Request for Applications
(RFA)

Health Policy Plus Project

RFA Title	**Accountability and the Law**
RFA Number	**HPP-RFA-2021-02**
Date of Issuance	**July 30, 2021**
Closing Date for Questions	**August 13, 2021** (all questions should be sent via email to AccountabilityandLawRFA@rti.org)
Pre-Application Meeting (via Zoom)	**August 16, 2021**
Responses to be Published (sent to applicants via email)	**August 17, 2021**
RFA Closing Date	**August 30, 2021**
Anticipated Award Date	**September 30, 2021**
Duration of funding/ Period of Performance	**September 30, 2021 – March 20, 2022**

OVERVIEW OF THE FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

USAID's Health Policy Plus (HP+) Project (hereinafter referred to as HP+ or Project) implemented by a consortium led by Palladium, with RTI International as one of its subcontractors, seeks applications from local organizations in Zambia to propose and implement activities that will address recommendations to improve accountability for family planning through a grant.

This RFA provides prospective applicants with a fair opportunity to develop and submit competitive applications to the Project for potential funding. This RFA encourages women-owned and operated organizations to apply for the grant.

One (1) grant is expected to be awarded under this RFA. The grant will be awarded and implemented in accordance with USAID and US Government regulations, and the Project grant management policies and procedures. Please see the detailed description of the application requirements in "Section III Application Merit Review Criteria" below.

Grant activities will be conducted in Zambia.

To ensure uniform disclosure to the potential applicant, clarification questions should be submitted by email to AccountabilityandLawRFA@rti.org before August 13, 2021, 17:00 o'clock East Africa Time (EAT). The Project will not respond to telephone inquiries. Responses to the questions will be sent to applicants by August 17, 2021 via email. The table below shows the RFA timelines:

RFA Timeline	
Date of Issuance	August 2, 2021
Closing Date for Questions	August 13, 2021
Pre-application Meeting (via Zoom)	August 16, 2021
Responses to be sent to the applicant	August 17, 2021
Closing Date for RFA	August 30, 2021
Anticipated Award Date	September 30, 2021

RTI will host a pre-application meeting on August 16, 2021 using Zoom. Organizations interested in participating in the meeting should send an email to AccountabilityandLawRFA@rti.org with the name and title of up to three (3) representatives. Invitations containing Zoom login information will then be sent out.

Issuance of this RFA does not constitute an award commitment on the part of the Health Policy Plus Project nor does it commit the Project to pay for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Further, the Project reserves the right to reject any or all applications received. Similarly, an invitation to clarify your application is not a commitment to fund that application, nor reimburse any costs incurred during the preparation of the application.

The Project grant review and approval process eliminates the possibility of any unilateral decision of any given application. The Project staff will not ask for, and applicants are prohibited from offering, any money, fee, commission, credit, gift, gratuity, thing of value, or compensation to obtain or reward improper favorable treatment regarding this solicitation. Any improper action from a project employee should be reported to ethics@rti.org

Sincerely,

Alyson Lipsky
Project Manager

SECTION I. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The Health Policy Plus (HP+) Project is a seven-year (August 2015 – August 2022) program funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and implemented by Palladium in partnership with RTI International, Avenir Health, Futures Group Global Outreach, Plan International USA, Population Reference Bureau, The White Ribbon Alliance for Safe Motherhood and ThinkWell. The Project aims to advance equitable and sustainable health programming in HIV, maternal and child health, and family planning (FP) through policy design, implementation, and financing. This goal will be achieved by accomplishing four results:

(1) Health policies are developed, adopted, implemented, and monitored that improve equity, access, availability, affordability, and acceptability of quality health services, supplies and information.

(2) Sustainable, predictable, and adequate financing for programs and health policy implementation increased.

(3) Policy environment for public stewardship, accountability, and transparency improved.

(4) Sustainable development goals are advanced through global leadership and advocacy.

