



**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**

**RFA SOLICITATION NUMBER: FY18-RFA02-500**

**Data Collection and Analysis Services for the  
USAID Human Resources for Health in 2030 (HRH2030) Project  
Through University Research Co., LLC**

**Date of Issue: Wednesday, April 25, 2018**

**Closing Time and Date for Applications:  
17:00 Hrs. Eastern Africa Time (EAT) on Wednesday, May 9, 2018**

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

**No hard copies of Applications will be accepted**

**Deadline for Questions: 17:00 hrs. EAT on Wednesday May 2, 2018**

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

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute a contractual commitment on the part of URC (the "Client"), nor does it commit URC or the US Government to pay for costs incurred in the submission of an Application. All costs of the Applicant in the preparation and submission of an application shall be borne by that Applicant. URC reserves the right to reject any and all Applications 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.

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

1. CONTEXT
2. PURPOSE OF RFA
3. ACTIVITIES
4. DELIVERABLES
5. TIMING, MILESTONES AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS
6. AWARD
7. ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES
8. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR OFFERORS
9. INSTRUCTIONS FOR OFFERORS
10. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR APPLICATIONS
11. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

## I. CONTEXT

Since it was established more than 50 years ago, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has been a vital supporter of global- and national-level efforts to improve the health workforce in low- and middle-income countries. The USAID funded Human Resources for Health in 2030 (HRH2030) program, managed by Chemonics International Inc., builds on USAID's investments to improve the health workforce. HRH2030 contributes to increasing the sustained availability, accessibility, acceptability, and quality of the health workforce. The program aligns with the approaches that support the USAID and the United States Government (USG) strategies for achieving the global health goals of ending preventable child and maternal deaths, achieving the control of the HIV/AIDS epidemic, protecting communities from infectious diseases, and contributing to the Global Health Security Agenda.

To meet these goals, countries need to mobilize greater domestic resources for HRH and make rational health workforce allocations at the program level. By flooding a health system with new workers, investments in HRH can lead to better health outcomes through an improved economic standing via job creation, as well as an enhanced health system via greater social cohesion. HRH2030 is developing an HRH investment impact methodology featuring a framework-based and retrospective study approach. The objective of this activity is to develop a tool for health system decision-makers to inform multisectoral policy dialogue and advocacy about prioritizing investments in the health workforce based on the expected economic, social and health impact and its return on investment (ROI).

University Research Co., LLC (URC), a partner to Chemonics International on the HRH2030 project, will lead this activity in collaboration with Brandeis University. A HRH ROI framework to calculate the return on investment and health impacts of specific HRH investments has been created. By identifying economic, social, and health parameters through a combination of the framework-based and retrospective methodologies, expected HRH benefits from any future interventions through the Excel-based tool can then be quantified. By inputting specific parameters into this Excel tool, Ministries of Health will be able to estimate the cost and projected benefits of potential HRH investments in their own respective countries. Ideally, any nation could use this tool to calculate the potential costs and benefits of HRH projects.

Field testing the above will include the application of the predictive framework-based analysis using evidence from published literature (peer-reviewed and grey) and implementation of the retrospective study in certain countries. Ethiopia, with the health extension worker program (HEW) provides a natural opportunity to undertake the retrospective assessment of the program (mostly rural focused) and the flooding and retention HRH strategy (FRS). The contribution of health workers targeted by the flooding and retention strategy will be documented through task-shifting/sharing with HEWs.

Field testing will incorporate four separate stages of interviews and focus groups and will involve human subjects. Interviews will take place in four different interview stages: (1) interviews with key informants at the national level designed to inform the inputs for HRH; (2) interviews with key informants at the health worker level designed as a time/motion study to understand the daily tasks of a health extension worker as well as the amount of time spent on each task as well as the 'opportunity costs' associated with choosing to be a Health Extension Worker (HEW) taking into account task-shifting/sharing with other health workers including those identified in the FRS; (3) patient/client exit interviews with contingent analysis to estimate health and social benefits gained as well as triangulation on time spent with the HEW, and (4) focus groups in various communities to gather information on perceptions of health, social and economic (from the employment of health workers) benefits gained.

