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REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

RFP SOLICITATION NUMBER: RFP-2019-6024-002

Data Collection and Logistical/Translation Services to support an evaluation of a USAID/Guinea-funded health project

DATE OF ISSUE: September 12, 2019

CLOSING DATE AND TIME FOR PROPOSALS:
Thursday, September 27, 2019
5:00 PM (Eastern Time)

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

Deadline for Expressions of Interest (EOI) and Questions: Friday, September 20, 2019, 5:00 PM (ET)

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

Contact Person: Dinara lunusalieva

Issuance of this RFP does not constitute a contractual 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. All costs of the Offeror in the preparation and submission of an offer shall be borne by that Offeror. URC may reject any submission that does not fully comply with requirements of the RFP. URC reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to make no award at all, or to make an award without further discussion or negotiations if it is considered to be in the best interests of the project and URC.

USAID'S HEALTH EVALUATION AND APPLIED RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT (HEARD) PROJECT

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1. PURPOSE OF THE RFP

University Research Co (URC) is looking to procure the services of a local firm to provide **data collection** and **logistical/translation services** that will be required for conducting an evaluation of a USAID-funded health project in Guinea. URC intends to issue a Firm Fixed Price subcontract to the successful offeror.

2. SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS

Successful Offeror will be a local Guinean firm, or a firm that has an office in Guinea, with a specific skill set and organizational capacity expected to include:

- a. Capacity and experience in conducting maternal and child health service data collection activities at selected sites (to be determined) within the country, as well as experience in conducting qualitative data (i.e. in-depth interviews, focus group discussions) with identified key stakeholders.
- b. Availability of an appropriate team leader with a high-level of knowledge and proficiency in conducting quantitative and qualitative data collection in various parts of Guinea.
- c. Capacity to assemble a qualified team of data collectors capable of collecting the required information from sites spread throughout the country using an already developed and approved questionnaire and facility observation and record review protocol.
- d. Capacity to transcribe and enter collected information into an electronic database and the skills to collate, clean and possibly support preliminary analysis of the data as guided by the HEARD evaluation team.
- e. Experience in providing logistical services: organizing meetings, notes takings, coordinating travel (arranging ground transportation in Conakry and other arears on Guinea and lodging, as needed).
- f. Experience in providing translation (oral and written) services (French-English) in health sector.
- g. Previous experience working with USAID-funded programs and knowledge of USAID programs preferred
- h. Demonstrated managerial, technical, and institutional capacities to achieve the results outlined in this RFP; and
- i. Strong institutional financial and management capacities.

3. BACKGROUND

The maternal, neonatal and child health situation in Guinea is dire despite targeted development interventions over the past years. Though preliminary results of the latest Demographic Health Survey (DHS 2018) indicate some improvements, mortality rates remain high. Fever, diarrhea and acute respiratory infections remain the main cause of neonatal and postnatal mortality. There are also recorded changes in key maternal and child health and family planning indicators. Levels of improvement across the different indicators vary across regions, with some of the poorest performance in current USAID regions of interventions. During this period, Guinea suffered the catastrophic 2014 - 2015 Ebola epidemic that claimed the lives of 2,254 people including health service providers. A significant drop in health facility attendance during this period impacted all services, including maternity services, thus increasing the risk of maternal and infant mortality.

USAID Guinea has invested substantial resources targeted at achieving improvement in the provision of maternal and child health services in Guinea over the past years. The USAID Guinea-supported Activity of focus for this evaluation supports an integrated package meant to be implemented through the household-to-hospital continuum of care, where key interventions will ensure that high-quality care is available at each level, as well as access to information and referral for serious illness, obstetric fistula (OF) and long-acting and permanent contraception. This will be achieved through three core objectives; a) delivery of quality health services improved; b) Healthy behaviors and demand for quality health services improved and c) health systems strengthened.

By the end of the five-year period, the project, in collaboration with the MOH, will have contributed to increasing the availability and quality of an essential integrated care package (EICP) for MNCH and FP at each level of the health system, from the community to the prefectural hospital, at regional and national levels, to mitigate the effects of the Ebola epidemic, restore the community’s confidence in the health system and its use, and improve the health of Guinea’s population. At least 80% of 272 targeted facilities will offer the full range of EICP services consistent with their level in the healthcare system.

4. OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID)’s Health Evaluation and Applied Research Development (HEARD) Project will conduct a final performance evaluation of a USAID/Guinea-funded health activity. The evaluation will independently verify the results achieved and how core strategic interventions have contributed to their achievement. This end of activity performance evaluation will establish how USAID can focus its maternal child health and FP interventions to support greater country self-reliance. The evaluation shall point out promising practices / lessons learnt/ weaknesses / gaps/ bright spots that we can build on /expand and new opportunities that should inform the design of a new health activity and overall health strategy for USAID in Guinea over the next five years.

