

Position Title: Endline Survey for Strengthening COVID – 19 Responses in Afghanistan Project

No of Position: 01

Duty Station: Kabul and Regions

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The Aga Khan Foundation, Afghanistan (AKF (Afg)) is an agency of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of international, private, non-denominational development agencies working to improve living conditions and opportunities for people in some of the poorest parts of the developing world. The Network's organizations have individual mandates that range from the fields of health and education to architecture, rural development and promotion of private-sector enterprise and institutions that seek to empower communities and individuals, usually in disadvantaged circumstances, to improve living conditions and opportunities.

The Aga Khan Foundation (AKF) is a non-denominational international development agency established in 1967 by His Highness the Aga Khan. Its mission is to develop and promote creative solutions to problems that impede social development, primarily in Asia and East Africa. Created as a private, non-profit foundation under Swiss law, it has branches and independent affiliates in 19 countries.

AKF seeks to provide sustainable solutions to long-term problems of poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and ill health. In Afghanistan, AKF works with rural communities in mountainous, remote or resource poor areas to improve quality of life in the areas of natural resource management, market development, governance, education, and health.

1. Study Rational

AKF Afghanistan's AKF (Afg) health & Nutrition Unit is looking for an experienced and qualified consulting firm (hereafter referred to as "contractors") to conduct an endline survey for Strengthening COVID19 Response in Afghanistan Project in 16 provinces of AKF-A's and Cordaid core program regions.

The EC COVID-19 project in Afghanistan is being managed through a consortium where AKF is leading the consortium in 16 provinces and directly implemented the project in 8 provinces (Parwan, Bamyan, Daikundi, Baghlan, Samangan, Kunduz, Takhar, Badakhshan). 8 provinces including, Kandahar, Nangarhar, Kabul, Balkh, Paktya, Ghazni, Herat and Nemroz provinces are being managed by Cordaid and its implementing partners as AKF (Afg) had no access to these provinces.

The endline is one of the key project activities to be carried out in the project targeting geography. The study should conduct in 9 provinces out of the 16 provinces which baseline/midline study were conducted in close coordination with of AKF - UK. The endline study will fully manage and is being led by AKF (Afg) in all sampled provinces with closed coordination of CORDAID.

2. Background

AKF(Afg) is active in Afghanistan since 2002, AKF-A delivers integrated multi-input development programmes in eight of the country's 34 provinces. With over 1,800 staff members active in 53 districts, AKF-A focuses on community development and governance, civil society, market development, natural resource management, infrastructure, education, and health. AKF's vision of Afghanistan is a stable, peaceful, and more prosperous country where resilient communities have access to quality basic services and the knowledge and tools to uphold inclusive and effective institutions to support a democratic and pluralistic society.

The AKF-A is part of the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN), a group of private, international, non-denominational agencies founded by His Highness the Aga Khan. The overall goal of AKDN is the improvement of quality of life in the areas where its member institutions work.

3. Strengthening COVID19 Response in Afghanistan

This 34-month project, beginning from December 2020 and ending in September 2023, the EC COVID-19 project consortium is implementing its interventions directly in 16 provinces while AKF (Afghanistan) is implementing activities in Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Baghlan, Bاميان, Samangan, Daikundi and Parwan provinces. Cordaid is implementing its interventions directly in Kabul and Herat provinces while its partners are implementing the project in Balkh, Nangarhar, Ghazni, Nimroz, Kandahar and Paktya provinces. In addition, the Cordaid has installed the oxygen plant in Uruzgan province.

The overall objective of Strengthening COVID19 Response in Afghanistan project is to contribute to protecting the Afghan citizens from the spread of COVID-19 and to strengthen national health systems preparedness and capacity to respond to public health emergencies.

The specific objectives of the project are:

- To Increase the response capacity of the health system for effective response to public health emergencies.
- To improve infection prevention for COVID19 with focus on community-based gender sensitive interventions.
- To reduce nutritional risks for boys, girls and mothers affected by COVID-19 through provision of supplementary nutritional food.
- To strengthen and sustained community efforts to prevent the spread of COVID-19 through increasing community awareness, promoting health and hygiene practices and conducting BCC campaigns.

