REQUEST FOR BIDS
Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research

Request for proposals: Analysis of fund flows for health policy and systems research (HPSR) relevant to low and middle income countries (LMICs)

Closing Date / Time: 27th October 2014 23:59 GMT

1. Background and Objective

The Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, thereafter called the Alliance, is an international collaboration, based within WHO Geneva, that aims to promote the generation and use of health policy and systems research (HPSR) as a means to improve health systems in LMICs. For more information please visit: http://www.who.int/alliance-hpsr/en/.

The field of HPSR has witnessed rapid development over the past few years, as evinced from the success of the Global Symposia on Health Systems Research. However, the growth and development of the field is greatly dependent on the availability of adequate and reliable funding.

There exists a considerable literature that analyzes trends in Development Assistance for Health (Ravishankar et al 2009, McCoy et al 2009, World Health Organization, 2010) as well as on health research funding more broadly (Global Forum for Health Research, 2009). Recently countries such as the UK have utilized health research classification systems to categorize research grants, enabling the identification of funding for specific types of health research (UK Clinical Research Collaboration, 2012). However there is a lack of easily accessible information on funding for HPSR at the global level that can be used to both inform decision-makers of the situation and serve as a tool to advocate for the field.

As part of its mandate to advocate for the field of HPSR, the Alliance seeks to address this gap and through this bid, is inviting proposals for the development of a document/background paper to analyze funding for HPSR over the period 2009-2014.

This analysis will form the basis of a chapter on fund flows for HPSR within a report to survey the state of the field of health policy and systems research. The report is due to be released in 2015. It is planned to produce a similar report biennially.

This analysis is expected to:

a) Identify major funders of HPSR, including those from major LMICs and emerging economics
b) Provide quantitative data on HPSR funding from major funders over the period 2009-2014
c) Provide information on funding mechanisms for HPSR adopted by major funders including policies on the provision of core funds, the use of priority setting mechanisms, and coordination with other funders at the country level.

Guidelines on the analysis expected are provided below

For the purpose of this work, health policy and systems research is understood as research on the health system functions of regulation, organization, financing and delivery of services, as well as broader determinants (such as social and economic policies directly affecting the health system). More specifically, it can address any or all of the six building blocks of health systems identified by
the WHO: service delivery, information and evidence, medical products and technologies, health workforce, health financing, and leadership and governance. Thus, clinical research, biomedical research or research focusing on environmental, political, cultural and economic determinants and processes that affect health indirectly are considered outside the scope of HPSR.

2. Deliverables

An analysis in the form of background paper/document of approximately 30 pages including tables and charts that will serve as the basis of a chapter in the report mentioned above. Bidders are expected to use a range of methods including surveys, web searches and analysis of organizational reports to conduct this work. However, they should feel free to propose alternative methods that they see most suitable.

Bidders should keep in mind the following guidelines:

1. There should be a clear methodology driving the identification of funding organizations, data collection as well as analysis.
2. The range of funding organizations examined should include public funders (including multilateral and bilateral agencies and medical research councils), private organizations and foundations and public-private partnerships including major HPSR funders in large LMICs/emerging economies
3. The analysis should provide information on funding mechanisms of major funders that should include but not be limited to: a) policies on provision of core funds, b) existence and description of priority setting mechanisms if any, c) mechanisms to coordinate with other donors at the country level.
4. The analysis is expected to provide data on (the following list is only indicative and not exhaustive):
   o Funding for health research and HPSR: a) provided by each of the major funders identified and, b) aggregated estimates for funders identified for each of the years 2009-2014
   o Funding for health research and HPSR to: a) HICs and LMICs from each of the major funders identified and b) aggregated estimates for health research and HPSR funding from all funders identified for HICs and LMICs for the period 2009-2014
   o Funds for HPSR to countries that have been major recipients (analysed for each of the funders as well as for all the funders taken together, for the last two years)
   o Funds for HPSR to LMICs that have been major recipients (analysed for each of the funders as well as for all the funders taken together, for the last two years) (See Annex 1 of this call for bids, p.7)
5. The above are examples, bidders are expected to build on these further
6. Bidders are expected to extensively use tables, graphs and charts to illustrate the findings
7. Bidders are expected to provide the Alliance with both the sources of data as well as the collated data used to generate tables, graphs and charts
8. Sample questions and tables have been provided in the Appendix of this document. Applicants should note that they are expected to build further on these questions in the submitted bids.

Applicants will be expected to work with the responsible staff of the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research at each stage, including in the development of a peer reviewed publication using this data. This includes agreement on the methodological approach for selecting the institutions, the
type of questions that will be addressed in the analysis as well as in developing the deliverables. The Alliance may also help identifying organizations, or contacts for these, but it is expected that the work will be initiated and conducted by the bidder. Bidders should be aware that all materials produced as a result of this work will become the property of WHO and may be made freely available and disseminated through the Alliance website and other channels.