Findings and recommendations from this evaluation can also be used by government and other development partners to determine how efforts and resources can be better directed towards strengthening the health system in Guinea.

5. TIME FRAME

The evaluation activities will take place in country from September to December 2019 with data collection phase in October-November, 2019 for up to 5 weeks.

For the purposes of responding to this RFP, offerors should follow the illustrative timeline below with the understanding that the timeline may shift during implementation.

Tentative schedule for key tasks

Key Tasks	October	November
Training of data collectors	X	
Conducting data collection in selected sites/facilities	X	X
Entering, cleaning, and supporting preliminary analysis datasets	X	X

6. EXPECTED ACTIVITIES

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

A. Data Collection

A.1 Pre-Data Collection

- a. In close collaboration with the HEARD evaluation team, test (and translate) data collection tools and interview guides.
- b. Development of appropriate electronic means of storage in which collected information will be kept.
 - a. An Excel spreadsheet to store site-level quantitative data
 - b. An appropriate database in which to store and analyze qualitative data.
- c. In close collaboration with the evaluation team develop an operational plan and team coverage plan that identifies:
 - a. Team composition including information on how actual data collectors will be identified and appropriately trained. The appropriate team should include 4-5 interviewers with qualitative data collection experience (one of whom would serve as a team lead); and 4-8 (depending on site sample size, TBD) surveyors with the clinical training required to review and assess cases in medical records and perform health facility observations.
 - b. Deployment plan for the data collection exercise when sites for assessment have been identified.
 - c. Timeframe for the data exercise
- d. Development of a data collection, entry, cleaning, and quality assurance plan for both the quantitative and qualitative data.

A.2 Data Collection

- a. Deliver introductory letters to each facility to be assessed if determined to be applicable;
- b. Collect qualitative and quantitative data at site level, including facility surveys, observations, and health record reviews, which will require data collectors with clinical training; and interviews and surveys with the key informants, with electronic quantitative data collection using tablets desired;
- c. Conduct some focus group discussions (FGDs) with groups of cadres at facility if determined to be applicable
- d. Carry out interviews with a sample of health care providers and clients receiving health services through the different models implemented at sites;
- e. Ensure that all required site-level data is collected as accurately as possible before departing each site;
- f. Transcribe (and translate from French to English) all qualitative interviews

A.3 Post-Data Collection

- a. Upload quantitative data from completed questionnaires into Excel database that has been approved by the HEARD evaluation team;
- b. Upload qualitative data from interview guides into database that has been approved by the HEARD evaluation team;
- c. Work with the evaluation team to do data cleaning, quality assurance, and preliminary data analysis (*it is mainly the qualitative data for which preliminary analysis support will be needed*);
- d. Compile a report on the data collection exercise.

B. Logistical and Translation Services:

- a. Assist HEARD evaluation team with organizing meetings with identified stakeholders;
- b. Assist with arranging ground transportation services and hotel accommodations throughout Guinea;
- c. Take notes during meetings, compile and share actionable meeting notes with the team;
- d. Provide interpretation services during meetings and during data collection activities in the field;
- e. Translate evaluation protocol from English into French for IRB approval, if necessary;
- f. Translate questionnaires and other written data collection tools from English into French, as requested;
- g. Translate completed questionnaires and interview transcripts from French into English.

7. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONSES

7.1 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Firms that are interested in participating in this RFP should meet the following requirements:

- Must be a firm based in Guinea or in the West Africa Region with experience in carrying out similar work in Guinea, particularly in the area of maternal and child health services and systems
- Demonstrated expertise in data collection, data analysis, and reporting
- Sufficient level of trained and experienced professionals committed to the work outlined in Activities (Section 6)
- Experience serving USAID-funded programs and knowledge of USAID programs preferred

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

7.2 GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Key Information

Expressions of Interest and Questions:

- Expressions of Interest and Questions about the RFP must be written in English and emailed to heard@urc-chs.com, copying Dinara Iunusalieva at diunusalieva@urc-chs.com by **September 20, 2019, 5:00 PM (ET)**.

