

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR A CONSULTANCY TO DEVELOP A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK**

### **ABOUT THE UNIT**

The MRC/UVRI & LSHTM Uganda Research Unit is an internationally recognized centre of excellence for research and training. The Unit was established in 1988 to improve the understanding and control of the HIV epidemic in Uganda and globally, following a request from the Uganda Government to the United Kingdom (UK) Government. After wide consultations, and in response to the changing public health landscape, Unit work has broadened beyond HIV to include other infections, neglected, endemic, emerging and re-emerging infections and non-communicable diseases (NCDs).

The Unit is one of two (2) UKRI/MRC Units outside the UK, the other one in [the Gambia](#). With strong affiliation to the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI), the Unit enjoys vital representation at government level, which facilitates translation of research findings.

In 2018, the Unit was transferred to LSHTM, a major UK global health institution. This new partnership is boosting research capacity into some of the current and emerging health issues in Africa and globally.

### **OUR MISSION**

To conduct high-quality research that adds knowledge and leads to improved control of infectious and non-communicable diseases in Uganda, Africa and globally, through translation of scientific findings into policy and practice, and rigorous research capacity building.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** Engaging with and involving the community/public in our research, incorporating their views to shape our research questions, is central to ensure maximal buy-in, and to facilitate participation in research activities and uptake of our findings. This is particularly crucial where the Unit engages in “high-risk” population research (e.g. fishing communities, sex workers) and vulnerable populations, including children and pregnant women. The Unit has, over the years, established mechanisms to facilitate such engagement. These include Community Advisory Boards (CABs composed of community representatives within research communities), Participant Advisory Groups, and Patient Clubs. We increasingly also include patient representatives or non-scientist members on our study investigation teams and all our research work undergoes scientific and ethical review and clearance. These mechanisms play an important role in facilitating community guidance and input into the Unit’s studies. This not only promotes sustained support for the Unit’s scientific research but also strengthens its capacity for collaborative, community-driven research.

### **THE CONSULTANCY**

The objective of this consultancy is to develop a robust Community Engagement and Involvement Framework that will guide the Unit in effectively engaging with and involving communities in research endeavors. The framework should be tailored to our institution's specific context and priorities, taking into account the findings of the recent survey.

#### **Scope of Work:**

1. Review the findings of the community engagement survey conducted by the Unit.
2. Conduct a thorough assessment of existing community engagement practices, policies, and procedures within the Unit.
3. Review relevant literature, best practices, and case studies on community engagement in research, both locally and globally.
4. Consult with key stakeholders, including researchers, community representatives, institutional leaders, and relevant government agencies, to gather input and insights on community engagement needs and priorities.
5. Develop a draft Community Engagement and Involvement Framework outlining key principles, objectives, strategies, and action plans.
6. Facilitate a stakeholder workshop to present the draft framework, gather feedback, and refine the document based on input received.
7. Finalize the Community Engagement and Involvement Framework based on stakeholder feedback and submit the final document to the Unit's Head of Communications and Engagement.

**Deliverables:**

1. An inception report outlining the consultant's approach, methodology, and costed work plan.
2. A draft Community Engagement and Involvement Framework document.
3. A community engagement planning template that can be adopted and used Unit wide to ensure consistency across all projects
4. Facilitation of a stakeholder workshop and summary report of feedback received.
5. A finalized Community Engagement and Involvement Framework document incorporating stakeholder input.

**Duration**

The consultancy is expected to be completed within six months from the date of contract signing.

**Qualifications**

- Demonstrated expertise in community engagement, public participation, or participatory research methodologies.
- Proven experience in developing community engagement and involvement frameworks or similar documents for research institutions or organizations.
- Strong understanding of ethical and regulatory considerations, cultural sensitivities, and power dynamics related to community engagement and involvement in research.
- Excellent facilitation, communication, and stakeholder engagement skills.

- Familiarity with the local context and community dynamics in Uganda including the 2022 Uganda National Council For Science and Technology (UNCST) National Guidelines for Community Engagement in Research

## **SUBMISSION OF PROPOSALS**

Interested bidders are invited to follow the link below to submit their proposal, including a detailed methodology, work plan, budget, and CV highlighting relevant experience.

**Link:** [https://redcap.link/SUBMISSION\\_OF\\_PROPOSALS](https://redcap.link/SUBMISSION_OF_PROPOSALS)

**Combine all your key documentation into one PDF document.** Deadline for submission is **5<sup>th</sup> June 2024, 5:00pm**. Only online applications through the link provided will be accepted. ***You will receive a notification in your email if your application and documentation have been successfully received.***

### **Proposals should be addressed to:**

The Head of Communications and Engagement,  
MRC/ UVRI and LSHTM Uganda Research Unit,  
P.O. Box, 49, Entebbe, Uganda.

## **EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the consultant's qualifications and experience (40%), proposed methodology and work plan (30%), and budget (30%).

The MRC/UVRI and LSHTM Uganda Research Unit reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal and is not bound to accept the lowest or any proposal submitted.