



## **CONSULTANCY ADVERTISEMENT**

The International Training and Education Center for Health (I-TECH) is a center in the University of Washington's Department of Global Health that works in partnership with the University of California, San Francisco. I-TECH has projects in more than 20 countries, and its worldwide staff work with local ministries of health, universities, non-governmental organizations, medical facilities, and other partners to support efficient, well-ordered health care systems that provide high quality care to all citizens. I-TECH Malawi provides technical assistance to the Malawi Ministry of Health and its partners to support human resource development, health systems strengthening, HIV care and treatment, and HIV surveillance for epidemic control.

I-TECH has been privileged to provide technical support to the Government of Malawi Ministry of Health (MoH), since 2008, through seconded senior Technical Assistants, Program Officers and Public Health Fellows. The International Training and Education Center for Health (I-TECH) was established in 2002 at the University of Washington in Seattle. I-TECH is funded by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Division of Global HIV and TB (CDC-DGHT) under the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR).

I-TECH Malawi wishes to recruit a highly qualified and experienced person to carry out the following Consultancy work

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR CONSULTANCY TO DEVELOP NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR GENOMIC SEQUENCING IN MALAWI**

#### **1.0. Background and Rationale**

According to the World Health Organization, genomic surveillance provides critical information about pathogens that pose a health threat, their evolution, and their state of circulating. The African Union (AU) and the Africa Centers for Disease Control (CDC), Africa Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have a continental program called pathogen genomics initiative, to which Malawi is already affiliated through its membership of Africa CDC and Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The genomic data for pathogens can significantly contribute to deeper comprehension of dynamics of specific pathogens with pandemic and epidemic potential. Used with other data such as clinical or epidemiological, it can further have a global input in overall development of vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostic assays, and decisions on public health social measures. The results can spearhead proliferation of innovative technologies in sequencing and bioinformatics which is a challenge in most resource limited settings.

It should additionally be noted that many emerging infectious diseases originate from animals. Hence, the need for early warning systems at the human, animal, environmental interface, which is key for control of COVID 19 and other potential pathogens at global, regional, and national level. Countries including Malawi should thus increase their capacity to detect new threats including through laboratory techniques, such as genomic sequencing.

With COVID-19 pandemic, the importance of strengthening genomics in public health surveillance systems and real-time tracking of pathogens has become more pronounced for decision making and action. The resurgence of COVID-19 pandemic has revolutionized the scale of sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 genomes, and the current investments in global genomic surveillance, outpacing all other surveillance systems, and the number of available genomes of SARS-CoV-2 is higher than those for influenza, HIV and all foodborne bacterial species. Genomic sequencing has been embraced as part of the essential public health toolbox, driving massive investments in further development of sequencing capacity. It is imperative to introduce and strengthen Sequence-based genomic surveillance to detect, monitor and assess virus variants that might result in increased transmissibility and disease severity, or have adverse effects on public health and social control measures.

In Malawi, after the first cases were reported in April 2020, within the ongoing COVID-19 global pandemic, the country has so far experienced 4 waves. To mitigate the upsurge, the Ministry of Health (MoH) has progressively geared in strategic measures, such as the national COVID-19 preparedness and response plan, with the view of providing a blueprint for preparing and responding to the epidemic in the country with the aim to reduce morbidity and mortality through early detection and effective management of infections. Additionally, a guideline was developed to and provides diagnostics processes of SARS-CoV-2 and introductory insights on Genomic surveillance and innovative testing strategies which could forage in a wider national genomic surveillance. To this effect, the MoH, in collaboration with implementing partners, has started establishing genomic surveillance capacity in the country. Through, the Public Health Institute of Malawi (PHIM), the MoH has further established on 19<sup>th</sup> January 2022, a “Malawi Genomic Committee” with members from government, academic institutions, and development partners. The main role is to provide strategic leadership in the development and strengthening of genomic sequencing in Malawi. As such, the development of a comprehensive genomic surveillance national strategic plan that will have a one health approach was agreed to strengthen and harmonize the available genomic systems and effectively coordinate mechanisms to guide and supervise the national response with respect to genomic surveillance and monitoring pathogen control programs.

The Committee agreed to hire a consultant to develop the national genome sequencing strategic plan.

## Objectives

The overall objective of this consultancy is to develop a comprehensive genomic surveillance national strategic plan.

