

Call for Proposals

Lift Up Project – UNAIDS, South Sudan

To Create an Enabling Environment for Increased Access to HIV Services Among Children

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| Funding Opportunity Title: | Lift Up Project – UNAIDS, South Sudan |
| Funding Type | Grants: Fixed Amount award |
| Deadline for Applications: | 24 th May 2024 |
| Maximum Expected Number of Awards | Up to Four (4) |
| Program Performance Period | 6 months (from August 01, 2024, to January 31, 2025) |

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1. INTRODUCTION

This Call for Proposals is for UNAIDS to enter into a contractual agreement with the successfully selected FBO and CSOs to create an enabling environment that will facilitate access to HIV services, improve retention in care, and increase achievement across the 95 – 95 – 95 targets among children living with HIV in four (4) PEPFAR supported states in South Sudan.

The project will focus on the use of evidence-based, age-appropriate SBC tools to create demand for HIV services, reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination, and improve enrolment and retention of HIV treatment among children living with HIV. The project aims at improving access to and retention in care for children affected by HIV, and will therefore focus on their caregivers, households, community gate keepers and health providers with innovative Social and Behaviour Change (SBC) activities.

UNAIDS office in South Sudan is calling for proposals from FBOs and CSOs with presence in any of the PEPFAR supported states of **Central Equatorial, Eastern Equatoria, Western Equatoria and Lakes states**. Applicants must specify their targeted geographic areas and coverage within the identified State/s. Details of sub-locations and priorities will be finalised during engagements and will include an opportunity for a co-creation with successful bidders.

2. BACKGROUND

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS) leads the world for an expanded HIV response by providing evidence and strategic guidance to end inequalities and end AIDS by 2030, leaving no one behind.

For more information about UNAIDS please visit our website www.unaids.org

Children under 15 years (<15) continue to be disproportionately affected by the HIV epidemic in South Sudan. According to UNAIDS estimates, 160,000 people were living with HIV (all ages) in 2022 in South Sudan, of which 15,000 (nine percent) were children <15. Despite constituting nine percent of people living with HIV in the country, children <15 contributed approximately eighteen percent of the AIDS-related deaths in 2022. Also, they have the lowest achievement across the three 95s of any population in the country. The UNAIDS 2022 estimates indicate that children in South Sudan have only 15 percent known HIV status compared to 37 percent among people 15+; only 15 percent of the children living with HIV are on ART compared to twenty eight percent among people 15+ years. In addition, only thirty six percent of children are virally suppressed compared to 82 percent among people 15+ years old (UNAIDS, 2021).

The 2022 HIV program review in South Sudan identified several challenges affecting Early Infant Diagnosis (EID) and treatment of children that result in low uptake of HIV treatment services and retention in care. These include high levels of stigma and discrimination in both health facilities and communities, and gender-based violence from spouses after disclosure. Furthermore, children mostly rely on their caregivers for accompaniment to HIV care and treatment facilities, and young children depend on caregivers to administer their medication. A 2022 qualitative assessment conducted among community care workers and providers examining continuity of treatment among Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC) found that there was a lack of continuity of care between primary and secondary or substitute caretakers, and that substitute caregivers were not always informed of the children's status or where their medication is stored.

3. SCOPE OF THE LIFT UP PROJECT

3.1 Objectives

- 1) To identify and implement community initiatives to increase demand for HIV testing, uptake of HIV services, and treatment adherence among children under 15 years living with HIV in PEPFAR supported states in South Sudan using SBC tools developed by FHI 360, EPIC project.
- 2) To develop and implement community activities using SBC tools to raise awareness of HIV&AIDS and HIV-related

stigma and discrimination that affected people living with and affected by HIV in PEPFAR supported states in South Sudan.

This project will utilise SBC tools and training guidelines produced by FHI 360. Also, FHI 360 will conduct Training of Trainers (ToT) of the selected partners, Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to ensure local ownership and sustain the use of the tools in project sites.

3.2 Specific activities to be performed

The selected FBOs and CSOs are expected to develop innovative approaches relevant to their local context. Their activities should focus on:

- Innovative approaches of community engagement to increase demand and improve access to and retention in HIV services for children with a focus on their caregivers, households' heads, health providers, and other influencers in the family and community.
- Identifying and engaging community gate keepers (including chiefs and religious leaders), and other stakeholders in the community to develop strategies towards reducing HIV-related stigma and discrimination that hinder uptake and retention of children in HIV treatment.
- Involving caregivers to identify and address the critical HIV treatment challenges that impede the enrolment, uptake of, and retention of children in HIV services.

