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REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

RFI SOLICITATION NUMBER: RFI-APPHC MALAWI-2020-001

Advancements in Post-Partum Hemorrhage Care: Data analysis to understand trends in emergency obstetric service delivery in the context of COVID-19

DATE OF ISSUE: August 28, 2020

CLOSING DATE AND TIME FOR APPLICATIONS:
September 11, 2020
5:00 PM (UTC+2)

Applications must be emailed to: heard@urc-chs.com

Deadline for Questions: **September 3, 2020, 5:00 PM (UTC+2)**

Questions by email ONLY to: heard@urc-chs.com

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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.

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1. PURPOSE OF THE RFI

The purpose of the RFI is to **identify a partner institution** in Malawi to collect, compile, analyze, interpret and package recent data for the purposes of understanding trends in emergency obstetric service delivery in the context of COVID-19 in Malawi. This work relates to the portfolio of work being undertaken by the Advancements in Post-Partum Hemorrhage Care (APPHC) partnership (see Section 8: Background). USAID's Health Evaluation and Applied Research Development (HEARD) project, managed by University Research Co., LLC, expects to make one (1) award up to 25,000USD.

2. OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The HEARD Project aims to partner with an institution in Malawi to collect, compile, analyze, interpret, and package recent data to understand trends in emergency obstetric service delivery in the context of COVID-19 in Malawi. To accomplish this, the following activities are planned:

1. Compile and analyse existing quantitative data related to key maternal health and service delivery indicators (e.g. DHIS2, program monitoring data, site level service delivery data);
2. Document COVID-19 contextual factors (e.g. case numbers, testing, guidance impact on service delivery, etc.) as they are affecting maternal health services;
3. Lead the interpretation and synthesis of the findings, including the incorporation of a contextual analysis (above) to strengthen understanding of trends and conclusions; and
4. Support packaging and presentation of findings to inform policy and practice.

3. SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

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

- a. A clear proposal for an approach to accomplish the expected activities (Section 5);
- b. Demonstrated technical expertise in data management, quantitative analysis, interpretation and presentation of findings;
- c. Demonstrated technical expertise related to maternal health and health systems research in Malawi; 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 five (5) months.

5. EXPECTED ACTIVITIES

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

1. **Compilation and analysis of key maternal health and service delivery indicators**
To inform improvements in policy and practice, an analysis of critical process and outcome data is foreseen. A preliminary list of indicators of interest has been developed. This list needs to be

finalized with partners, including the USAID/ONSE project, USAID/Malawi, and the Ministry of Health. Possible data sources include DHIS2 and monitoring data from ONSE. Other analyses and sources may be proposed by the applicant, including site level data.

2. Documentation of COVID-19 contextual factors

To support the interpretation of the key maternal health and service delivery indicators, it is important to understand the rapidly changing COVID-19 situation and the in-country responses to the continued provision of essential maternal health services. The purpose of this activity is not a stand-alone analysis of COVID-19 data, but rather a synthesis of the data and contextual changes which are affecting maternal health service delivery and outcomes (e.g. COVID case numbers, COVID testing, MOH guidance impacting service delivery, supply chain, training and supervision, etc.).

3. Interpretation, synthesis, packaging, and presentation of the data and findings

The selected partner is expected to interpret and synthesize the findings from the above two activities to provide a global understanding of the situation to aid decision-making related to policies and emergency obstetric service delivery by program implementers and policymakers. Additionally, the selected partner will lead the packaging and presentation of findings (e.g. dashboard, interactive visualizations, etc) in multiple formats to make the findings available to a variety of stakeholders and in formats that are useful to support decision-making. The selected partner will ensure linkages to other ongoing efforts in Malawi related to COVID-19 and maternal health service delivery (e.g. webinars, technical working groups)

4. Participate in periodic APPHC Task Force meetings

The APPHC partnership has worked closely with the Ministry of Health and the Safe Motherhood Technical Working Group to establish the APPHC Task Force that is both informed by and informs the APPHC activities. The purpose of the Task Force is to facilitate an ongoing dialogue between research, implementation, policy, and advocacy partners about post-partum hemorrhage specifically, and emergency obstetric care more broadly. The work conducted by the successful applicant will feed into the Task Force discussions and ultimately decision-making by stakeholders.

The activities may be undertaken by one or more researchers and organizations as a partnership of organizations; this needs to be detailed in the application. Researchers are encouraged to include students (Master's or Doctoral level) on the proposed research team.

6. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONSES

6.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Individuals or teams of individuals in technical organizations **based in Malawi** 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: September 3, 2020
- Due date for applications: September 11, 2020
- Number of award(s) expected: one
- Maximum page length of technical response: four (4) pages maximum (not including Cover Page, Annexes)
- Language for technical response: 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 English and emailed heard@urc-chs.com by **September 3, 2020**.

Responses to the RFI must be submitted in English and emailed to heard@urc-chs.com by **September 11, 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. Describe an approach to accomplishing the activities outlined in section 5 (**limit 2 pages**);
- Section 2. Provide a rationale for the technical expertise of the team proposed. Include who would serve on the team and their roles related to sourcing quantitative data, data management, quantitative analysis, interpretation, and presentation of findings, and why the team is qualified to lead these activities. (**limit 1 page**);
- Section 3. Describe the technical expertise of the team related to maternal health (and specifically PPH and emergency obstetric services), infectious disease surveillance, and/or health systems (**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 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 Malawi-2020-001) and the name of the applicant and organization on every page
 - Limited to up to four (4) 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 Team Lead and Team Members 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 approach;
2. Demonstrated expertise in and ability related to sourcing quantitative data, data management, quantitative analysis, interpretation, and presentation of findings; and,
3. Demonstrated expertise related to maternal health (and specifically PPH and emergency obstetric services), infectious disease surveillance, and/or health systems.

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 proposed approaches 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.

Although Malawi's maternal mortality rate has shown a moderate decline, it continues to be among the highest in Sub-Saharan Africa at 439 per 100,000 live births¹. PPH accounts for at least a quarter of all maternal deaths in Malawi. Despite very high facility delivery (91%), lack of access to quality care in both the public and private sectors across the pregnancy continuum contribute to these statistics. Inadequate human resources is a major issue; only 54 percent of facilities are staffed 24 hours a day. If health care providers are present in the facility, many are unable to adequately attend all births due to high client volume and staffing shortages.

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 approaches to collect, compile, analyze, interpret and package recent data for the purposes of understanding trends in emergency obstetric service delivery in the context of COVID-19 in Malawi.

¹ National Statistical Office (NSO) [Malawi] and ICF. 2017. Malawi Demographic and Health Survey 2015-16. Zomba, Malawi, and Rockville, Maryland, USA. NSO and ICF.