BACKGROUND

A key component of improving the enabling environment for equitable and sustainable health services, supplies, and delivery systems is a transparent legal framework. Family planning donors, advocates, and implementers around the world have demonstrated increased interest in accountability as a useful lens for supporting the achievement of family planning goals. This can be evinced by the attention given to the issue by FP2020, the advocacy and accountability working group of the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition, and the multitude of case studies, tools, and resources on accountability that have been recently published by HP+, Advance Family Planning, the Evidence Project, and others.

Policies, grounded in laws, provide the basis for accountability, responsiveness, and sustainable reforms. Health system accountability is complex, with multiple actors representing several sectors—the government, clients/citizens, and providers—that all play a part in strengthening and supporting accountability for political, programmatic, and financial commitments. Accountability for family planning is rooted in health and family planning strategies and policies, and other areas of the law, including, for example, laws that establish and protect cadres of health workers, public accountability laws, and laws regulating speech, information dissemination, and civil society organizations.

Recent work stresses the importance of looking at the broad context of and for accountability systems grounded in the law, including formal and informal accountability relationships and mechanisms, both horizontal (within government) and vertical (between government and citizens).[1] As the family planning community gains more experience in implementing approaches to accountability, it is important to understand the interplay between the law and the accountability system.

In 2019, HP+ drafted the analysis approach, titled 'Legal and Policy Framework' approach (LePoF), focusing on understanding the legal framework for financial, programmatic, and political accountability. The approach identified the kinds of laws, regulations, and policies to look for in any given country that will help understand the answerability and enforcement mandates for each type of accountability. In 2020, HP+ applied the approach in Zambia. A set of recommendations resulted from this exercise, validated by the National FP

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[1] Halloran, B. 2015. "Strengthening Accountability Ecosystems: A Discussion Paper." *The Transparency and Accountability Initiative.* Available at: http://www.transparency-initiative.org/uncategorized/862/strengthening-accountability-ecosystems/.

Technical Working Group (TWG) aimed at improving accountability for FP. Those recommendations were then prioritized, based on those that are most relevant to improving accountability for FP and those most feasible to undertake within a short implementation time (6 months).

PURPOSE

To that end, RTI International seeks to award a grant to a local organization to propose a set of activities over an implementation period of five months, that will advance one of the prioritized recommendations to improve accountability for FP in Zambia.

The **recommendation** that this RFA seeks to implement is:

Recommendation	Status	Link to FP accountability
Advocate for greater public participation in planning and budgeting	Desk research and key informant interviews revealed little involvement of CSOs in the planning and budgeting process. Planning and Budget Act was assented into law on 23rd October 2020, aiming at integrating a national planning and budgeting process, strengthen accountability and enhance citizen participation in national planning and budgeting process This does not, however, include the level and degree of participation required from civil society.	Mandate citizen participation in budget and planning processes at district level – improving government responsiveness to needs of the people including FP concerns at local levels.

For the purpose of this Award, the following definition is used:

Local organizations can be defined by USAID's New Partnership Initiative[2] list of potential partners: education, research institutions, cooperative, faith-based organizations, private sector firms, non-governmental organizations and not-for-profit organizations.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

At the end of the five months, the Applicant will have implemented an advocacy strategy directed at achieving greater public participation in planning and budgeting to improve accountability for FP in Zambia. The advocacy strategy shall clearly define the strategy's objectives, the activities to be undertaken to achieve the stated objective, the target audience(s) for the strategy and who shall implement the strategy. Different tactics, approaches, and methods can be proposed to ensure the greatest chance for success. The strategy can be implemented at both or either national and/or district levels but must demonstrate and leverage the relationship and interconnectivity between the two levels.

1. **Kick-off**

Awardee will mobilize its team and conduct a kick-off meeting once the Award has been made. The workplan will be reviewed and revised by the wider team as necessary. The HP+ Technical Advisor and the RTI Project Operations Manager will attend virtually, where feasible. This plan will outline specific areas of technical support to be provided by HP+ over the course of the Award.

2. **Design and Implementation of Activities**

Awardee will undertake its activities, according to the agreed upon workplan, for a period of five months. HP+ will provide regular (likely weekly) technical support to the Applicant through virtual platforms (Zoom, WhatsApp, etc.).