The direct beneficiaries: Proposed interventions and activities should focus on children living with HIV under the age of 15 years, their caregivers, health care providers, and other influential community members.

3.3 Eligibility and requirements for the interested Organizations

To be eligible for the grant, applicants must:

1. Be an FBO or CSO legally registered in South Sudan. Faith Based Organizations are encouraged to apply.
2. Be present in the project location sites and directly responsible for the implementation of the project.
3. Demonstrate experience in public health programs, particularly with community engagement activities and working with People Living with HIV (PLHIV) particularly children.
4. Adhere to UNAIDS and USAID standard provisions.

3.4 Previous experiences

1. Previous work in the field of HIV response in South Sudan, community outreach, community-led response initiatives, and working with people living with HIV particularly children.
2. Applying organizations should present evidence of organizational and functional capacity to implement donor funded projects.
3. Demonstrate the ability to collaborate with government entities (MOH and SSAC), private sector, implementing partners, civil society organizations, and the Faith-Based Organizations fraternity.

4. LOGISTIC CAPACITIES

Applicants should develop a proposal that targets beneficiaries in any of the following states.

1. **Central Equatoria**
2. **Eastern Equatoria**
3. **Lakes**

4. Western Equatoria

Applicants with the capacity to cover more than two States are encouraged to bid for these resources guided by the geographic locations above and the priority populations described.

5. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

The FBOs/CSOs awarded contracts are expected to provide:

- Monthly technical reports with progress on project implementation
- A Final Technical and financial report

6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

UNAIDS will review, in accordance with the work plan agreed upon at the time of contract signing, all milestones and the quality of deliverables. UNAIDS reserves the right to reject deliverables that do not comply with the specifications herein, at any milestone and will consider terminating the contract.

7. PROPOSAL CONTENT

The expression of interest should be submitted together with all supporting documents.

The expression of interest should include the following key parts:

A) Cover Page (**One page**)

- Name of the organization
- Name and title of contact person (s)
- Contact information (Telephone numbers and e-mail addresses)
- Postal and physical address

B) Profile of the organization (**one page**)

- Type of organization (NGO, FBO, CSO, Association, or other)
- Current geographical coverage/presence.
- Vision, mission, and general objective of the organization.
- Organizational structure and staffing (human resources) / membership size (if association)

C) Technical Proposal (**not to exceed 10 pages**)

- Background (maximum one page)
- Proposed objectives, activities, and anticipated results
- Population/community that activities of this project will focus on.

- Proposed Budget with a breakdown in Excel format per the illustrative activities and should consider the anticipated available (Budget should not exceed the funding amount stated above.)
- Monitoring and Evaluation plan
- Workplan: Provide a breakdown of the work plan for the project.

D) Organizational capacity (**three pages maximum**)

- A summary of similar projects done by the applicants in the past, particularly in HIV and other health-related community interventions (one page)
- Names of the individuals assigned to this project, a summary of their level of responsibility within the organization, and their experience in community engagement activities in HIV and other related areas (Attach their CVs in the annex).
- Description of the organization's monitoring and supervision, including tools and systems used.

E) Stakeholders' engagement plan (**one page maximum**)

- Provide the list of stakeholders present in your proposed project locations and their roles.
- Indicate how these stakeholders will be engaged.

Additional supporting documents to be submitted in the application include.

- 1) A valid certificate showing a legal registration in South Sudan.
- 2) Audited financial statements for the last fiscal year.
- 3) CVs of key people assigned to the project.
- 4) Other documents deemed important to support the application.

8. AWARD INFORMATION

This call for proposals seeks to **select four (4) FBOs and CSOs** with the capacity and or potential to deliver the stated objectives. They will be provided with training and funds to implement specific project activities. Each selected FBO or CSO will receive about USD 70,000 for the project implementation in the specified duration. Award applicants will be informed in writing of the decisions concerning their applications.

Awarded organizations are expected to comply with both UNAIDS and USAID Standard Provisions and regulations. Activities under this Scope of Work are subject to Standard Provisions that are included in the USAID-UNAIDS agreement number 7200GH22IO00004. As a general reference, the Standard Provisions for USAID agreements with PIOs are available here: <https://www.usaid.gov/about-us/agency-policy/series-300/references-chapter/308mab>

9. INSTRUCTIONS TO SUBMIT THE PROPOSALS

Applications (with all application documents) must be submitted by email to kombam@unaids.org copying RahmanM@unaids.org

The email subject line: Call For Proposal-2024-19: Lift Up Project - UNAIDS, South Sudan". Other means of application will not be accepted.