3. Requirements/Competencies

Bidders for this contract should demonstrate the following:
- Relevant work related to examining funding patterns for research or health policy and systems research (desirable) relevant to LMICs.
- Knowledge of funding institutions or organizations working in this area or conducting previous work that is closely relevant to this work is an asset.
- Publication record relevant to this work, that can be readily accessible or attached. Peer-reviewed publications will be considered an asset.

4. Activity timeline and Budget

A first draft of the report(s) would be due by 15th February 2015 with a revised version due by 15th April 2015. Alliance Staff will periodically review progress on the drafts and provide feedback to the bidder. The maximum allowable budget for this work is USD 25,000; however the final budget will be contingent on the scope of the proposed work. The payments will be linked to satisfactory completion of the deliverables.

5. Format and content of the proposal

5.1 Format and content of the proposal

Applications for this work should be in the form of a proposal of approximately 3-4 pages that should include the following:

a) Motivation for applying: how this work fits into the bidder’s academic/professional background and current position. This should include a short statement explaining why the bidder believes he/she is particularly suitable to carry out this work.

b) Relevant Background: Brief description of experience in examining fund/resource flows for research in LMICs. This includes information on institutions that the bidder has worked with as well as references of publications and reports produced by the bidder.

c) Approach proposed to carry out this work, this includes information on:
   - Criteria that will be used to identify relevant funding agencies
   - Tentative list of funders that the bidder proposes to examine, including major national level funders in large LMICs/emerging economies
   - Sources of data and methods (for example surveys, annual reports) that the bidder plans to use to gather this information. This includes information on how the applicant plans to approach the organizations and gain access for surveys and interviews, if any.
   - Draft data collection tools and instruments that the bidder proposes to use (can be provided as Annex extra to the 5 page limit)
   - Analytical strategy planned
   - Presentation of results, including list of tables and graphs and charts that the bidder plans to collect data on (can be provided as Annex extra to the page limit)

d) Short institutional profile/s and profiles of anticipated team members, including the main
b) Estimated and itemized budget summary.

c) Contact details of the bidder including email and telephone number.

5.2 Joint Proposal

As mentioned above, two or more entities may form a consortium and submit a joint proposal offering to jointly undertake the work. Such a proposal must be submitted in the name of one member of the consortium - hereinafter the “project leader”. The lead organization will be responsible for undertaking all negotiations and discussions with, and will be the main point of contact for, WHO. The lead organization and each member of the consortium will be jointly and severally responsible for the proper performance of the contract.

5.3 Communications during the Call Period

A prospective bidder requiring any clarification on technical, contractual or commercial matters may notify WHO via email at the following address no later than 3 working days prior to the closing date for the submission of offers.

Email for submissions of all queries: alliancehpsr@who.int
(use subject: WHO Bid Ref. Fund Flows for HPSR)

The Alliance team at WHO will respond in writing (via email only) to any request for clarification of the call that it receives by the deadline indicated above. Questions are to be submitted by e-mail to the above address.

A consolidated document of the WHO’s response to all questions (including an explanation of the query but without identifying the source of enquiry) will be posted on the internet site where the bid itself is posted.

There shall be no individual presentation by or meeting with bidders until after the closing date. From the date of issue of this call to the final selection, contact with WHO officials concerning the call process shall not be permitted, other than through the submission of queries and/or through a possible presentation or meeting called for by WHO, in accordance with the terms of this call.

5.4 Period of Validity of Proposals

The offer outlined in the proposal must be valid for a minimum period of 120 calendar days after the closing date. A proposal valid for a shorter period may be rejected by WHO. In exceptional circumstances, WHO may solicit the bidder’s consent to an extension of the period of validity. The request and the responses thereto shall be made in writing. Any bidder granting such an extension will not, however, be permitted to otherwise modify its proposal.

5.5 Closing Date for Submission of Proposals

Proposals must be received at WHO at the e-mail address alliancehpsr@who.int (use subject: WHO Bid Ref WHO Bid Ref. Fund Flows for HPSR) no later than the 27th October 2014 (23:59 GMT).

WHO may, at its own discretion, extend this closing date for the submission of proposals by notifying all bidders thereof in writing. Any proposal received by WHO after the closing date for submission of proposals may be rejected.
5.6 Amendment of the Call

WHO may, at any time before the closing date, for any reason, whether on its own initiative or in response to a clarification requested by a (prospective) bidder, modify the call by written amendment. Amendments could, inter alia, include modification of the project scope or requirements, the project timeline expectations and/or extension of the closing date for submission.

All prospective bidders that have submitted a proposal with regard to the call will be notified in writing of all amendments to the call and will, where applicable, be invited to amend their proposal accordingly.

5.7 Clarification of Proposals

WHO may, at its discretion, ask any bidder for clarification of any part of its proposal. The request for clarification and the response shall be in writing. No change in price or substance of the proposal shall be sought, offered or permitted during this exchange.