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[2] https://www.usaid.gov/npi/npi-key-definitions

This RFA has left the scope of work's approach purposefully generic to allow for activities to be provided by the Applicant. This allows for greater flexibility in creativity of proposed approaches that are relevant to the Applicant's context. The following principles and/or elements may be considered (but not limited to):

- Participatory approaches in the design, execution and/or refinement in roll-out of activities
- Alignment to existing initiatives / support to other groups working in the accountability space
- Capacity building of local organizations working in the accountability to drive recommendations forward, including training of local / community groups to take activities forward upon completion of the Award to ensure sustainability
- Engagement through existing forums/channels for the purpose of integration
- Ensuring linkages to wider accountability channels (e.g. upstream with national or regional / district structures)
- Sensitization of local or community groups, or government

3. Reporting

Awardee will be responsible for submitting monthly reports of all activities to the HP+ Technical Advisor using templates provided by HP+. In addition to routine reporting, Awardee will be responsible for preparing a final report, providing inputs for an HP+ blog post, news story and webinar. The reporting timelines must be strictly enforced to be compliant with USAID reporting regulations. The reports include:

N	Reporting	Timing
1	**Narrative progress reports**: describes the progress and covers all components of the SOW, including monitoring and evaluation plan; setbacks; shifts in strategy, unexpected outcomes.	Monthly
2	**Final Report:** results achieved; progress against workplan; lessons learned; next steps and/or handover plan to local actors (if relevant).	Upon conclusion of activities
3	**Inputs provided for news story for the HP+ website blog, new story and webinar:** Awardee will be requested to submit inputs for the above that will be prepared by the HP+ Team.	Upon conclusion of activities

4. Close-out

Awardee will ensure its activities have been concluded and handed over to relevant partners or stakeholders, where relevant.

The HP+ Technical Advisor will be the Awardee's point of contact for all technical activities. Specific issues related to the grant will be discussed with the Project's Grant Specialist.

TIMELINE

Task	Anticipated Timeline
September 2021– **March 2022**	
Signing of Grant	September 30, 2021
Kick-Off Meeting	After September 30, 2021
Key activities and milestones	September 2021– February 2022
Regular interface with HP+ Technical Advisor for technical updates, support, etc.	September 2021– February 2022
Monthly routine reporting	September 2021– February 2022
Final Report	By March 2022
Inputs provided to HP+ Technical Advisor for website news story, blog, and webinar	By March 2022
Close out	March 20, 2022

SECTION II. APPLICATION AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Instructions to Applicants

1. Questions and Further Assistance

HP+ will host an Orientation Zoom meeting on August 16, 2021 at 15:00 o'clock EAT. Applicants should confirm participation in the Zoom meeting to AccountabilityandLawRFA@rti.org by August 13, 2021, 18:00 o'clock EAT.

Questions concerning this RFA must be submitted in writing via email to AccountabilityandLawRFA@rti.org (with **HPP-RFA-2021-02** in the email subject line as a reference) on or before the deadline for receipt of questions stated on the cover letter of this RFA. Questions will not be accepted by any other means. It is the responsibility of the Applicant to monitor all correspondence related to the RFA and reply to the emails published by the Project within the set deadlines. Please read this RFA in its entirety and ensure that your response addresses all of the items listed in the Technical Application Instructions and in the Evaluation Criteria.

2. Submission Information

All documents requested by the RFA shall be submitted in an electronic format (via email with **HPP-RFA-2021-02** in the email subject line as a reference) to AccountabilityandLawRFA@rti.org email address according to the timeline guidelines listed in the cover letter of the RFA. Application will be considered valid and official only in cases where it was submitted to the listed email address. The submission deadline is August 30, 2021, 18:00 o'clock EAT. Late applications will not be considered.