Note: Incomplete applications will be rejected.

Deadline for submission of applications

The deadline for submitting full project proposals is **May 24, 2024**, on or before 23:59 hours (GMT +2).

Late applications will not be considered.

10. SELECTION CRITERIA

10.1 Eligibility assessment of proposals

An application will be considered eligible for the next assessment step if it meets all the following criteria.

- 1) The proposal was submitted within the deadline.
- 2) The proposal was submitted together with all required forms and requested documents.

10.2 Technical assessment of proposals

Each subsection of the evaluation criteria will be assessed by the evaluation team and given a weighted score as in the table below.

| Evaluation criteria | Weighting |
|--|------------------|
| 1. Capacity of the Organisation | 50 |
| 1.1 The organisation has a proven track record in community public health programs particularly in community engagement activities focusing on awareness raising. | 10 |
| 1.2 The organisation has adequate experience in project management. There is evidence of successful delivery of donor funded projects. | 10 |
| 1.3 The organization is currently implementing a community-based HIV project in South Sudan. | 10 |
| 1.4 The organisation has concisely described the experience and role of at least three key personnel on board who will be responsible for programme implementation oversight and will deliver the project. | 10 |
| 1.5 The organisation has demonstrated its presence in the project sites they are applying. | 10 |
| 2. Quality of the Project Proposal | 35 |
| 2.1 The proposed project background logically responds to an articulated need and demonstrates knowledge of the current HIV epidemic and gaps in HIV treatment among children. | 5 |

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| 2.2 The primary end users (children living with HIV and caregivers) have been identified and quantified and the project is likely to achieve a positive and lasting impact on the primary and other end users. | 5 |
| 2.3 Clearly defined SMART objectives, and the proposed activities are clearly described per objective and are evidence-based | 5 |
| 2.4 Clearly described work plan for the proposed project and the timeline is feasible and realistic for the proposed activities. | 5 |
| 2.5 Clearly described Monitoring and Evaluation plan. | 5 |
| 2.6 Budget – proposed costs are necessary and realistic; Efficiency - proposed costs are proportionate to proposed activities | 5 |
| 2.7 The stakeholder’s engagement plan is clearly defined | 5 |
| | |
| 3. Crosscutting issues | 15 |
| 3.1 The organisation has proposed a gender inclusion intervention. | 5 |
| 3.2 The proposal demonstrates human rights and child protection issues will be addressed. | 5 |
| 3.3 The proposed intervention has measures to ensure confidentiality of health information among the end users of the project. | 5 |

11. UNAIDS TERMS AND CONDITION

The following general conditions shall apply to any eventual contract. No other deemed conditions shall apply.

GENERAL CONDITIONS

1. It is understood that the execution of the work does not create any employer/employee relationship. In this respect, the Organization shall be solely responsible for the manner in which the work is carried out. Thus, UNAIDS and/or WHO shall not be responsible for any loss, accident, damage, or injury suffered by any person whatsoever arising in or out of the execution of this work, including travel. Insurance coverage for any such loss, accident, damage, or injury will be the Institute’s responsibility, including where appropriate, insurance coverage for persons used by the Organization to carry out the work.
2. All rights in the work, including ownership of the original work and copyright thereof, shall be vested in UNAIDS, which reserves the right (a) to revise the work, (b) to use the work in a different way from that originally envisaged, or (c) not to publish or use the work.
3. If the option, on the face of this agreement, for payment of a fixed sum applies, that sum is payable in the manner

provided, subject to proper performance of the work. If the option for payment of a maximum amount applies, the funds shall be used exclusively for the work specified in this agreement and any unspent balance shall be refunded to UNAIDS. In this latter case, any financial statement required shall reflect expenditures according to the relevant main categories of expenditure. Institutes who are legal entities (hereinafter referred to as “Company Institutes”) must submit an invoice to UNAIDS in order to receive payment. Invoices are not required from Institutes who are individuals (hereinafter referred to as “Individual Institutes”) who can be paid upon receipt by UNAIDS of the required deliverables (including any required technical reports and financial statements) in a satisfactory manner.

UNAIDS and/or WHO shall have no responsibility whatsoever for any taxes, duties or other contributions payable by Institute. Payment of any taxes, duties and other contributions which an Organization may be required to pay shall be the sole responsibility of the Organization who shall not be entitled to any reimbursement thereof by UNAIDS and/or WHO.

