Request for Applications

Serve as Local Research Partner for
Kyrgyzstan Cure Tuberculosis Project
Mid-Project Performance Evaluation

Introduction
The TB Data, Impact Assessment and Communications Hub (TB DIAH) project, funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), is associated with USAID’s Global Accelerator to End Tuberculosis (TB). The Accelerator is USAID’s new business model to focus on performance-based measures for combating TB. TB DIAH aims to ensure optimal demand for and analysis of TB data and the appropriate use of such information to measure performance and to inform national TB programs and USAID interventions and policies.

TB DIAH seeks a research organization to serve as our local partner for a mid-project performance evaluation of USAID Kyrgyzstan’s Cure Tuberculosis Project. The purpose of this request for applications (RFA) is to determine the organization best suited to fulfill 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 the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC-CH). The timeline for implementation is April–August 2022. Applications are due by 8am EST Monday, March 21, 2022.
CURE Tuberculosis Project Mid-Project Performance Evaluation

USAID/Kyrgyzstan has requested support for a mid-project performance evaluation of the USAID Cure Tuberculosis project, a US$18 million five-year project led by JSI Research and Training Institute. The project runs from July 1, 2019, through July 7, 2024.

The project has four major focus areas: increase drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) case detection; cure more patients of DR-TB; prevent DR-TB infections; and improve the enabling environment. After the COVID-19 pandemic started, the project was asked to support the Kyrgyz response to COVID-19 as well as to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and preserve essential TB services.

This activity will answer a series of key questions, the answers to which will be used to inform the final two years of project activities and to guide the follow-on activities.

Target groups of the analysis will be Kyrgyzstan’s Ministry of Health (MOH), National TB Program (NTP), Sanitary Epidemiological Service (SES), and the TB hospitals and primary healthcare (PHC) facilities in Naryn, Talas, and Chi oblasts, as well as in the capital city of Bishkek.

The audience for this analysis is the USAID Health and Education Office, as well as the broader USAID/Kyrgyz Republic Mission. The other principal audience is the Cure TB Project and its stakeholders, including the MOH, the NTP, and other key TB donors such as the Global Fund.

This mid-project performance evaluation will use mixed-methods, including the collection and use of quantitative and qualitative data to analyze and identify findings and to develop conclusions in response to evaluation questions.

- Document and data review
- Key informant interviews (KIIs)
- Focus group discussions (FGDs) or group interviews
- Client/participant satisfaction or exit interviews

Activities and Responsibilities for the Local Research Partner

The local research partner will work in close collaboration with TB DIAH (UNC-CH) to carry out the following activities:

Ethics Approval and Translation of Tools (Institutional review board)

Prior to the start of data collection, TB DIAH will obtain ethics approval from UNC-CH in the United States. The local research partner will be responsible for obtaining ethics approval in Kyrgyzstan, with assistance from the USAID Mission. The local research partner will also be responsible for translation and back translation of the study tools into the local language.
Liaise with Local Authorities

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

Data Collection/Data Quality

Data collection will include qualitative and quantitative review of progress with indicators. The primary methods in this mid-project performance evaluation include desk review of key documents, qualitative methods (KII, focus groups, client participation satisfaction/exit interviews). It will also include reviews of performance data. Participatory methodologies will be determined once the evaluation questions are finalized. Cure TB conducted a baseline study in 2019 and that may provide a framework for indicator review.

The local research partner will participate in activities to determine the final number of focus groups, KII, and group interviews. Current plans are to base the evaluation work in Bishkek with travel proposed to Naryn, Talas, and Chui oblasts (districts), where the Cure TB project is implemented. The qualitative component will include a total of six FGDs, and 12 KII. In each city, the local partner will conduct (up to two) FGDs. At each location, FGDs are expected to take approximately 90 minutes and KII are expected to take approximately 40 minutes. The local research partner will record all FGDs and KII and transcribe the interviews into English.

Data Analysis

The local research partner will analyze the qualitative transcripts using an agreed upon qualitative software analysis program and provide a draft qualitative report. The local research partner will also provide input into the mid-project performance report.

