

Response to Queries

RFP-2011-40: A qualitative study on factors influencing HIV resource allocation decisions in selected countries

September 23, 2011

1. When do you anticipate work on this contract would start ie. how long do you think it would take for UNAIDS to issue a contract for the work?
[We estimate that a contract could be issued approximately six weeks after the closing of the bid \(mid-November\). Ideally, we would like the work to begin before the end of November 2011. However, proposals with later proposed start dates will be fully considered.](#)
2. Do you have a particular time frame in mind for this work, or any particular deadlines that need to be met?
[We anticipate the proposed delivery of the final product to be as timely as possible and would expect the final outcome of the work to be delivered no later than end of June 2012.](#)
3. The RFP suggests that UNAIDS may already have countries in mind in terms of where it would like the work to be done. Please can you let us know whether there are particular priority countries where you would like the case studies to be conducted?
[The countries for the study will be selected purposefully by UNAIDS SSE/ESR staff in collaboration with the successful bidder. Countries will be selected from the UNAIDS Strategy/UBRAF, 2011-2015 20+ high impact countries. The countries included in this list are Nigeria, Ethiopia, Mozambique, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Cameroon, DRC, Indonesia, South Africa, India, Russian Federation, China, Brazil, Lesotho, Swaziland, Botswana, Namibia, Ukraine, Myanmar, Thailand, Haiti, Rwanda, Iran, Guatemala, Jamaica, Cambodia and Djibouti.](#)
4. What is the timeline for starting, and completing, this study?
[See answers to questions 1 & 2.](#)
5. Are there any views as to which countries might be particularly important to include in the study? What criteria will be used for country case-study selection?
[See answer to question 3.](#)
6. Is there any notional dollar figure in mind in relation to this piece of work?
[UNAIDS prefers not to pre-specify the size of the budget for this task. As per RFP instructions, bidders are asked to provide the most economical offer that addresses UNAIDS specified requirements in the proposed timeframe.](#)

7. Is there any important background information that can be provided that will help clarify the rationale for establishing this study? i.e. what problem is it seeking to address?

Analyses have shown that “neighbouring countries with similar HIV prevalence levels spend resources in radically different ways. Spending patterns appear to be only nominally related to the severity of the epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa, and are totally unrelated to prevalence in the rest of the world [1].” This is due in part to the limited use of resource allocation tools in country planning processes and the limited influence of model results on set targets and objectives when the tools are used.

A more strategic approach to investment is needed to strengthen national and international HIV responses and maximize returns on investments. Prioritization of interventions is especially critical in the context of the decline in the resources available for HIV interventions [2]. An investment framework has been proposed that is intended to support better management of HIV responses than presently exists [3]. In order to better focus UNAIDS assistance to countries in prioritization and evidence based resource allocation in the context of national strategic and operational planning the following are critical: an updated understanding of the decision-making process for allocating funds to HIV in countries and information on how resource allocation tools can be made more useable and beneficial to decision-makers.

References

1. Forsythe S, Stover J, Bollinger L (2009) The past, present and future of HIV, AIDS and resource allocation. BMC Public Health 9 Suppl 1: S4.
2. UNAIDS (2010) UNAIDS Report on the Global AIDS Epidemic 2010. Geneva, Switzerland: UNAIDS.
3. Schwartländer B, Stover J, Hallett T, Atun R, Avila C, et al. (2011) Towards an improved investment approach for an effective response to HIV/AIDS. Lancet.

8. When is the complete report expected?

See answer to question 2.

9. We note UNAIDS will not support travel to the selected countries. Will it support travel within the selected countries (e.g. travel by local researchers?)

As indicated in the RFP, the study is meant to be comprised of telephone interviews. So neither travel to nor travel within selected countries is foreseen.

10. There is an asterisk following ‘number of person-working days’. Does this refer to a footnote?

Apologies, the asterisk is a mistake and should not be there.

11. Does UNAIDS envisage a particular timescale for the services, or can we propose our own? Must the services be underway this year, for example, or could we start next year?

See answers to questions 1 & 2.

12. Could you clarify when you expect the assignment to commence, and the broad timelines/deliverables for the study?
[For timeline, see answers to questions 1 & 2. The study deliverables are listed in the RFP - section 1.3.2.](#)
13. Please could you confirm approximately how many informants will need to be interviewed in each country. Will UNAIDS provide the contact details for these informants/help schedule the meetings?
[The number of informants to be interviewed should be part of the technical proposal narrative. As indicated in the RFP, UNAIDS will facilitate contact with the UNAIDS country office, and through the country office, with national authorities in the selected countries.](#)
14. Might it be possible to provide an indication of the budget available for this consultancy?
[See answer to question 6.](#)
15. We note UNAIDS will be responsible for selection of the countries for review in consultation with the contractor. Can UNAIDS provide an indication now of which countries it would be likely to want to select? If not, can we propose the countries we would like to be considered for selection, as part of the proposal?
[See answer to question 3. Countries should not be proposed as part of the proposal.](#)
16. We are required to provide a description of a range of responses on current HIV resource allocation decision making process in selected countries. If the countries are to be selected later, on what basis should we identify countries to respond to this part of the technical proposal?
[This refers to a general overview. A literature review should provide some of this information.](#)
17. Does UNAIDS have a policy on how much IDC/overhead it is willing to pay in its contracts?
[In commercial contracts such as this one, indirect costs can be included and the breakdown of these costs should be provided. Since the technical and financial components of submitted proposals are evaluated separately as described in the RFP, high indirect costs can lead to lower scores on the evaluation of the financial proposal. UNAIDS usually does not pay overhead costs above 8%.](#)
18. With reference to your bid on the qualitative study on factors influencing HIV resource allocation decisions in selected countries we kindly ask you to confirm that country visits are not foreseen. Will UNAIDS cover travel costs if bidders propose visits to a limited number of countries?
[See answer to question 9.](#)

19. Is it expected that key informants would include, for example, recipients of HIV services and civil society organisations?

Key informants are expected to include people who take part in the process of resource allocation.

20. Objective 5 is to explore the extent to which HIV program implementation reflects the decision making process. Does this mean that the scope of the study goes beyond resource allocation itself to include whether funds actually reach the intended recipients?

The focus of the study is exploring the process of resource allocation through discussions with people who participate in the resource allocation process. And these discussions are expected to include some exploration of perspectives on the extent to which implementation reflects the decisions taken. Assessing whether funds actually reach the intended recipients would require a different exercise.

21. In addition to the researcher/ interviewer based in the UK, would it be acceptable to use local consultants in the selected countries to arrange/ conduct interviews where appropriate? Could some interviews be done face to face, or only by telephone and email?

See answer to question 9.