4. If the work is not satisfactorily completed (and, where applicable, delivered) by the date fixed in this agreement and/or if any financial statement required is not satisfactorily submitted to UNAIDS in accordance with general condition 5 below, UNAIDS may specify an additional period within which this agreement must be satisfactorily performed. Normally such additional period should be of at least one week’s duration, unless it is clear from the agreement that it was particularly important that the performance be completed on the date specified, in which case UNAIDS may specify a shorter period or refuse to grant any additional period at all. In the event that the work is not satisfactorily completed and delivered on the date fixed, or any additional period granted by UNAIDS and/or if any financial statement required is not satisfactorily submitted to UNAIDS in accordance with general condition 5 below, UNAIDS may rescind this agreement (in addition to the other remedies), subject to an equitable arrangement being made in case of delay caused by force majeure.
5. The Organization shall complete and deliver the work to UNAIDS (including any technical report that may be required) by the date fixed in this agreement or any additional period that may be granted by UNAIDS under general condition 4. Any financial statement required shall be submitted within thirty (30) days thereafter at the latest. If the payment schedule on the face of this agreement provides for a final payment upon completion of the work, this final payment shall be made only after satisfactory receipt of all deliverables called for under this agreement, including any technical report and financial statement.
6. Each Individual Organization certifies that he/she does not presently, and will not during the term of this agreement, hold any form of contractual relationship with UNAIDS and/or WHO (including any UNAIDS and/or WHO regional, country or project office, as well as any programme, centre or other entity where staff is subject to WHO Staff Regulations and Rules) that confers upon the Individual Organization the status of a UNAIDS and/or WHO staff member. The Individual Organization understands that a false statement may result in the cancellation of any or all contracts, and/or the withdrawal of any offer of a contract with UNAIDS and/or WHO.
7. If and to the extent the work to be performed under this agreement includes surveys or interviews involving human participants (hereinafter referred to as “research”), the following shall apply:

1. Ethical Aspects

It is the responsibility of the Organization to safeguard the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in research performed under this agreement, in accordance with the appropriate national code of ethics or legislation, if any, and in

the absence thereof, the Helsinki Declaration and any subsequent amendments. Prior to commencing any such research, the Organization shall ensure that (a) the rights and welfare of the subjects involved in the research are adequately protected, (b) freely given in o, (c) the balance between risk and potential benefits involved has been assessed and deemed acceptable by a panel of independent experts appointed by the Institute, and (d) any special national requirements have been met.

2. Regulatory Requirements

It is the responsibility of the Organization to comply with the relevant national regulations pertaining to research involving human subjects.

3. Protection of Subjects

Without prejudice to obligations under applicable laws, the Organization shall make appropriate arrangements to eliminate or mitigate any negative consequences to subjects or their families resulting from the conduct of the research under this agreement. Such arrangements shall to the extent feasible include appropriate counselling, medical treatment, and financial relief. The Organization furthermore undertakes to protect the confidentiality of the information relating to the possible identification of subjects involved in the research.

12. ZERO TOLERANCE FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

UNAIDS has zero tolerance towards sexual exploitation and abuse. In this regard, and without limiting any other provisions contained herein:

- each legal entity Organization warrants that it will: (i) take all reasonable and appropriate measures to prevent sexual exploitation or abuse as described in the UNAIDS Policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Prevention and Response by any of its employees and any other persons engaged by it to perform any services under the Contract; and (ii) promptly report to UNAIDS and respond to, in accordance with the terms of the Policy, any actual or suspected violations of the Policy of which the Organization becomes aware; and
- each individual Organization warrants that he/she will (i) not engage in any conduct that would constitute sexual exploitation or abuse as described in the UNAIDS Policy on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Prevention and Response; and (ii) promptly report to UNAIDS in accordance with the terms of the Policy, any actual or suspected violations of the Policy of which the Organization becomes aware.

13. DISPUTE RESOLUTION

Any dispute relating to the interpretation or application of this agreement shall, unless amicably settled, be subject to conciliation. In the event of failure of the latter, the dispute shall be settled by arbitration. The arbitration shall be conducted in accordance with the modalities to be agreed upon by the parties or, in the absence of agreement, with the Rules of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce. The parties shall accept the arbitral award as final.

Nothing contained in or relating to this agreement shall be deemed to constitute a waiver of any of the privileges and immunities enjoyed by UNAIDS and/or WHO and/or as submitting UNAIDS and/or WHO to any national court or jurisdiction.