### 4. Scope of Work for Consultancy

These TOR target the following tasks as assigned by the Malawi Genomics Committee. All the work will have to be consultative:

- a. Compile a list of relevant implementing partners and stakeholders in public and private sectors and including civil society and their capabilities.
- b. Review previous and current strategic plans, guidelines, data and other relevant supporting documents in public health and private sectors whether local or international.
- c. Using appropriate tools and methodologies, review current genomic surveillance systems, identify strengths, weakness, opportunities and threats in human, animal health including genomic research agenda. This may be done through organizing and facilitating strategic planning joint meetings
- d. Develop appropriate strategic objectives and respective broad activities
- e. Generate a draft strategic plan and budget, together with a monitoring and evaluation framework and facilitate the adoption of the plan through consultative meetings
- f. Submit to the Chairman of the Malawi Genomics Committee the final and bound copy of the strategic plan with support from ITECH and UMB, and through PHIM, being secretariat of the Malawi Genomics Committee.
- g. Be present, and make the presentation as appropriate, when the bound strategic plan is presented by the committee to the Secretary for Health.

### 5. Deliverables

- a. List of stakeholders and implementing partners; private, public
- b. Roadmap outlining activities and timelines
- c. Inception report detailing processes and tools to be used for the assignment with clear milestones
- d. Report and/or updates on the process including reviews, stakeholder consultations, meetings, and workshops.
- e. Present all files in editable formats (no PDF's), images in JPG format of the various versions of the genomic surveillance national strategic plan to stakeholders to have it fully understood and embraced by the involved parties.
- f. Final version of the 5-year genomic surveillance national strategic plan

### 7. Dates and details as to how the work must be delivered

Deliverables	Working Days	Due Date
a. Inception report, process to be used including consultations with stakeholders and SWOT analysis including roadmap outlining activities and timelines	5	

b. Listing of all stakeholders and Implementing partners; private, public	5	
c. Conduct meeting and SWOT analysis together with the Genomic Committee and stakeholders.	10	
d. Consultatively develop appropriate strategic plan objectives and respective broad activities	5	
e. Generate the first draft strategic plan together with a monitoring and evaluation framework and budget	10	
f. Presentation of the draft plan to solicit input from stakeholders	5	
g. Incorporate comments and corrections from stakeholders. Finalize and submit the final version of the strategic Plan with M&E framework and budget (Power Point Presentation Slides and Word document)	10	

Payments will be made upon satisfactory completion and/or submission of deliverables.

#### 8. Indicators to evaluate the consultant's performance:

	Indicator	Score
a. Timeliness	All deliverables are completed on time as defined by the deliverable due date.	1-5
b. Achievement of Goals	All deliverables achieve the specific goals (purpose) of the assignment. And all outputs contribute towards individual deliverables by providing distinct pieces of work, events, written products, or other defined activities.	1-5
c. Quality	All documents are developed and handed over to an acceptable level of quality including completeness, clear and concise language, all files are provided in editable formats (no PDF's), images are provided in JPG format	1-5

#### 9. Time Span

This assignment is expected to be carried out for a period of 50 man-days

#### 10. Institutional Arrangements

The Consultant will report directly to the Malawi Genomics Committee secretariat. The Genomics Committee secretariat will provide relevant background documents necessary for the task. The secretariat shall be responsible for the coordination of meetings and other activities under the Consultancy.

## **11. Stakeholders:**

Including but not limited to MoH-DHA, PHIM, MOH-Diagnostics, UMB, I-TECH, KUHES, UNC, R4H, MLW, 10 molecular labs, PEPFAR, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Education, other PEPFAR Implementing Partners.

## **12. Academic Qualifications, experience, and competence**

- Must possess at least a BSc degree or Higher in a relevant field
- Demonstrated experience in working with government partners and other stakeholders in public sector development programs
- Ability to work with minimal supervision.
- High-level written and oral communication skills in English.
- Must be result-oriented, a team player, exhibiting high levels of enthusiasm, tact, diplomacy, and integrity.
- Demonstrate excellent interpersonal and professional skills in interacting with government and development partners.
- Skills in facilitation of stakeholder engagements/workshops.
- Experience in research, policy development, management, and programming-related work
- Previous experience in strategic plans development

## **13. Application standard:**

The application should include introduction, background, CV of the consultant, proposition on how the activity would be conducted and proposed daily rates. Send application by email to; hr@itech-malawi.org. Deadline for receiving application is Friday 25<sup>th</sup> March 2022.”