6. Award of Contracts

6.1 Award Criteria

Contracts shall be awarded based on a combination of criteria including the bidder’s motivation statement, exposure to or experience of, working in the area of capacity strengthening, the content of the proposal in terms of innovativeness and comprehensiveness, and value for money.

However, WHO reserves the right to:

a) Award the contract to a bidder of its choice, even if its bid is not the lowest;

b) Award separate contracts for parts of the work, components or items, to one or more bidders of its choice, even if their bids are not the lowest;

c) Accept or reject any proposal, and to annul the solicitation process and reject all proposals at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders and without any obligation to inform the affected bidder or bidders of the grounds for WHO’s action;

d) Award the contract on the basis of the Organization’s particular objectives to a bidder whose proposal is considered to be the most responsive to the Organization’s needs and the activity concerned;

e) Not award any contract at all

WHO has the right to eliminate bids for technical or other reasons throughout the evaluation/selection process. WHO shall not in any way be obligated to reveal, or discuss with any bidder, how a proposal was assessed, or to provide any other information relative to the evaluation/selection process or to state the reasons for elimination to any bidder.

NOTE: WHO is acting in good faith by issuing this call. However, this document does not obligate WHO to contract for the performance of any work, nor for the supply of any products or services.
6.2 WHO’s Right to enter into Negotiations

WHO reserves the right to enter into negotiations with one or more bidders of its choice, including but not limited to negotiation of the terms of the proposal(s), the price quoted in such proposal(s) and/or the deletion of certain parts of the work, components or items called for under this call.

6.3 Signing of the Contract

Within 30 days of receipt of the contract, the successful bidder shall sign and date the contract and return it to WHO according to the instructions provided at that time. If the bidder does not accept the contract terms without changes, then WHO has the right not to proceed with the selected bidder and instead contract with another bidder of its choice.

Please apply by email only to alliancehpsr@who.int (use subject: WHO Bid Ref. Fund Flows for HPSR)

Closing date 27th of October, 2014 (23:59 GMT)

Only the successful bidder(s) will be contacted

6. References


7. Appendix 1- Sample Questions

Sample questions for fund flow analysis

1. Does your institution provide core funds (not tied to a particular project) to research institutions? Please respond yes or no
2. Does your institution have an explicit priority-setting mechanism to decide research priorities? Please answer yes/no

3. If yes, please explain below how research priorities are set at your institution.

4. Does your institution have an explicit mechanism to coordinate funding with other donors in the field of HPSR at the country level? Please answer yes/no

5. If yes, please explain how coordination with other donors is achieved

For all budgetary questions please provide estimates of grants committed in the corresponding year (not grants disbursed). Please provide all amounts in million US dollars.

6. Please indicate total budget for grants made by your institution for health research (all research related to health), for each of the years indicated below.

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<th>2009</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<td>Total budget for grants made for health research (million US dollars)</td>
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7. Please indicate total budget for grants made by your institution for health policy and systems research for each of the years indicated below.

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<th>2009</th>
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<th>2011</th>
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<td>Total budget for grants made for health policy and systems research (million US dollars)</td>
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8. Please indicate total budget for grants made by your institution for health policy and systems research in low, middle and high income countries for each of the years indicated below.

Note: For high income countries, please provide information on total grants as well as grants for conducting research on LMICs. Please see attached classification of countries as low, middle and high income according to World Bank country classification.

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<tr>
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<th>2009</th>
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<td>Total budget for grants made for health policy and systems research (million US dollars)</td>
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<td>HICs (for research on LMICs)</td>
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9. Please indicate the **five countries that received the maximum funds** from your institution for **health policy and systems research**, in the years mentioned below as **well as the funds received by them**. Note: For this question, country is understood in terms of country of the institution carrying out the research

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country Receiving Most Funds</th>
<th>2012</th>
<th>2013</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1&lt;sup&gt;st&lt;/sup&gt; Funds Received (million US dollars)</td>
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<td>2&lt;sup&gt;nd&lt;/sup&gt; Funds Received (million US dollars)</td>
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<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Funds Received (million US dollars)</td>
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10. Please indicate the **five low and middle income countries that received the maximum funds** from your institution for **health policy and systems research**, in the years mentioned below as **well as the funds received by them**. Note: For this question, country is understood in terms of country of the institution carrying out the research

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<tr>
<th>Country Receiving Most Funds</th>
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<td>5&lt;sup&gt;th&lt;/sup&gt; Funds Received (million US dollars)</td>
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11. Please indicate **total budget for grants** made by your institution for **health policy and systems research** to geographical regions mentioned below. **Note:** Geographical region should be understood in terms of region of the world studied, not the location of the institution carrying out the research.

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<th>Geographical Region</th>
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<td>Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific Islands</td>
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