The purpose of the interviews and focus groups is threefold: to gather quantitative and qualitative data from patients, clients, key informants, and health workers at various levels of the Ethiopian health system,

to use the entire process as a means to ‘field-test’ the ROI HRH Excel tool, and to fill in any gaps on potential impacts where data are scarce or not available.

## **2. PURPOSE OF THE RFA**

In this collaboration with Brandeis University, University Research Co., LLC, is looking for the services of a local firm to support the field test as indicated in the Context section of this RFA which will allow for the calculation of the return-on-investment (ROI) and estimate the economic, social, and health benefits of specific HRH investments. This portion of the study will focus on, estimating the ROI for Health Extension Workers (HEWs). The successful applicant should be a firm with the capacity to carry out the required data collection activities at selected sites in Ethiopia as well as obtain the appropriate and necessary Institutional Review Board permissions to undertake the collection.

Proposed sites will be situated throughout Ethiopia. To generate a list of eligible facilities from which to draw, four sampling frames have been created. They are: 1. Northern Ethiopia - containing all zones within the Afar Region; 2. Western Ethiopia – containing the rest of the zones in the Amhara Region; 3. Southern Ethiopia – containing two zones within the Oromia Region (Borana, and Guji), as well as all zones within the Southern Nations, Nationalities, and Peoples’ Region (Bench Maji, Dawro, Gamo Gofa, Gedeo, Gurage, Hadiya, Keffa, Kembata Tembaro, Sehka, Sidama, Silt’e, South Omo, Wolayita, Alaba, Amaro, Basketo, Burji, Dirashe, Konso, Konta, and Yem), and; 4. Eastern Ethiopia – containing the rest of the zones within the Oromia region.

The field test exercise will utilize both quantitative and qualitative data collection. The tools and format will be provided by the Client. Key methodologies to be utilized include:

- Documentary review of existing data sources on HEWs of interest to this activity as well as health workers targeted by the FRS
- Key informant interviews with:
  - 15-20 respondents who have strong ties to the Ministry of Health,
  - HRH investment respondents at the health worker level designed as a time/motion study to understand the daily tasks of a health extension worker as well as the amount of time spent on each task and the ‘opportunity costs’ associated with choosing to be a HEW. This will include an assessment of task-shifting/sharing between HEWs and other health workers including those related to FRS.
  - Patient/client exit interviews with contingent analysis to estimate health and social benefits gained as well as triangulation on time spent with the HEW and other health workers including those related to FRS. It is anticipated Patient/Client Exit Interviews will take place at the same 100 randomly selected health facilities chosen for the time/motion study. A conservative estimate of 1500 interviews (nationally) will be gathered, using an estimate of 15 exit interviews conducted at each health facility.
  - Representatives of the various HRHs and HEWs of interest to this activity
  - Other local government or agency officials to be determined
- Focus group discussions with HEWs and other health workers of interest to this activity (per every fifth facility with no more than eight members per group, or 25 nationally). Workload assessments of HEWs through time and motion studies, interviews, use of individual timesheets and through observation. The focus group discussions will take place at the same, 100 randomly selected health facilities chosen for patient/client key informant interviews.

The data collection needs for this assignment include the following:

- Conducting assessments of HEWs as well as FRS health workers to evaluate at least the following:
  - Number of HRH;
  - HRH costs;
  - Coverage allocation
  - Employment impact (household income and expenditures from health worker employment))
  - Health impact
  - Social impact
  - Empowerment
  - Value of health
  - Value of equity and
  - Value of empowerment.

The successful Applicant should have a team leader with a high-level of knowledge, proficiency and capacity to conduct similar assignments. The successful Applicant should have the capacity to assemble a team of experienced data collectors capable of collecting the required information from sites in the target districts using data collection tools provided by the Client and with inputs from other key stakeholders. The successful Applicant should have the capacity and necessary resources to capture data in a digital format and enter collected information into an appropriate software, as well as the skills to collate, clean and analyze the data as guided by the Client to produce meaningful outputs that will be useful in achieving the objectives of this assignment.