Applicants should submit the following:

   a. **Grant Application & Award From – Annex A**
   b. **Technical Approach**
   c. **Budget and Cost Narrative – Annex B**
   d. **Certification Forms – Annex C**

e. **Instructions to Obtaining the DUNS Number – Annex D**
f. **Implementation Plan – Annex E**
g. **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Plan Template – Annex F**

a. **Grant Application & Award Form**

Applicants must fill out and submit the Grants Application and Award Form (Annex A). Please note that all sections of the form must be filled out, including the Organizational Control Environment Questionnaire.

b. **Technical Narrative**

Applicants must provide a technical narrative (no more than 3 pages) to be supported by the grant. The description must demonstrate the Applicant's understanding of the Objectives and Scope, detailed in the SECTION I of the RFA, and outline the Applicant's technical approach to respond to priority recommendations to improve accountability for FP. In addition to outlining the technical approach, the technical narrative should also include a description of any digital tools and/or technology that will be used, organizational capacity, value for money and sustainability.

c. **Implementation Plan**

Applicants should include a detailed workplan with key activities to show how the anticipated results will be achieved and over what timescale. The implementation plan can be submitted in either Word or Excel format, no more than 1 page.

d. **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) Plan Template**

Applicants are responsible for developing a brief M&E Plan, including relevant indicators that will be measured monthly. (These indicators should be Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART). The reporting template (table) is provided in the Annex B. The table must be included in the monthly progress reports submitted to the Project. Please note that an individual may only be counted once.

e. **Budget & Cost Narrative**

Applicants shall submit a detailed budget accompanied by a cost narrative, using the template provided in Annex C. The maximum amount of available funding for this grant is $35,000. Applicants should propose a budget that is comprehensive and cost-effective and reflect realistic costs. The cost narrative should detail how they will allocate the grant funds during the grant term (through March 20, 2022), including the proposed level of effort staff who will work on the project. Applicants should ensure that the rates provided are reasonable and consistent with organizational policy. The budget can also include operational costs related to the implementation of the proposed activities, including personnel, relevant materials, supplies, financial administration, and other costs directly related to implementing the project.

Payments will be made based upon the submission and acceptance of specific verifiable milestones. These milestones include the following and will be finalized prior to the execution of the grant award.

Milestone	Timeline	Deliverable	Grant Amount (%)
Milestone 1	September 2021	Kick-off meeting minutes; revised workplan; capacity development plan submitted to HP+ and approved	25%
Milestone 2	December 2021	3 monthly reports covering October, November, and December 2021 submitted to HP+ and approved	25%
Milestone 3	Feb 2022	2 monthly reports covering January and February 2022 submitted to HP+ and approved	25%
Milestone 4	March 2022	Final report + inputs for website story, blog, webinar submitted to HP+ and approved	25%

RTI is not responsible for any costs associated with the development of applications in response to this RFA. All costs incurred in the preparation and submission of applications will be the Applicant's responsibility and will not be reimbursed. All grant activity costs must be within the normal operating practices of the Applicant's organization and in accordance with their written policies and procedures. In addition, costs must be compliant with 2 CFR 200 Subpart E, Cost Principles (https://ecfr.io/Title-02/sp2.1.200.e).

g. Certification Forms – Annex C

All USAID grants recipients are required to sign and submit certifications. The RFA incorporates certifications required for the type of organization, level/type of funding, flow down from the Prime award, or work that will be performed for the grant. The certification forms required to be submitted by the applicant along with the Application Form are listed in the Annex D.

h. Instructions to Obtaining the DUNS Number – Annex D

If Applicant does not have a Data Universal Number System (DUNS) number, use this Dun & Bradstreet (D&B) online registration process to receive one free of charge. The DUNS number is required for all grant recipients who receive grants funded by the US government in the amount of $25,000 or more. Instructions for obtaining the DUNS number are detailed in Annex E. The DUNS number is a unique nine-character number that identifies your organization. It is a tool of the US government to track how federal money is distributed. Most large organizations, libraries, colleges and research universities working outside the United States already have DUNS numbers. Confirm with your grant administrator or financial officer whether your organization has a DUNS number.

