REQUEST FOR BIDS

Issue Date/Time: 6 December 2012, 17:00 Central European Time (CET)
Closing Date/Time: 31 December 2012, 11:59 CET

Request for BIDS: Pilot testing of a tool for assessing the capacity of Ministries of Health to use research evidence in decision-making

1. Objective

This request for bid is issued by the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (AHPSR), an international collaboration, based in WHO Geneva, that aims to promote the generation and use of health policy and systems research as a means to improve the health systems in LMICs. For more information please visit: www.who.int/alliance-hpsr

The objective of this request is to pilot test a survey instrument that has been developed for assessing the capacities of Ministries of Health to use research evidence in decision-making in 12 countries. As part of this work, the successful bidder will carry out the following activities:

- Coordinate with and train data collectors in 12 countries on the implementation of the survey instrument with Ministries of Health
- Oversee the pilot testing of the survey instrument with 25-30 respondents in each country and ensure quality checks
- Assess the validity and reliability of the survey instrument
- Analyze and synthesize the data from pilot testing

The AHPSR will be responsible for the identification of the countries where the pilot testing will take place and the data collection teams; the AHPSR will also establish contractual agreements directly with data collection teams. The successful bidder will have responsibility only for the training, coordination, and quality assurance of this work but will not have to engage in any contractual agreements with the data collectors.

2. Deliverables

The final deliverable will be a report based on three main analytical components:

A. an assessment of the validity and reliability of the instrument;
B. a preliminary analysis of the data collected through the pilot testing; and
C. an evaluation of the survey implementation process and identification of areas where the instrument can be further improved for wider use.

3. Requirements/Competencies

It is anticipated that this work would require a combination of both technical and administrative/managerial capacities. Bidders for this contract must demonstrate the following qualifications:

- Experience in the development, implementation and evaluation of survey instruments using a variety of media: web-based, telephonic, and in-person
- Capacity to oversee, coordinate, and support work carried out by collaborators in multi-country settings
- Ability to manage (including ensuring data security), analyze, and synthesize quantitative and qualitative data
- Experience in the conduct of trainings through virtual and web-based platforms
- Experience working with Ministries of Health and ability to engage with policy-makers and programme managers at the national, regional and local levels

4. Activity Duration

The expected duration of the contract is approximately 6 months, with dates beginning in January 2013 and ending in June 2012.

5. Instructions to Bidders

The application will be a short concept note (5-7 pages in total) that includes the following elements:

- Brief institutional profile/s and biographies of the team members demonstrating capacity to undertake this work
- A description of the proposed project approach (including sampling framework)
- Estimated and itemized budget summary
- Contact details of the project lead

The application in PDF should be sent to alliancehpsr@who.int with ‘MOH Capacity’ in the subject line by no later than 11:59 on 31 December 2012 CET.

6. Background

A great deal has been learned about how to improve the communication of research findings to decision-makers. This project represents a shift in direction to assess research utilization and uptake from the perspective of decision-makers—the users of
research—themselves. Whereas improving the supply of research evidence and its dissemination are important tasks, understanding the needs of the demand side is also crucial.

A key element in the use of research evidence by decision-makers in Ministries of Health (MoHs) is evaluating the capacity of these organizations. Existing instruments have considerable limitations, especially for low- and middle-income country (LMIC) settings. Specifically, these instruments are often not written from the user’s perspective or in a language with which they relate, they focus on one level of capacity only (e.g. the organization), and they have been developed and tested primarily in high-income countries.

An instrument to assess the capacity of MoHs in LMICs to use research evidence to inform policy and management decisions was developed at the request of the AHPSR. To this end, existing instruments were evaluated for suitability for use in LMICs. Existing instruments that were consulted included:

- SUPPORT Tool for organizational capacity
- CHSRF’s “Is Research Working for You?”
- McMaster University’s “A Tool for Measuring Theory of Planned Behaviour Constructs for Use in Evaluating Research Use in Policymaking”
- MEASURE Evaluation’s “Data Demand and Information Use in the Health Sector: Strategies and Tools”

The instrument to be implemented as part of this contract has been adapted and integrated—where appropriate, items from existing tools as well as new items that were developed specifically for this purpose. The instrument is divided into three sections that correspond to the three levels of capacity: individual, organizational and systems.

This instrument has been designed to have the following characteristics. First, it should be broadly applicable to a representative group of MoH officials and staff across countries, and be administered in a standardized way. Second, administration within a MoH would require facilitation, particularly to explain the capacity assessment exercise within the MoH, and to help with participant selection. The instrument should be able to be self-administered by individual respondents, but one that could also be administered by a data collector if necessary. Third, the instrument is meant to be initially answered in under 30 minutes. The instrument now needs to be pilot tested to ensure validity and reliability in low- and middle-income countries.