Request for Applications

Serve as Local Research Partner for
Nigeria Multi-Activity Evaluation Baseline

Introduction

Data for Impact (D4I) is a five-year cooperative agreement funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). D4I supports countries to realize the power of data as actionable evidence that can improve programs, policies, and—ultimately—health outcomes. The University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH), through the Carolina Population Center (CPC), leads D4I in partnership with Palladium, ICF, John Snow, Inc. (JSI), and Tulane University.

D4I seeks a research organization to serve as our local partner for the Nigeria Multi-Activity Evaluation. The purpose of this request for applications (RFA) is to determine the organization best suited to play this role. The successful applicant will demonstrate superior technical, logistical, and organizational capacity needed to conduct the study. If a successful applicant is selected, they will be contracted through UNC-CH.

Nigeria Multi-Activity Evaluation

Data for Impact (D4I) is conducting an outcome evaluation of 4 four USAID/Nigeria Health, Population, and Nutrition (HPN) activities in order to provide evidence for health programming, with a focus on comparing an integrated health programming approach with a disease-focused approach (malaria). The four activities to be evaluated are the Integrated Health Project (IHP), the President's Malaria Initiative for States (PMI-S), Breakthrough ACTION-Nigeria (BA-N), and the Global Health Supply Chain Program – Procurement and Supply Management (GHSC-PSM).

The evaluation will be implemented in three case study states—Kebbi, where IHP is implementing an integrated approach; Zamfara, where PMI-S will be implementing a disease-focused, or vertical, approach; and Ebonyi, where both IHP and PMI-S will be implementing. BA-N and GHSC-PSM are operating in all three states and are expected to collaborate and coordinate with IHP and PMI-S.

The results of the evaluation will inform ongoing, adaptive changes in activity implementation and support USAID learning objectives. The evaluation will also help USAID/Nigeria determine how it can most effectively direct its investments to improve health outcomes.

Data Collection

Data collection will include implementation of a supplemental health facility assessment (HFA) and heath provider interviews in Ebonyi, Kebbi, and Zamfara. Data collection will be conducted in English.

In each state, we will conduct data collection at 120 health facilities (HFs), resulting in 360 total HFs in the sample. HFs will be sampled by the D4I team and a list will be provided to the local research partner. There will be no more than one HF per ward selected.

In Ebonyi and Kebbi, we will conduct a limited HFA focused on specific health areas. The HFA in Zamfara will be more comprehensive.

In all three states we will conduct an average of three health provider interviews per HF (i.e., 360 interviews per state, 1080 interviews total).

Prior to the start of data collection, D4I will obtain ethics approval from UNC in the United States and from the National Health Research Ethics Committee in Nigeria.

Activities and Responsibilities for the Local Research Partner

The local research partner will work in close collaboration with D4I to carry out the following activities.

Recruitment of Enumerators

The local research partner will recruit a sufficient number of qualified enumerators and interviewers to implement the supplemental HFA and the provider interviews in Kebbi, Zamfara, and Ebonyi in a six-week period. We estimate that a team of two to three enumerators and one supervisor can complete one HF in one day (HFA and provider interviews), thus we suggest 12 teams comprised of three to four persons inclusive of a supervisor (i.e., four teams per state).

The enumerators and supervisors should be trained clinicians (doctors, nurses, senior community health extension workers, or community health officers).

Training of Enumerators/Interviewers and Pre-Test of Data Collection Tools

The local research partner, with support from D4I, will train the core data collection team and team supervisors in Abuja. We estimate that the training will take seven days, including a one day pre-test of the study tools. The local research partner will handle all training logistics, including transport for pre-testing. Topics covered should include an introduction to the study and an overview of the survey, treatment of human subjects, interview techniques, and an in-depth review of the study tools in English. The training should include practice interviews prior to the pre-test.

Following the central training, similar state level trainings (seven days) will be held in Ebonyi, Kebbi, Zamfara, led by members of the core data collection team and supervisors trained in Abuja. These trainings will include practice interviews, but no pre-test.

Finalization of Data Collection Tools

The local research partner will participate in the finalization of all data collection tools following the pre-test of the tools.

Liaise with Local Authorities

The local research partner will be responsible for arranging all necessary permissions and conducting all necessary protocol visits with local authorities at all study locations prior to the start of data collection.

Data Collection/Data Quality

The local research partner will implement data collection over as a period of six weeks as described above. For the supplemental HFA, data will be collected on paper and then entered into a tablet pre-programmed by D4I. For the health provider interview, data will be collected directly onto tablets pre-programmed by D4I. Tablets will be provided by D4I. The local research partner will upload data to a secure D4I server each day, or whenever internet access is available. The data collection team will be responsible for conducting internal quality checks at different stages of field work.

Dissemination of Results

The local research partner should also plan for a half-day results dissemination meeting in Abuja for approximately 40 persons.