SECTION III. APPLICATION MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

Full applications will be evaluated against the merit review criteria as shown below:

Merit Review Criteria	Maximum Points Available
Technical Approach	40
Institutional Capacity	15
Value for Money	10
Sustainability	5
Implementation Plan	20
Monitoring and Evaluation Plan	10

These merit review criteria elements are described in more detail below:

Technical Narrative (no more than 3 pages)

I.   **Technical Approach:** Applicants must provide a description of the technical approach to be supported by the grant (40 points). The description must demonstrate the following:

- **Understanding of the Scope of Work:** detailed in the SECTION I of the RFA
- **Context:** description of the overarching landscape which affects why the approach for improving accountability for FP has been proposed.
- **Justification:** identify the issue and outline how the approach will strengthen accountability for FP, in line with the priority recommendation. The proposed approach should be well justified with a strong evidence base.
- **Expected outcome:** change expected, and how it will affect certain populations/groups in the targeted region.
- **Overarching strategy and approach(es):** what activities, processes or strategies are essential to achieve the results? Why will the planned work lead to the intended results?
- **Stakeholder engagement:** how the applicant plans to coordinate the proposed approach with identified local stakeholders to ensure their capacity is strengthened to continue to strengthen accountability for FP, including post-Award completion.
- **Linkages:** how/if this solution will leverage existing initiatives, either to build off what is already there or become integrated for greater buy-in/sustainability.
- **Targeted geographic region:** for intervention and reasons they have been targeted.

II.   **Institutional Capacity:** Applicants should describe the organization's overall institutional capability and resources (finances, personnel) in meeting the general requirements of the technical approach. Applicants should describe its prior work in a related field or activity. The information on past performance should be provided in a table included in the relevant section of the Grants Application and Award Form (Annex A). In case the applicant has no past experience related to receiving grants from a USAID or US-government funded project, the applicant can list experience with other donors or programs funded by the Government of Zambia (15 points).

III.   **Value for Money:** The criteria include evaluation of the budget provided by the applicant as well as the degree to which budgeting is clear, reasonable and reflects best use of resources. Maximizing use of existing resources and/or examples of cost-sharing should also be provided (10 points).

IV.   **Sustainability:** Explain how the approach has been designed to ensure that its benefits will continue beyond the period of funding. Applicant should also include whether there is a plan for pursuing additional funding for longevity beyond the period of funding and/or handing over of activities to local stakeholders (5 points).

V.   **Implementation Plan** (reporting template provided in Annex E)
Applicants should include a detailed workplan to show how the anticipated results will be achieved. What activities, processes or strategies are essential to achieve the results? Why will the planned work lead to the intended results? What is the anticipated timetable for the achievement of the results? (20 points).

VI. **Monitoring and Evaluation Plan** (reporting template provided in Annex F)

Applicants should demonstrate a realistic, but brief plan for monitoring, tracking and reporting performance, including a plan for collection, evaluating and validating performance data. The plan should contain a set of indicators that would permit continuous measurement of progress toward targeted results. For each result, what is the performance indicator? What is the baseline data? What is the performance target? What is the timetable for achieving results? For each performance indicator, what is the definition and what is the unit of measurement? What are the plans for reporting and using the performance information? The M&E Plan should also outline how the Applicant intends to gather and measure beneficiary feedback. (10 points).

SECTION IV. AWARD AND ADMINSTRATION INFORMATION

A. Award Information

1. Program Duration

The duration of the activities funded under this RFA will be from signing of the grant (anticipated in September 2021) through March 20, 2022.

2. Anticipated Funding Availability

Funding for this grant opportunity is available under the USAID Cooperative Agreement AID-OAA-A-15-00051. All grants will be negotiated and funded in US dollars. All costs funded by the grant must be allowable, allocable, and reasonable. Grant applications must be supported by a detailed and realistic budget.

3. Type of Award and Payment

The grant awarded under this RFA will be a Fixed Amount Award (FAA). RTI shall retain the right to terminate the grant activities unilaterally in extraordinary circumstances. The grant may be terminated at a date earlier than the grant activity completion date under the following conditions, but not limited to:

- Significant change in the scope of work: if the requirements of UASID or the program change such that the work to be completed varies significantly from the proposed activities.
- Reduction or termination of donor funding: in the event USAID reduces funding or terminates funding earlier than the Grant Activity Completion Date.
- As a requirement of the donor: in the event the donor requests early termination of the grant.
- Significant delays or external or internal challenges which have a material impact on the ability of the grantee to implement the activities.

