - Typed in a Microsoft Word compatible program, single-spaced with a 11-point font and one-inch margins
  - Saved and submitted as one document in pdf or Word format, with all sections and appendices put together
  - Labeled with page numbers, the RFI number (RFI-APPHC\_Madagascar-2020-001) and the name of the applicant and organization on every page
  - Limited to up to three (3) pages not including cover page and annexes
- b. The technical application should have **Cover Page** (not included in the page limit) with the following information:
  - Program/Project title;
  - RFI reference number;
  - Name of organization applying to the RFI;
  - Contact person, telephone number, fax number, address, and types name(s) and title(s) of person(s), who prepared the application, and corresponding signatures.
- c. **Curricula Vitae (CV)** of proposed Research Lead must be included in an Annex.

- d. **Letter of Support from Ministry of Public Health**, indicating support for case study topic, relevance of topic to the Ministry of Public Health, and potential for use of findings in decision-making, must be included in an Annex.

## **7. REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS**

### **7.1 TECHNICAL REVIEW**

A Technical Review Panel (TRP) will evaluate the applicants' Technical Expertise and Organizational Capacity Statement taking into account the eligibility criteria (Section 6.1) and the technical review criteria (Section 7.2) found in this RFI.

### **7.2 REVIEW CRITERIA FOR TECHNICAL APPLICATION**

Technical responses will be reviewed and evaluated against the following criteria:

1. The feasibility and strength of the proposed case study approach;
2. Demonstrated experience and methodological and subject matter expertise related to post-partum hemorrhage, maternal health, and/or health systems research; and
3. Demonstrated experience and expertise related to managing and coordinating research activities in Madagascar.

### **7.3 STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL REVIEW**

In addition to the technical review, an operational review of the applicants' Financial and Administrative capacity will be undertaken by the HEARD project, and a strategic review of case study topics will be conducted in consultation with APPHC partners.

### **7.4 NOTIFICATION PROCESS**

URC will conduct a review of submissions and select responses submitted in accordance with the guidelines and criteria set forth in this RFI.

URC reserves the right to disregard any responses that do not meet the guidelines. URC is not obligated to issue a financial instrument or award as a result of this RFI.

If the review of the applicant's response will result in a decision to request a full application, URC will provide specific requirements and instructions for the full application.

### **7.5 CONSIDERATIONS FOR AN AWARD**

To be eligible to receive U.S. Government funding, organizations must meet certain requirements. While these requirements do not have to be met in order to submit a technical response under the RFI, they will need to be met if the applicant is requested to submit a full application. Among those requirements are:

- A. All first-time applicants for USAID funding are subject to a pre-award assessment to verify that the applicant has proper procedures in place to receive USAID funding (ADS 303.3.8)

- B. Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal awarding agency that is excepted from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:
  - i. Be registered in SAM before submitting its application (**Please allow several weeks for processing through SAM.GOV**);
  - ii. Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal awarding agency. To obtain information regarding the preceding, see the respective links: <http://www.dnb.com> and <https://www.sam.gov/portal/public/SAM/>
  - iii. Provide a valid DUNS number in its application (**Note: the DUNS number must be submitted with the application**).
- C. Submission of relevant SF 424 Forms on request:
  - i. SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance;
  - ii. SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-construction Programs; and
  - iii. SF-424B, Assurance – Non-construction Programs
- D. Submission of a Detailed Budget and Budget Narrative
- E. Submission of additional documentation and certifications including:
  - i. Negotiated Indirect Costs Rate Agreement (NICRA) or audited financial statements to support indirect rates.
  - ii. A signed copy of ADS 303mav, Certifications, Assurances, and Other Statements of the Recipient and Solicitation Standard Provisions.
  - iii. Complete Pre-Award Assessment Questionnaire,
  - iv. Organization’s registration (e.g., certificate of incorporation, business license, certificate of registration with government).
  - v. Organization chart or list of company officers.
  - vi. Audited financial statements for the last two fiscal years.

## 8. BACKGROUND

Globally, nearly one-quarter of all maternal deaths are associated with postpartum hemorrhage (PPH). Despite global progress, PPH remains the leading cause of maternal death in most low-income countries. In an effort to accelerate reductions in maternal deaths due to PPH, USAID has designed the Advancements in Postpartum Hemorrhage Care (APPHC) Activity, a one-time, catalytic investment to advance innovation and evidence in PPH prevention and treatment. Activities will be conducted in Malawi and Madagascar, and with significant cross-country, sub-regional, and global learning engagement.

In Madagascar, maternal mortality rates remain high at 478 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births<sup>1</sup>. The 2012 Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care survey identified hemorrhage as the leading cause of maternal deaths (20%) and found that less than half (44%) of all births are attended by a skilled health provider. The limited number of skilled health workers hampers the ability of Madagascar’s health system

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<sup>1</sup> National Statistics Institute (INSTAT). 2012-2013. Madagascar Millenium Development Goals National Monitoring Survey. [https://madagascar.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/OMD\\_Summary\\_0.pdf](https://madagascar.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pub-pdf/OMD_Summary_0.pdf)

to offer quality health services, and data shows that provider knowledge was notably weak in relation to complications that are the leading causes of maternal death in Madagascar<sup>2</sup>.

The [Breakthrough-RESEARCH](#) and [HEARD](#) projects are collaboratively undertaking the APPHC Activity in Malawi and Madagascar. This activity aims to 1) strengthen the evidence base for effective provider behavior change and implementation approaches to prevent and treat PPH, and 2) contribute to strengthening active Implementation Science (IS) platforms/processes for use of evidence base in policies, planning, and implementation; identifying next implementation evidence priorities; and responding to priorities.

To do this, the [Breakthrough-RESEARCH](#) and [HEARD](#) projects undertook a collaborative process to identify research priorities related to PPH in Madagascar, develop specific studies to investigate the identified priorities, and form a multi-stakeholder country working group that would both inform and be informed by the APPHC activities. These activities are underway and are being adapted to remain feasible and relevant in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. As part of this adaptation, the HEARD project is seeking proposals for case studies that document and help understand adaptations related to maintaining essential maternity services that are taking place in Madagascar in response to and as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

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<sup>2</sup> Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program. 2011. Quality of Care of the Prevention and Management of Common Maternal and Newborn Complications in Health Facilities in Madagascar.  
<https://www.mchip.net/sites/default/files/Madagascar%20QoC%20report%20-%20Final.pdf>