

## Expression of Interest

**TITLE:** Request for Midterm Evaluation Consultant for Health System Strengthening Project in Eswatini

**LOCATION:** Mbabane, with extensive travel within Eswatini to visit Health Facilities

### Background

Over the past decade, ICAP under the funding from United States Government (USG)— through the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has been supporting the Government of the Kingdom of Eswatini (GKOE) in response to HIV/AIDS in Eswatini and enabled rapid and remarkable scale-up of HIV prevention, care, and treatment services. In September 2020, ICAP was awarded a follow-on grant to continue implementing a CDC-funded cooperative agreement entitled Strengthening National Epidemiologic and Research Capacity to Track the HIV/TB Epidemic and Improve Health Outcomes in the Kingdom of Eswatini under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. The project will end on September 29, 2025.

The award objectives are to strengthen the capacity of Epidemiology and Disease Control Unit (EDCU) to implement HIV/TB and COVID-19 surveillance systems; strengthen the capacity of the National Health Research and Innovation Department (NHRID) to implement population based HIV surveys including Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) and Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey (SHIMS); strengthen the capacity of the Eswatini Health and Human Review Board (EHRRB) to improve the review of research protocols; and support the Central Statistics Office (CSO), Ministry of Information, communication and Technology (MOICT), Ministry of Health (MOH), to strengthen the Civil Registration and Vital Statistics (CRVS) system to inform national planning and policy updates.

### Purpose of the evaluation

The evaluation will assess the extent to which the program is meeting its objectives including challenges and provide recommendations that will help guide mid-course ~~correction~~ of activities/interventions supporting epidemiology, surveillance, and research capacities in Eswatini. In line with PEPFAR's Evaluation Standard of Practice (ESoP), the evaluation will engage all relevant stakeholders throughout the evaluation cycle. The national and regional-level representatives of the Eswatini MOH programs supporting health system strengthening will be engaged.

The evaluation will triangulate information from different sources to assess the extent at which the program objectives have been achieved halfway through the expected five years outcomes

of implementation. Additionally, the evaluation will document challenges encountered and propose appropriate recommendations for the following program objectives.

1. Develop/Strengthen the capacity of Epidemiology and Disease Control Unit (EDCU) to implement HIV/TB (and COVID-19) surveillance systems.
2. Develop/strengthen the capacity of the National Health Research and Innovation Department (NHRID) to implement population-based HIV surveys including Violence Against Children Survey (VACS) and Swaziland HIV Incidence Measurement Survey (SHIMS)
3. Develop/strengthen the capacity of the EHRRB to improve the review of research protocols.
4. Support the Central Statistics Office (CSO), MOHA, MOICT and MOH, to strengthen the Civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) system to inform national planning and policy updates

### **Scope of work**

An independent consultant/evaluator (and/or team) is hereby solicited to conduct the mid- term evaluation using an approved protocol and Terms of Reference. The mid-term evaluation will triangulate information from routinely collected (secondary) data, key informant interviews (KII) of project stakeholders, site assessment of HIV recency testing facilities, and a survey of knowledge, attitudes, and practices of healthcare providers toward recency testing, and barriers to healthcare provider in implementing HIV recency testing.

ICAP program staff will provide the external evaluator and team with administrative support including access to resources and logistics required to conduct key informants' interviews, visit to health facilities and collection of data as needed. This administrative support will also include scheduling/confirming meetings dates, time, and venue with key informants and logistic support to attend these meetings, including dissemination meeting.

### **Key Deliverables**

1. Synthesis of project documents including NOFO, narrative proposal, monthly, quarterly, KII interview findings, annual and episodic reports with accompanying datasets, tools, and any narrative/short reports
2. Inception report outlining the evaluation workplan and timelines.
3. Draft report
4. Stakeholder workshop
5. Final report
6. Datasets generated during the evaluation.

**Anticipated Timeline:** 12 weeks from March to June 2023

### **Qualifications and Experience**

The consultant(s) or consultant firm will need to demonstrate that they have requisite education, skills and experience to conduct a successful evaluation. Two expert consultants are expected. The lead consultant will be expected to have a minimum of Masters' in public health, or equivalent, preferably with experience working or evaluating health system strengthening projects for a minimum of 10 years. She/He/evaluation team will also be expected to

demonstrate the capability to perform requisite task including both qualitative and quantitative data collection, management, and analysis and should have in-depth knowledge of secondary data analysis. The consultant(s) will be expected to have knowledge of epidemiology and integrated disease surveillance and functionality of institutional review board for research involving human subjects, HIV population-based prevalence and incidence survey and programming for identification of HIV transmission hotspots, KAP study, with a proven record delivering professional results. She/He should have the ability to critically observe, obtain accurate data, and analyze information for writing reports as well as evaluate plans for proposed corrections and recommend actions if noncompliance is determined. The second expert should be an evaluation specialist with work experience of minimum 10 years and demonstrated experience in performing project evaluations including evaluation designs, both qualitative and quantitative data collection, management, in-depth knowledge of data analysis. An individual consultant who fulfils both expertise and has a combination of qualifications mentioned above will be more preferred. The consultant must be fluent in English.

In addition, the evaluator (and team) will complete and sign conflict of interest form before commencement of the evaluation.

### **Application Instructions**

Prospective consultants are expected to submit an Expression of Interest which includes qualifications of the proposed consulting team (lead and second expert), previous evaluation work (experiences of evaluations preferably on similar field) and a list of references/organizations (including contact details) where evaluations were undertaken. The CVs of the two proposed consultants should be included in the Expression of Interest. A consultant who fulfils the qualifications and evaluation/work experience for both experts can also apply individually. Applications will be submitted through ICAP website <https://icapacity.icap.columbia.edu> . The deadline for submission of the expression of interest is **12 March 2023 at 1700hrs SAST**. Shortlisted consultant/s will be informed and provided with the approved evaluation protocol and the Terms of Reference within 5 days of the closure of the advert requesting for a proposal. The shortlisted consultant/s will respond to the call for proposals within 14 days from the date of communication. The proposal will comprise of a technical and financial proposals. The technical proposal should detail the scope of work of the evaluation, methodologies to be followed, workplan and proposed timeline to accomplish the job and the qualification, experience of the expert/s to be engaged in the evaluation. The financial proposal will state the proposed number of consulting days for key evaluation activities, consultancy rates per day as applicable, and any other related costs. Shortlisted candidates will be interviewed as part of the selection process.

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