RTI will make payments based on submission and acceptance of specific verifiable milestones. Once an award is issued, it will include a fixed price payment schedule with milestones and deliverables negotiated during the final application and award process.

B. Applicant Eligibility

Applicants may be: education, research institutions, cooperative, faith-based organizations, private sector firms, non-governmental organizations and not-for-profit organizations, as defined by USAID's New Partnership Initiative. All applicants should:
- Be formally constituted at the time of grant award
- Be legally registered in Zambia (submit registration certificate or equivalent)
- Be compliant to Zambian regulations (submit tax compliance certificate or equivalent)

Applicants will be required to provide a Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number at the time of submission. If the Applicant already has a DUNS number, it should be included on the Grant Application and Award Form. Otherwise, Applicants will be expected to obtain a DUNS number before an award is made. DUNS numbers may be obtained online at

http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform/pages/CCRSearch.jsp

Applicants must display sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures and present a system of internal controls that safeguard assets, protect against fraud, waste, and abuse, and support the achievement of program goals and objectives. HP+ will assess this capability prior to awarding a grant. Any falsification of proposal information may result in rejection/cancellation of the award.

C. Authority / Governing Regulations

RTI awards are issued in the form of grants under cooperative agreement and made under the authority of the U.S. Foreign Affairs Act and USAID's Advanced Directive System (ADS) 303. Grantees are expected to comply with the provisions of these guidelines and regulations, as applicable. USAID ADS 303 can be accessed at http://www.usaid.gov/ads/policy/300/303

2 CFR 200 is not directly applicable to non-U.S. organizations; however, USAID applies some of these regulations to non-U.S. organizations through ADS 303 and the Standard Provisions (USAID ADS 303.3.1). 2 CFR 200 can be accessed at https://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?SID=12ac87ccfe859ca4c02abc695baa6227&mc=true&node=pt2.1.200&rgn=div5

D. False Statements in Applications

Applicants must provide full, accurate, and complete information as required by this solicitation and its attachments.

E. Conflict of Interest Clause

Applicants must provide disclosure of any past, present, or future relationships with any parties associated with the issuance, review, or management of this solicitation and anticipated award. Failure to provide full and open disclosure may results in RTI having to re-evaluate selection of an applicant.

F. Prohibited Goods and Services

Under no circumstance shall the recipient budget for or procure any of the following under this award, as these items are excluded by the Foreign Assistance Act and other legislation which govern USAID funding. Programs which are found to transact in any of these shall be disqualified:

- Military equipment
- Surveillance equipment
- Commodities and services for support of police of other law enforcement activities
- Abortion equipment and services
- Luxury good and gambling equipment
- Weather modification equipment

G. Restricted Goods

The following goods are restricted by USAID and require prior written approval from RTI and USAID to be allowable costs:

- Agricultural commodities
- Motor vehicles
- Pharmaceuticals
- Pesticides
- Fertilizer
- Contraceptives
- Used equipment
- Immovable property

H. Disclaimers

- RTI may cancel this solicitation and not award.
- RTI reserves the right to accept or reject any or all applications received.
- Issuance of solicitation does not constitute award commitment by RTI.
- RTI reserves the right to disqualify any application based on applicant failure to follow solicitation instructions.
- RTI will not compensate applicants for response to solicitation.
- RTI reserves the right to issue award based on the initial evaluation of applications without further discussion.
- RTI reserves the right to ask for further clarifications from the applicants or negotiate for adjustments on the nature, scope of work, or scale of the funds prior to the award determination to promote competition.
- RTI may contact applicants to confirm contact person, address, and that the bid was submitted for this solicitation.

The following Annexes are included with this RFA:

Annexes can be requested in Microsoft Word (Annexes A and F) and Excel (Annexes B and E) by emailing AccountabilityandLawRFA@rti.org.

ANNEX A: Grant Application & Award From

ANNEX B: Budget and Cost Narrative

ANNEX C: Certification Forms

ANNEX D: Instructions to Obtaining the DUNS Number

ANNEX E: Implementation Plan Template

ANNEX F: Monitoring and Evaluation Plan Template