The successful Applicant should also clearly mention in their response to this RFA how they propose to contribute cost share towards implementing this activity. While cost share is not expected to be monetary, in-kind contributions that can be costed and validated (such as provision of already existent data sets that are key to implementation of the activity, provision of training space for data collectors, subsidization of transportation to districts/sites where data is to be collected, etc..) should clearly be identified in the offerors response to the RFA. The proportion of cost share as part of the overall cost of this activity should be stated in the Applicant's Cost Application, our expectation is a cost share proportion of at least 15% of the overall cost of implementing this activity. The proposed cost share should be clearly itemized in the Applicant's cost application.

### **3. ACTIVITIES**

#### **3.1 Pre-Data Collection**

- a. In close collaboration with the Client and Brandeis University, finalize the development of data collection tools/interview guides for IRB submission. This includes the review of data collection tools and providing feedback. Conduct a consultation with stakeholders (TBD) about the purpose and design of the study and the data collection tools. The aim of the consultation is to share information and solicit feedback.

- b. Lead the submission of the IRB package. Ensure that the package is submitted to the relevant authority and in the correct format as well as following the process through to approval. IRB approval must be obtained before June 30, 2018
- c. Obtain letter(s) of support from MOH and others as needed; perform sample selection under guidance from Brandeis University; develop notification of authorities and sites about impending research; any other preparatory steps needed for a successful conduct of the data collection.
- d. Develop appropriate electronic means of collection, storage and basic analysis (frequency distributions and cross-tabulations to describe the sample) of data in conjunction with URC and Brandeis University.
  - 1. An appropriate digital platform to utilize for field-based data collection
  - 2. Data storage on a secure cloud server.
  - 3. Appropriate software package(s) for analysis of information collected during the assessment
- e. Develop an organizational structure and team coverage plan that identifies:
  - 1. Overall team leader
  - 2. Team composition including information on how actual data collectors will be identified and appropriately trained
  - 3. Deployment plan for the assessment exercise in the five regions
  - 4. Timeframe for the exercise
  - 5. Training plan for data collectors and execution of training
- f. Ensure participation of the data collection team in the data collection training to be led by Brandeis University and co-facilitated by the Applicant.
- g. Provide Brandeis University real-time access to the data on the cloud server.

### **3.2 During Data Collection**

- a. Ensure sites/respondents are aware of activity and coordinate logistics
- b. Carry introductory letters from appropriate authorities to each site/informant participating in the activity
- c. Conduct documentary review as highlighted in Section 2
- d. Conduct interviews with the key informants identified in Section 2
- e. Conduct focus group discussions as highlighted in Section 2
- f. Conduct workload assessments of HEWs as highlighted in Section 2
- g. Ensure that all required site-level data is collected accurately and completely using digital devices before departing each site
- h. Upload data collected to the cloud server at the end of each day or as soon as enumerators are connected to mobile services

- i. Perform routine data consistency and quality checks on a daily basis

### 3.3 Post-Data Collection

- a. Work with Brandeis University researchers to clean data as necessary and prepare clean data tables and dictionaries.
- b. Conduct a basic data analysis including frequency distributions and cross-tabulations to describe the demographic and geographic distribution of the sample population.
- c. Compile a report on the implementation of the activity describing its process and challenges and including the summary findings from the basic analysis.

## 4. DELIVERABLES

The following deliverables for this assignment consist of the following:

- 1. Inception report detailing plans for recruitment and deployment of data collectors, site sampling and execution of field test activities.
- 2. Successful submission of IRB package and follow-up to completion of the process; IRB approval must be obtained before June 30, 2018.
- 3. Digital data collection tools as agreed with the Client.
- 4. Report on the data collection process including lessons learned and challenges faced during exercise including summary findings from the basic analysis.