The theory of change has been developed with the following outcomes:

- 30 Collection points with capacity to collect samples, transfer to lab facilities and provide education and counselling services will be established.
- 10 oxygen plants in Provincial hospitals with capacity to produce oxygen for all admitted patients will be installed.
- 133 staff will be trained to manage COVID-19 cases effectively.
- By the end of 2023, 90% of Comprehensive Health Centers (CHCs) & district hospitals in the target provinces comply with INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL guidelines of MoPH.
- Nutrition support will be provided to 15-18% of COVID 19 patients through distribution of food basket and 9568 children and women (8317 women and 1251 children) through distribution of micronutrient supplements.
- By the end of 2023, 55% of the population will be able to identify COVID 19 signs and symptoms and apply preventive measures by reaching preventive message including awareness on the importance of handwashing.
- By the end of 2023, 15-20% of people are understanding recommendations to avoid infection and its spread in the community and household.

4. Beneficiaries

the consortium is reaching 8.4 million direct and indirect beneficiaries at the country level including 4.3 million male and 4.1 million female beneficiaries, including children. The target population includes existing beneficiaries in program areas, as well as healthcare professionals. Particular attention is given to the most vulnerable individuals and families in program areas, including women and girls, Internally Displaced Peoples (IDPs) and returnees, Kuchis, the elderly, people with disabilities, those with underlying health conditions, those experiencing economic stress, and other at-risk individuals. The proposed Action focuses primarily on women, men and children located in some of Afghanistan's hardest to reach communities. These areas pose access challenges due to a variety of issues, including geographical terrain, particularly in the winter, and security instability. Many of these localities experience high refugee activity, specifically along the Herat and Kandahar border sections, which fuels the spread of COVID-19 in these areas but also in remote rural areas, like Badakhshan, where refugee families settle. Many of these communities have limited access to information and services due to their remoteness and mobility constraints. They receive limited or no support from Government services or other multilaterals due to the difficulty of access. Due to the access challenges, many are not as aware of the severity of the virus; however, there is still time to sensitize, prepare and plan, in addition to providing necessary health and social services to treat and mitigate impacts.

5. Objectives of Endline Survey

The overall objective of the EC COVID-19 response endline study is to measure the results for outcome level indicators as part of the project logical framework and compare the progress versus baseline and target to evaluate the effectiveness of project interventions.

Specifically, the objective of the study is to:

- To measure the level of knowledge and practices of men and women in the household (HH) for COVID-19 protocols.
- To assess the knowledge of HH members on COVID-19 signs and symptoms and its transmission ways.
- To measure the knowledge and practice of the health facility (HF) staff in COVID-19 preventive measures.
- To measure the people understanding on recommendations to avoid infections and spread of infection. To assess the availability and accessibility of oxygen plants in HF.
- To ensure that the MoPH INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL guideline is available in the targeted Health facilities (DHs and CHCs) and implementing on their facilities.

6. Methods and Approaches:

Study contains the following components:

- Household survey.
- Interview with COVID-19 infected individuals.
- Assessment of COVID 19 Health facilities.

To cover all the components a mixed research method including conducting interviews with heads of households and family members who were infected with COVID-19, and health facility assessment should be conducted in the targeted provinces. Two stages cluster sampling method may be applicable, to identify households and eligible participant for interview on them, as well to identify Health facilities which providing COVID 19 services to interview with their staff and observe the availability and utilization of oxygen plants and INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL guideline. In the first stage, the districts and villages should be selected randomly and in the second stage required households (secondary sampling unit) should be selected.

2 separate questionnaires would need to be developed for comprehensive data collection and information from household and Health facilities level.

The household survey questionnaire should collect socio-demographic information from target population and should include the following.

- Household Roster: information about the number of household members, each one's civil status, age, gender, level of education, and COVID-19 infection.
- COVID-19 Knowledge, attitudes, and practices questionnaire at the household level.
- Knowledge, attitude, and practices of the COVID-19 infected individuals.

Following points should be considered in the questionnaires which use to collect information about Health facilities.

- Assess the knowledge, attitude, and practices of the health facility staff toward COVID-19 patients.
- Assess the satisfaction level of covid-19 patients in the functional covid-19 hospitals.
- Assess the access and availability of Oxygen in COVID-19 hospitals.

7. Main Duties and Responsibilities

The successful contractor will need to work together with the AKF-A Health & Nutrition (program and M&E) and MERL team in Kabul Office in accordance with the specific duties assigned below:

- Experience in conducting similar studies particularly relevant to the subject within health unit.
- Critically developing/reviewing the study design, methods, and instruments.
- Inception report to obtain necessary guidance and or input.
- Planning and executing training for field research teams.
- Managing all project activities, including data collection, supervision, quality control, data-management, and analysis and reporting, as discussed in more detail in below sections.