Deliverables

- Finalized data collection tools
- Biweekly (every two weeks) reports on field work preparations and progress
- Uploaded HFA and provider data files to D4I secure server
- Participation in dissemination meeting
- Provision of secure storage of all hard copy documents (e.g., consent forms)

Timeline

D4I has already begun preliminary preparations for the study. The successful applicant should plan to start activities in March/April 2021. The expected timeline for study benchmarks is presented below:

- Training of data collection team and pre-test to study tools: March 2020
- Completion of data collection: April 2021

Application Requirements

The successful applicant will be required to possess the following skills and competencies:

- Experience with health facility assessments; experience with evaluation of health programs is strongly preferred;
- Experience managing large teams of enumerators collecting data in fieldwork settings;
- Evaluation design and research skills;
- Excellent project management and people management skills and the ability to deliver within timeframes as reflected in the work plan;
- Familiarity with Nigerian government processes for implementing surveys and experience establishing necessary relationships with government agencies;
- Excellent writing skills in English.

Applicants should take steps to register in https://sam.gov/SAM/ if they are not already registered. Active registration in SAM.gov will be required prior to contracting.

Organizations wishing to serve as D4I's local research partner for the Nigeria Multi-Activity Evaluation study should submit:

1) A **cover letter** that clearly identifies the application is responding to the "Nigeria Multi-Activity Evaluation" and stating the applicant organization's name, address, phone numbers, URL, and main email address. There should be a contact person listed for any purpose related to this RFA.

2) A **technical proposal** that describes in detail the approach to addressing the technical and logistical requirements to conduct a facility survey of the magnitude described above. The approach should describe a recruitment plan for enumerators (qualifications, where recruited from, size of overall team, number of team members, etc.); training topics for enumerator training; and a discussion of data collection logistics and data quality measures.

   The technical proposal should highlight any activities that will build local evaluation research capacity, including that of the data collection team itself.

   The technical proposal should address the applicant's COVID-19 safety protocol for data collection activities as well as how the applicant will address any security challenges that may arise during data collection.

   The technical proposal should include a **detailed timeline** that lays out all the project activities and tasks with projected completion dates for each activity and task.

   The technical proposal should be no more than 10 pages, 1.5 spaced with 1 inch margins and 11 point Times New Roman font.

3) An **organizational description and experience statement**. The applicant should provide a brief description of the overall governance structure of their organization. The applicant should describe the number and roles/responsibilities of the staff that will implement the study.

   The applicant should name the key technical and administrative/financial personnel that will be involved in the activities. It should name a principal investigator and a chief administrative/financial officer who will serve as the main technical and financial liaison persons with D4I (this can be the same person). CVs of key staff should be included in the application.

The applicant should also describe their organization's past experience successfully organizing and conducting quantitative and qualitative research in Nigeria. The applicant should provide a description of past projects (up to three, with no more than a one page description per project; these pages will not count to overall length of the application) that demonstrate the capacity to do high quality work.

The organizational description should be no more than three pages, 1.5 spaced with 1 inch margins and 11 Times New Roman point font, exclusive of CVs and past project descriptions.

4) A **description of financial/accounting structures and practices**. The applicant should submit, on letterhead, a statement of how the applicant calculates any indirect costs (if charged in the budget).

5) A **detailed budget and budget narrative** that breaks down costing information by line item. It should include, but is not limited to the following cost categories:

Personnel: List name and/or position title, annual base salary or daily rate, percent of effort or number of workdays for each category of staff (e.g., field supervisor, enumerator, etc.). Please provide justification and a description of responsibilities for each category of staff.

Training: Include expenses for training of enumerators, such as lunch and tea breaks, training materials, venue, and per diem.

Travel/transport: List travel/transport expenses, such as vehicle rental, driver per diem, etc., for training and data collection.

Other direct costs: Indicate costs for printing of data collection tools and consent forms; cost of dissemination meeting; cost for internet connectivity to upload surveys to the secure D4I server; communication costs; and any other direct costs, such as costs for personal protective equipment (PPE) related to COVID-19 that data collectors may require

Budgets can be supplied in an Excel spreadsheet along with a budget narrative in a Word document.

Deadline
Proposals must be submitted electronically to measure_rfp@unc.edu by 8am U.S. Eastern Standard Time on February 8, 2021. The submission should include all materials related to the application.

Questions
Questions will be accepted via email at measure_rfp@unc.edu until 5pm U.S. Eastern Standard Time until February 1, 2021. Answers will be provided via email to each declared/intended bidder by 5pm U.S. Eastern Standard Time on February 3, 2021. A list of all questions and answers will be posted at https://www.data4impactproject.org/about-us/work-with-us/.

Proposal Review and Notification of Intent to Enter into a Sub-Agreement
Following receipt of applications, D4I will review the received materials and may conduct a second round review of "best and final" applicants. If this occurs, D4I will follow-up with specific questions and may request additional information from the "best and final" applicants. Applications will be reviewed in terms of their technical soundness, organization past experience, quality of key staff, and financial competitiveness.