## 5. TIMING, MILESTONES AND PERFORMANCE TARGETS

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

### Proposed schedule for key tasks

Key Tasks	May	June	July	August
Preparing and submitting IRB package (approval before June 30)	X	X		
Obtain letter(s) of support from MOH and others as needed, Stakeholder meeting, Sample selection, Notification of authorities and sites, Compose research team and contract of enumerators	X	X		
Development of digital data collection tools and database		X		
Training of data collectors (co-facilitate with Brandeis University)			X	
Data collection and cloud storage			X	
Data cleaning and basic analysis				X
Producing report				X

### Milestones and deadlines

<b>Implementation Stage</b>	<b>Milestone</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Initial	Preparation and submission of IRB package Approval received	June 1, 2018 (latest) June 28, 2018
Initial	Data collectors trained	July 6, 2018
Advanced	Data from all sites cleaned, dataset prepared and analyzed (basic) and successfully transmitted to Client	August 15, 2018
Completed	Reports submitted as per instructions in Section 4	August 30, 2018

## **6. AWARD**

An agreement will be entered into, at URC's discretion, with the Applicant whose technical and financial offer demonstrates the most responsive and cost-effective approach and methodology to meet the RFA requirements, and whose offer represents the best value to HRH2030 and clearly outlines plans for cost share towards the implementation of this activity.

## **7. ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES**

Individuals and firms that are interested in participating in this RFA should meet the following requirements:

- Must be a firm in Ethiopia with experience carrying out similar work in Ethiopia
- Must have extensive experience carrying out assignments of similar size and complexity
- Demonstrated expertise in data collection, data analysis and reporting
- Sufficient level of trained and experienced professionals committed to the work as outlined above
- A verifiable reputation of integrity and competence
- Experience serving USAID-funded programs and knowledge of USAID programs is preferred

## **8. SUBMISSION GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS**

Soft copies of this RFA can be online found at <http://www.urc-chs.com/partnerships>. Only electronic submission of responses to this RFA will be permitted. All responses should be submitted to [hrhassessments@urc-chs.com](mailto:hrhassessments@urc-chs.com) by the deadline mentioned in this RFA.

## **9. INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICANTS:**

Applicants are encouraged to review in detail the following eligibility requirements, preparation and submission instructions. Applicants requiring clarification should send their written questions in English to [hrhassessments@urc-chs.com](mailto:hrhassessments@urc-chs.com) by 17:00 hours EAT, Wednesday, May 2, 2018 referencing the RFA Solicitation Number (FY18-RFA02-500) in the subject line of the email.

### **9.1 TECHNICAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

The Technical Application shall be a maximum of 20 pages containing the following sections in the order shown, using clear and concise language.

### **9.1.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY (1 Page Maximum)**

### **9.1.2 CONTEXT (2 Pages Maximum)**

This section should include a general overview of the proposed approach to this activity.

### **9.1.3 TECHNICAL APPROACH (14 Pages Maximum)**

This section should include a brief description of the Applicant's technical and strategic approach to providing the services requested herein as well as a data entry and analysis plan.

### **9.1.4 INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY (3 Pages Maximum)**

This section should briefly describe the capacity of the Applicant with respect to:

- **Previous experience** in implementing data collection activities of similar size and scope, highlighting USAID or other donor-funded experience, as applicable;
- **Personnel experience and capability.** The Applicant will propose an individual or team with specific roles, responsibilities and qualifications of each member. Each team member will have a thorough understanding and demonstrated experience conducting similar assignments. The Applicant should propose at least one senior level team member to function as the team lead.

### **9.1.5 ANNEX TO THE TECHNICAL APPLICATION**

**Annex:** In this section, the Applicant should provide CVs (limit of 3 pages each) and biographical data forms (USAID Form 1420) of proposed key personnel for this activity.