Dissemination of Results

The local research partner should also plan for a half-day results discussion meeting in Bishkek for USAID and other stakeholders.

Deliverables

- Translation and back translation of the data collection tools, as well as finalization of the tools following a pretest
- Determine if ethics approval is needed in Kyrgyzstan
- Biweekly reports on field work preparations and progress
- Qualitative interview transcripts in English
- Uploaded files for all documents to include in the document review (where documents are available electronically)
- Qualitative report
- Input into the report
- Organization of and participation in dissemination meeting
- Provision of secure storage of all hardcopy documents
Timeline

TB DIAH has begun preliminary preparations for the study. The successful applicant should plan to start activities in mid-April, 2022. The expected timeline for study benchmarks:

- Finalize study questions and design (**Feb 28, 2022**)
- Workplan methodology review briefing with USAID/Kyrgyzstan (**April 10, 2022**)
- Fieldwork completed (**May 27, 2022**)
- Evaluation report draft (**June 10, 2022**)
- IP/Stakeholder debrief and workshop (**TBD**)
- Final evaluation report: (**July 8, 2022**)

Application Requirements

The successful applicant will possess the following skills and competencies:

- Experience with performance evaluations (Prior experience with USAID projects preferred)
- Experience with qualitative data collection (evaluation of health programs strongly preferred)
- Experience managing qualitative data research teams
- Evaluation design and research skills
- Qualitative data analysis skills
- Excellent project management and people management skills and the ability to deliver within timeframes as reflected in the workplan
- Excellent written communication skills in English or Russian

Applicants should take steps to register in [SAM.gov | Entity Registrations](#) if they are not already registered. Active registration in SAM.Gov will be required prior to contracting.

Organizations wishing to serve as TB DIAH’s local research partner for the Cure TB mid-project performance evaluation should submit:

1. A **cover letter** clearly identifying that the application is responding to the “Cure TB mid-project performance evaluation” and stating the applicant organization’s name, address, phone number(s), URL, and main email address. Please list a primary contact person 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 survey of the scope and magnitude described above. The approach should detail participation in the sample selection, a recruitment plan for team members (qualifications, where recruited from, overall team size, proposed number of team members, LOE, etc.), training topics for qualitative interviewers, qualitative participant recruitment plan, qualitative analysis process, and a discussion of data collection logistics and data quality measures.
• The technical proposal should address the applicant’s COVID-19 safety protocol for data collection activities.

• The technical proposal should include a detailed timeline outlining all project activities and tasks with anticipated completion dates for each activity and task.

• The technical proposal should be no more than 10 pages, 1.5-spaced, with one-inch margins, and in 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 who will implement the study.

   The applicant should name the proposed key technical and administrative/financial personnel involved in the activities. The applicant should name a Team Lead, a TB specialist, and an Evaluation (performance evaluation) specialist, as well as the Evaluation Logistics Coordinator and a Chief Administrative/Financial Officer who will serve as the main technical and financial liaison persons with TB DIAH (UNC-CH). This can be the same person. Include CV’s for all key staff in the application.

   The applicant should also describe their organization’s past experience related to organizing and conducting similar research in Kyrgyzstan. 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 toward overall length of the application) that demonstrate the capacity to accomplish high-quality work.

   The organizational description should be no more than three pages, 1.5-spaced, with one-inch margins, and in 11-point Times New Roman font, exclusive of CV’s and past project descriptions.

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

5. **A detailed US$ 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, number of workdays for each category of staff (field supervisor, qualitative interviewer, etc.)

   • **Training.** Include expenses for training interviewers, such as lunch and tea breaks, training materials, venue, per diem, etc.

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

Proposals must be submitted electronically to measure_rfp@unc.edu by **8:00 am US Eastern Standard Time by Monday March 21, 2022.** The submission must include all materials related to the application.

Please contact Ann Fitzgerald, TB DIAH Deputy Director, at annafitz@unc.edu with any questions. Thank you!