



Terms of Reference

Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD)

Capacity building and implementation support to NGOs implementing girl-centered programming

Purpose of this TOR

In the context of the Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) project, aimed at accelerating the demographic transition and positioning the region to capture a demographic dividend, UNFPA WCARO is seeking applications from qualified organizations who can provide technical assistance and implementation support to strengthen the capacity of implementing partners and improve the coverage, quality, and effectiveness of girl-centered programming.

Background

The Sahel Women's Empowerment and Demographic Dividend (SWEDD) Project aims to accelerate the demographic transition and position the region to capture a demographic dividend.

The development objective is to increase women and adolescent girls' empowerment and their access to quality reproductive, child and maternal health services in selected areas of the participating countries, including the Recipients' territory, and to improve regional knowledge generation and sharing as well as regional capacity and coordination.

The three main strategies of the project are to:

1. *Increase demand for Reproductive Maternal Newborn Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) commodities and services* by promoting social and behavioral change and empowering women and adolescents (by keeping girls in school, developing life skills and economic empowerment opportunities).
2. *Improve supply of RMNCAH commodities and qualified personnel* by strengthening regional capacity and application of the rural pipeline concept.
3. *Strengthen capacity for translation and use of demographic data into policy* relevant briefs to empower and hold accountable national policy makers.

Investing in the social and economic empowerment of adolescent girls is essential for achieving these aims. Delaying early marriage and childbearing will help lower dependency ratios and increasing young women's participation and productivity in the labor market will help prime the region to capture an economic dividend.

Component 1.2 of the SWEDD project is fundamentally about expanding the range of choice and opportunities available to poor girls and their families in order to make delays in marriage and childbearing more viable and desirable. The focus on delayed marriage and childbearing stems from an understanding that early childbearing leads to high lifetime fertility and that girls who marry young are likely to face the most difficulty in accessing and using family planning. The project targets girls age 10 to 19 who are at high risk for early marriage and early childbearing and support them with a menu of age-



appropriate and evidence-based interventions. Under this component, nineteen sub-projects across the six original SWEDD countries are being implemented. A handful of additional programs are in the course of being designed in Benin, which recently joined the SWEDD and allocated a significant amount toward girls' empowerment interventions nationwide.

Focusing on high-burden “hotspots”, interventions are organized under three windows, with the aim to (i) **Improve life skills and sexual and reproductive health knowledge**. Examples of interventions include girls-only safe space clubs, community agents; (ii) **Keep girls in school**. Examples of interventions include cash transfers, safe transport and accommodation, school feeding programs, tutoring and awards; (iii) **Expand economic opportunity**. Examples include capital, training in both traditional and nontraditional professions for women and girls and equipment to boost their incomes.

Interventions are implemented by international and national NGO's with varying strengths and weaknesses. Supervision is conducted by Ministries (primarily Health, Education and Social Affairs, depending on the intervention), with the support of each country's project coordination unit (PCU) and the national and regional UNFPA teams. An impact evaluation is conducted in each country to assess the impact of a select number of interventions. The six impact evaluations are being harmonized in a regional strategy to produce the much-needed evidence on the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of these interventions in the Sahel.

Scope of Work

To understand capacity needs and enhance implementation across all implementing NGOs, UNFPA WCARO is seeking applications from qualified organizations who can provide technical assistance and implementation support to assist implementing NGOs with specific bottlenecks and strengthen the capacity of implementing partners, to continuously improve the coverage, quality, and effectiveness of girl-centered programming.

Regional knowledge generation, capacity and coordination is essential to the theory of change. While some countries have hired international NGOs with significant technical and operational experience have been hired, smaller and sometimes less experienced local NGO's are also contracted. Identifying common needs and local capacity will be an important step for future scale up of the program. The implementation partner will also ensure that the service providers take into account data coming out from 1.2 interventions to continuously inform and improve the targeting and design of the interventions.

The primary activities of this TA provider will be:

- 1. Identify common needs and build capacity among implementation NGOs (operational and technical).**

A continued scan of bottlenecks and problem-solving support should aim to keep program implementation moving and improving. Methods may include systematic periodic reviews of routine program data; focused qualitative studies; mentorship; peer-to-peer learning; and participatory methods involving the community among others. Established NGOs may benefit



from a “light touch” approach to TA while smaller contractors may need more intensive capacity building and quality improvement support.

2. Facilitate thematic and operational exchange on good practice among implementing NGOs.

Regional coordination will allow countries to identify good and less good practices, adapt interventions based on better understanding of what does and doesn’t work. The implementation partner will leverage knowledge generated by all of the implementation NGOs in the context of the SWEDD, as well as from the global evidence on adolescent girls’ programs. Meaningful process documentation will allow for collective learning, common understanding of course corrections along the way and serve to inform scale-up of activities.

3. Coordinate Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) across countries

In consultation with UNFPA’s regional M&E coordinator, the World Bank Impact evaluation coordination team, the PCU and the SWEDD government teams, the implementation partner is expected to (i) review and report on the existing M&E systems and tools for the initiatives of the component 1.2, identify improvements areas, and make recommendations for addressing gaps in the systems. The consultant should build on the existing Cote d’Ivoire M&E plan developed for component 1.2. However, the consultant has the responsibility to further enhance the existing Cote d’Ivoire M&E plan; (ii) lead the harmonization of M&E tools across the six SWEDD countries, a key process to produce the much-needed evidence on the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of these interventions in the Sahel; and (iii) facilitate peer learning on best practices among implementing NGOs and partnering Ministries.

Period of Performance

The implementation partner should be in place to support the SWEDD project until December 2020, with the potential for extension subject to additional financing.

Qualifications

The successful applicant will be able to demonstrate the following experience and expertise:

1. Implementation assistance in the area of girl-centered programming: Knowledge of and experience in working across disciplines and with a range of stakeholders (implementers, community, government, researchers, donors) to guide, build capacity in and undertake implementation support to the type of interventions implemented under SWEDD’s subcomponent 1.2.
2. M&E: Minimum of seven years’ experience in designing, managing and implementing M&E systems and reporting. A good experience of regional programs, and or of international agencies working especially in the field of adolescent girls. Experience in delivering training and capacity development for a range of stakeholders. Demonstrable ability to work with diverse groups of stakeholders and to develop consensus and partnerships.
3. Sahel: In-depth knowledge, understanding and experience of implementing programs in different country contexts within the Sahel region required.
4. Fluency in both French and English is required.



Methodology

The contracting mechanism with the Implementing Partner is governed by UNFPA NEX. The process involves the following steps:

- The selection of the implementing partner agency;
- Assessment of the selected agency's capabilities;
- The signing of a partnership agreement between the UNFPA Regional Office and the agency;
- The development of an annual work plan by the partner to be approved by the Regional Office;
- Monitoring the implementation of the annual work plan of the partner by the Regional Office;
- Provision of quarterly reports on the implementation of the work plan and an annual report.

Application requirements and timelines

- Offers submitted by potential implementing partners must include the elements required in *Section 2: Application requirements and timelines*.
- All applications must be received according to the instructions and in respect of the deadlines indicated in *Section 2: Application requirements and timelines*.

Funding

The activity will be financed by SWEDD from the funds earmarked for the implementation of the component 1.2. Funding will be based on annual work plans signed between the two parties.