- The subject line of the email must be: **RFP-2019-6024-002: EOI and Questions for Data Collection/ Logistics Services in Guinea**
- Expression of Interest should include brief summary of previous experience and current expertise in implementing data collection activities of similar size and scope, highlighting maternal and child health services/systems experience and USAID or other donor-funded experience (**not to exceed 1 page**).
- Questions are not included in 1-page limit. Questions section is optional and should be submitted together with EOIs if an offeror has any questions about the RFP
- Language for EOIs and Questions: English only

Technical and Cost Proposals:

- Technical and Cost Proposals must be submitted in English and emailed to heard@urc-chs.com, copying Dinara Lunusalieva at diunusalieva@urc-chs.com by **September 27, 2019, 5:00 PM (ET)**.
- The subject line of the email must be: **RFP-2019-6024-002: Proposal for Data Collection/ Logistics Services in Guinea**
- Number of award(s) expected: **one**
- The proposal must be divided into two parts, **the Technical Proposal** and **the Cost Proposal**. The two parts should be electronically submitted at the same time.
- Maximum page length of technical proposal: **5 (five)** pages maximum (not including Cover Page, Annexes)
- Language for technical and cost proposals: English only

All responses received by the deadline will be reviewed for responsiveness to the specifications outlined in Section. Applications may be judged as nonresponsive if they do not follow the instructions in the RFP. Section 8 addresses the technical evaluation procedures and criteria for the responses. Applicants are advised to carefully read the instructions.

Modifications to the RFP may be made at any time prior to the Proposal submission deadline. Deadline for submission may be extended depending on the scope of a modification. Modifications after the deadline for proposals will be communicated only to those Offerors who submitted proposals.

7.3 CONTENT OF TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

The technical proposal must be specific, complete, and presented concisely, demonstrating the applicant's **Organizational Capabilities and Technical Expertise** with respect to achieving the activities described in the RFP. The applicant's statement of Organizational Capabilities and Technical Expertise must include the following areas:

- Section 1: Previous experience and current expertise in implementing data collection activities of similar size and scope, highlighting maternal and child health services/systems experience and USAID or other donor-funded experience (**limit 2 pages**).
- Section 2: Previous experience and current capacity related to providing in-country logistical and translation service to evaluation teams (**limit 1 page**).
- Section 3: Personnel experience and capability (**limit 1 page**):
- a. The Offeror should propose 1 senior level team member to function as the team lead and summarize his/her specific training, role, and relevant experience in organizing and leading data collection activities.

- b. The Offeror will propose a team with specific roles, responsibilities and qualifications of each member. Each team member will have a thorough understanding and demonstrated experience conducting similar assignments.

Section 4: Institutional capacity to coordinate and implement the above-mentioned activities; including technical, financial, and administrative management capacity (**limit 1 page**).

7.4 FORMAT REQUIREMENTS

7.4.1 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

- a. The Expression of Interest and Questions should be:
 - Written in English
 - Typed in a Microsoft Word compatible program, single-spaced with a 12-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 RFP number (RFP-2019-6024-002) and the name of the offeror organization on every page
 - Limited to one (1) page not including cover page and questions
 - Questions section is optional and should be submitted together with EOIs if an offeror has any questions about the RFP
- b. The EOI should have **Cover Page** (not included in the page limit) with the following information:
 - Program/Project title;
 - RFP reference number;
 - Name of organization applying to the RFP;
 - Contact person, telephone number, fax number, address, and types name(s) and title(s) of person(s), who prepared the application, and corresponding signatures.

7.4.2 TECHNICAL PROPOSAL

- a. The technical proposal should be:
 - Written in English
 - Typed in a Microsoft Word compatible program, single-spaced with a 12-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 RFP number (RFP-2019-6024-002) and the name of the offeror organization on every page
 - Limited to five (5) 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;
 - RFP reference number;
 - Name of organization applying to the RFP;
 - 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 Vitaes (CVs)** of proposed team lead and other personnel will be included in Annex.

7.5 COST PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Since the locations of data collection, and number of surveys are being further discussed the cost proposal asks for unit prices, based on current assumption of a 3-week data collection throughout Guinea. The final data sampling frame will be determined after the award.

- a. The Cost Proposal must be submitted in a separate document at the same time the technical proposal is submitted.
- b. The Cost Proposal should consist of a budget with budget narrative
- c. Detailed budget should be submitted in Microsoft Excel format (with formulas) broken down by data collections services and logistical/translation services
- d. Budget narrative describing the cost assumptions made, if any, for each item listed in the proposed price so that each cost element is fully explained.
- e. A copy of Tax ID Registration, corporate business registration or operating license.
- f. The anticipated range for this award is **\$30,000 – \$40,000**. However, URC will consider the best value for money from Offerors. The Cost Proposal should be submitted in United States Dollars.