## **9.2 COST APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

The Cost Application must be submitted in a separate document in Microsoft Excel format (with formulas evident) at the same time the technical application is submitted. The Cost Application shall consist of a budget and budget narrative describing the following costs, as applicable:

### **9.2.1 What can be funded:**

URC will reimburse the awardee for all 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 or consultant time specifically related to the scope of work
2. Expenses for meetings required for assignment purposes, including: data collector training, review of assessment documentation, production or printing of documents
3. Expenses for data collection, analysis, and report write-up
4. Per diem, Meals and Incidental (M&IE) expenses whilst in the field
5. Local travel costs associated with the data collection
6. Telecommunications related to the assessment
7. Itemized cost share applications that the Applicant will cover as part of this assignment
8. Other expenses that are directly related to the assignment

### **9.2.2 What cannot be funded:**

Operating costs of a program such as:

1. Salary supplements or stipends
2. Transportation of interviewees/respondents for data collection

3. Purchase of computers
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 [hrhassessment@urc-chs.com](mailto:hrhassessment@urc-chs.com) prior to the deadline for questions noted on the cover page of this RFA.

\* If the Applicant includes indirect costs (i.e., overhead, G&A) in its budget, it should clearly describe the basis for the claim of indirect costs (e.g., financial statement, audit report) or simply list only direct charges in the budget (i.e., no indirect costs as a percentage of direct costs).

The anticipated value for this award is not expected to exceed US\$ 30,000. However, the Client will consider the best value for money from Applicants. The Cost Application should be submitted in United States Dollars (US\$).

As already mentioned in Section 2, it is a requirement of this RFA that the Applicant propose cost sharing opportunities as part of the response.

## **10. EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR APPLICATION**

The complete technical application will be reviewed by a technical review panel, convened by HRH2030 and evaluated against the following criteria:

1. **Technical Approach (40 points)**
  - a. Technical approach reflects knowledge and expertise in data collection and analysis
  - b. Proposed training and deployment timeline is realistic and reflects a good comprehension of the activities presented in this RFA
  - c. Technical approach is clearly articulated and presents a thorough understanding of data collection methods and clearly articulates how to operationalize this activity in Ethiopia
2. **Qualifications of Team Leaders and Trainers (20 points)**
  - a. Team leader has demonstrated experience carrying out data collection activities, including site-level assessments and evaluations in Ethiopia
  - b. Experience and qualifications of personnel are appropriate relative to their respective roles on the team
3. **Organizational Capacity/Past Performance (10 points)**
  - a. Strong capability of the Applicant to successfully conduct all aspects of the data collection, analysis and reporting for the community-based worker assessment exercise as determined by past successful implementation of similar activities
  - b. Clear description of the roles and responsibilities of team members
  - c. Proposed team leader has the qualifications necessary to successfully complete the work detailed in the RFA
4. **Evaluation of Cost Application (30 points)**

After the Technical Application is evaluated by the technical review panel, HRH2030 will review the Cost Application. HRH2030 will assess whether the proposed budget is realistic and feasible given the items and activities described. HRH2030 may contact Applicants to revise budgets if any issues or questions are identified.

## II. SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Applications must be submitted in English to [hrhassessments@urc-chs.com](mailto:hrhassessments@urc-chs.com) on Wednesday, May 9, 2018 by 17:00 hrs. EAT. The application must be divided into two parts, the Technical Application and the Cost Application. The two parts should be electronically submitted at the same time.

1. The Technical Application should be typed in a 12-point font and not exceeding 20 pages as described in Section 9.1 above
2. The Technical Application should be submitted in the below order.
  - I. Cover Page
  - II. Table of Contents
  - III. List of Acronyms
  - IV. Executive Summary
  - V. Context
  - VI. Technical Approach
  - VII. Institutional Capacity
  - VIII. Annex with CVs and biodata forms of proposed staff

*Note that the Cover Page, Table of Contents, List of Acronyms and Annex do not count toward the 20-page maximum for the Technical Application.*

3. The Cost Application should be sent as a Microsoft Excel document.
4. A Budget Narrative should be typed in a 12-point font, not to exceed 2 pages, and submitted in Microsoft Word or searchable PDF format.
5. Modifications to the RFA may be made at any time prior to the Application submission deadline. Deadline for submission may be extended depending on the scope of a modification. Modifications after the deadline for Applications will be communicated only to those Applicants who submitted applications.