8. Qualifications Required

The contractors should have the following qualifications:

- Extensive experience in M&E, research, and data management, with focus on qualitative and quantitative research methods and analysis.
- Experience in preparing and writing professional and academic reports and other utilisation focussed outputs.
- Experience working in the regions in which this study will take place, including knowledge of local language(s) and context.
- An ability to work to tight timelines.
- Knowledge and/or research experience in areas such as economic and/or similar socioeconomic fields is desirable.
- Ability and willingness to work in remote, hard-to-reach parts of Afghanistan.
- Ability to prepare analyses, presentations, and reports in English.

9. Work location(s) and Reporting Line

The contractors will need to be present in Kabul for an initial series of orientations and kick-off meetings, at a minimum, but will need to travel to concerned regions of study for data collection purposes. The contractors are expected to work closely with AKF-A's Health and Nutrition and MERL Unit and will directly report to M&E Manager of health department including Health & Nutrition sector M&E, who are based in National Program Office in Kabul. While the overall reporting will be provided to the MERL Lead based in Kabul Office as well.

10. Deliverables

The following deliverables are expected to be provided to AKF-A as per this consultancy:

- Inception report.
- A final study design including methodology, tools, and quality assurance mechanisms.
- A comprehensive work plan to be followed by the contractors.
- Presentation on data quality.
- Regular and open communications both in person and via, for example, email, WhatsApp, etc. to include timely flagging of issues and responses to queries.
- Draft and final analytical reports summarising findings and pragmatic recommendations.
- A PowerPoint presentation of major findings, a soft copy of which will be given to AKF-A.
- Soft and hard copies of all study materials, including audio recordings (if recorded) and transcripts, field notes, memos, analyses, and coding schemes.

11. Additional Significant Information

The contractor is bound by all ethical norms with the consideration of confidentiality for all information provided by AKF-A, including record keeping for the pre-defined/agreed timeline. Ignorance of any ethical norms will be considered a breach of mentioned norms and will lead to a follow up of AKDN/AKF-A's policy and procedures including the relevant law of Afghanistan.

The contractor should be aware that this opportunity is offered on a quality output-based contract basis and that AKF-A reserve the right to cancel this contract where this is not achieved.

The contractor should provide details about study design, tools development, data collection and management, data analysis and reporting, ethical issues of the study and informant consent from client.

12. Application Documents Required

Please note that all the following documents are required to be submitted with the proposal and that failure to supply these will result in an automatic disqualification from the process.

Detailed technical proposal - this should demonstrate the following:

- Understanding of the ToR, and ability to respond to all necessary requirements.
- Good technical M&E knowledge and experience, and the ability to apply best practice to this contract.

- An understanding of the subject matter.
- Good technical analysis skills including choice of methodology, limitations, and bias etc.
- A strong and appropriate team.
- An understanding of key principles such as beneficiary engagement and feedback.
- Financial proposal – a detailed budget including breakdown of fees, activities, transportation, and facilities etc.
- CVs and up to three examples of previous similar contracts including a description of the impact of this work.
- Ethical and environmental policy.
- Duty of Care policy.
- Appropriate business registration documents.
- Anti-corruption and counter fraud policy.

The applications will be evaluated using quality and cost-based scoring, as per the criteria described above. Priority will be given to local firms with previous experience in target provinces. Applicants should be aware of the nature of the ultimate donors' requirements with respect to the work they fund and relevant expectations about conduct, financing, value for money and quality of work.

Applicants should also be aware that no communication should be attempted between an organization/staff and AKF-A with respect to this opportunity outside those channels and times specified by AKF-A; any such contact will result in the removal of the relevant organization from the bidding process. AKF-A will provide feedback for unsuccessful contractors if requested.

Application:

Interested firms or individual should submit their proposal to Jobs.Afghanistan@akdn.org no later than 21 November 2023. For more technical information and queries please contact Mr. Habiburrahman Haziq at: Habiburrahman.Haziq@akdn.org on or before the cutoff date.

Important Points:

- Please quote the Vacancy Number as the Subject of the e-mail when applying.
- Please submit the resume of responsible individual along with the company license when applying.
- Only shortlisted proposals will be contacted for further assessment.

Aga Khan Foundation Afghanistan recruitment and selection procedures reflect our commitment to equal opportunity and safeguarding of children, beneficiaries, partners, community members and employees in accordance with AKF(Afg)'s safeguarding policy.

Female candidates are encouraged to apply.

Your details and information shared in this advertisement shall remain confidential.