What can be funded

URC will reimburse the vendor for expenses and charges that are reasonable, allowable, allocable and eligible. Examples of types of cost that will be allowed under the anticipated Subcontract:

1. Staff time specifically related to the scope of work
2. Expenses for meetings required for assignment purposes, including: data collector training, production or printing of documents
3. Lodging, Meals and Incidental (M&IE) expenses for data collection team whilst in the field
4. Local travel costs associated with the data collection
5. Telecommunications related to the data collection
6. Other expenses that are directly related to the assignment.

Examples of what cannot be funded:

1. Salary supplements or stipends
2. Transportation of interviewees/respondents for data collection
3. Purchase of computers or other equipment
4. Purchase of vehicles
5. Rent for office space

This list is not all-inclusive, and additional questions on eligibility of items and costs should be addressed to heard@urc-chs.com and submitted as part of Expression of Interest and Questions as noted on the cover page of this RFP.

8. REVIEW AND NOTIFICATION PROCESS

8.1 TECHNICAL REVIEW

The HEARD team may schedule meetings/conference calls with the offerors that will express interest in participating in this procurement effort and meet requirements outlined in Section 7.1 Eligibility Criteria of the subject RFP.

A Technical Review Committee will evaluate the Offerors' Organizational Capacity and Technical Expertise Statements taking into account the eligibility criteria (Section 7.1) and the technical review criteria (Section 8.2) found in this RFP.

8.2 REVIEW CRITERIA FOR TECHNICAL AND COST PROPOSALS

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

1. Organizational Capacity/Past Performance
 - a. Strong capability and experience of the Offeror to successfully conduct all aspects of the data collection and analysis as determined by past successful implementation of similar activities.
 - b. Experience and current expertise related to providing in-country logistical and translation service to evaluation teams
 - c. Demonstrated Institutional capacity to coordinate and implement the activities in the SOW; including technical, financial, and administrative management capacity.
2. Qualifications of Proposed Team
 - a. Proposed team leader has demonstrated leadership, expertise and experience carrying out data collection activities, including site-level assessment, training and facilitation in Guinea
 - b. Proposed data collection team has demonstrated expertise and experience in the area of data collection in public health sector in Guinea.
 - c. Proposed Experience and qualifications of logistics coordinator and translator(s).
3. Evaluation of Cost Proposal
 - a. After the Technical Proposal is evaluated by the technical review panel, HEARD will review the Cost Proposal. HEARD will assess whether the proposed budget is realistic and feasible given the items and activities described. HEARD may contact Offerors to revise budgets if any issues or questions are identified.

8.3 NOTIFICATION PROCESS

URC will review and select proposal submitted in accordance with the criteria set forth in this RFP.

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

ANNEX I: HEALTH, EVALUATION AND APPLIED RESEARCH (HEARD) PROJECT

The purpose of the HEARD Project is to undertake research and evaluation efforts to accelerate progress towards achieving USAID’s global health and development goals, including Ending Preventable Child and Maternal Death, achieving an AIDS Free Generation, and Protecting Communities from Infectious Diseases Initiatives, including the Global Health Security Agenda. The HEARD Project will focus on evaluative and targeted research that accelerates research-to-use processes.

The HEARD Project is engaged with building a partnership around IS through the creation the Implementation Science Collaborative (ISC). The ISC is comprised of organizations that work to advance global health goals as implementation support organizations, regional health bodies, policy advocacy groups, civil society-based evidence advocates, research organizations, and academic institutions. This strategic mix of partners will help to inform which research questions are prioritized in different contexts, to generate and analyze evidence, and to better package and move evidence through channels which render it more accessible to inform policy and practice.

The HEARD Project and the ISC will seek to:

- Effectively respond to evaluation and research-to-use global health priorities: developing the study designs and issue-specific partnerships required to navigate a complex effort along a strategic research-to-use pathway;
- Actively engage national, regional, and global-level stakeholders for the development of those priorities: engaging and supporting a growing community of interested implementers, policy makers, and investigators in shaping and promoting a more relevant research-to-use agenda and capacity; and by
- Strengthening and connecting the institutional applied research capacities required to sustain a vigorous implementation science agenda in support of global health goals, emerging threats and new opportunities.

Our approach is illustrated in Figure 1, below. Emphasizing effective stakeholder engagement and knowledge management throughout, the four main strategies of the HEARD Project are: (1) partnership and agenda development; (2) data liberation and evidence strengthening; (3) research and evaluation study design and implementation; and (4) the acceleration of evidence-to-use processes.

Figure 1. Key strategies for accelerating research-to-use

