Laboratory Advisor
Job Announcement No. AID–002-20

OPEN TO: All Interested Candidates

POSITION: Laboratory Advisor

OPENING DATE: October 31, 2019

CLOSING DATE: November 15, 2019

WORK HOURS: Full-time; 40 hours/week

SALARY RANGE: FSN 11 - (ZMK 486,490.50 p.a. – ZMK 761,723.29 p.a.)

The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) in Zambia is seeking eligible and qualified applicants for the position of the Laboratory Advisor.

BASIC FUNCTION:

The Laboratory Advisor provides management, leadership, and technical support to activity design, implementation, monitoring and reporting related to these activities. The Laboratory Advisor is responsible for overall oversight of laboratory system strengthening efforts in USAID/Zambia health programs and the United States Government (USG) inter-agency team, including the President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) team. The Advisor engages with senior officials within the GRZ, Implementing Partners (IP), and other donors and partners to ensure laboratory capacities are strengthened throughout USG-supported activities and within the GRZ national structures and processes. The Laboratory Advisor supports partners and the GRZ in ensuring core strategic and technical laboratory activities are strengthened and improved.

This position ensures a seamless link between service delivery interventions and country capacity in laboratory systems development and strengthening. Under PEPFAR, Zambia is scaling up laboratory system capacities and must address barriers to access and uptake of HIV testing and viral load testing. This includes understanding and addressing weaknesses and opportunities in demand creation, sample referral systems, procurement, optimization of testing capacity, return and uptake of results, and monitoring and evaluation of the cascade for improvements. These same activities will also provide capacity for early infant diagnosis (EID) of children from HIV positive mothers and other HIV-related laboratory services. This position will serve to ensure laboratories are fully functional and operating at capacity, including the provision of the qualified staff and ancillary equipment. Additionally, the
Laboratory Advisor will work with the GRZ and partners to support and improve the sample referral system from specimen collection, processing, adequate handling and storage as well as transportation to the laboratories. Other activities of focus will include availability of HIV related laboratory tests, national quality oversight of HIV testing, and increasing awareness of VL/EID testing to ensure maximum coverage.

MAJOR DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

I. Technical Leadership (40%).

The Laboratory Advisor provides technical expertise and leadership in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of laboratory strengthening and laboratory quality assurance and control activities within the health systems strengthening portfolio. S/he provides guidance in these areas to the GRZ, MOH, and non-governmental partners and assists Implementing Partners in the development of achievable, measurable plans and objectives in support of quality laboratory activities. S/he provides expert advice based on knowledge of evidence-based methods and strategies, current practice, and established laboratory and operational standards.

• The Laboratory Advisor supports a full range of consultative, advisory, strategic planning and evaluation activities for the HSS team by staying current on active and new laboratory system strengthening issues emerging from USAID/Washington, the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, and other global communities of practice, and provides recommendations on options in shaping laboratory strengthening and capacity building approaches.

• S/he provides technical input into strategies and tools for the design and implementation of laboratory capacity building components.

• S/he assesses current technical, scientific, managerial and operational efficiencies of the USAID-supported laboratory system strengthening activities.

• S/he provides high-level guidance oversight and direction for developing and maintaining key HIV laboratory systems and services including use of data to identify priority areas and sites.

• The incumbent serves as the USAID strategic lead for laboratory system strengthening activities within the PEPFAR interagency technical team.

• S/he makes regular project supervision and monitoring visits, ascertains progress, identifies delays and problems, if any, and recommends solutions.

• The Laboratory Advisor identifies areas for improved efficiency or effectiveness within prescribed parameters, and recommends enhancements to procedures.

• S/he provides technical assessment and recommended strategies to existing and planned interventions, including the integration of innovative approaches (where appropriate) into laboratory strengthening activities.
II. Program Design and Management (40%).

The Laboratory Advisor serves as an Activity Manager with program technical leadership and administrative oversight for laboratory strengthening-related activities. The Advisor provides strategic guidance in ensuring activities are aligned with GRZ and USG policies and objectives, complies with relevant laws and regulations and ensures that contractual obligations are met. S/he provides technical guidance, supervision and support to other HSS and Health team staff to ensure a seamless link between service delivery interventions and country capacity in laboratory systems and development and strengthening plans across the USAID health portfolio. The Advisor monitors progress in meeting laboratory strengthening needs, evaluates plans for feasibility, effectiveness, efficiency and economy.

- The Laboratory Advisor serves as the Contracting Officer Representative/Agreement Officer Representative for HIV-related laboratory system strengthening programs as assigned.
- S/he leads the development and management of laboratory strengthening acquisition and assistance mechanisms, including coordination, management and reporting of actions and functions required to support lab strengthening activities.
- The incumbent provides expert technical input and influences design and scope for work plans, budgets, monitoring and evaluation plans of activities.
- S/he reviews, analyzes and evaluates the effectiveness of managed projects and makes recommendations for enhancements.
- S/he monitors expenditures and pipelines, and appropriate and timely funding.
- Supports USAID regular and ad-hoc reporting needs on lab strengthening activities including preparing complex portions of key planning documents such as the PEPFAR Country Operational Plan, the PEPFAR Annual and Semi-Annual Performance Reports, annual work plans, and annual/semiannual portfolio reviews.
- Ensures that lab strengthening activities are integrated into overall USG supported and health systems strengthening activities and coordinates these activities with the interagency HSS Technical Working Group, GRZ, and other donors to avoid duplication of efforts and programming gaps.

III. Programmatic Coordination (20%).

The Laboratory Advisor is the USAID/Zambia liaison in substantive meetings with high level public and private sector officials involved with USAID supported programs keeping them informed of program status, GRZ action needs, difficulties encountered and other project related issues, including the review of existing strategies and the formation of new laboratory-related policies. The Advisor coordinates and communicates regularly with other USAID/Zambia staff, IPs, the GRZ, the Global Fund, and other donors on administrative, technical, programmatic and policy issues related to the lab strengthening activities.

- The Laboratory Advisor leads coordination efforts between USG’s Health IPs working in this field.
- S/he coordinates with other donors, international agencies, and GRZ counterparts working on lab strengthening issues, including technical working groups as well as through policy engagement with senior Ministry of Health (MOH) officials and others leading HSS activities.
- The Laboratory Advisor maintains high level contacts and constructive dialogue through substantive meetings with both public and private sector officials involved with USAID-supported HSS programs keeping them informed of lab strengthening activities, GRZ actions, difficulties encountered and other activity related issues, including the review of existing strategies and formation of new policies with differences in opinions and priorities of other participating organizations.

- Represents USAID with multi-lateral donor coordination organizations and in defining the donor technical, policy and program agenda with regards to lab strengthening. Monitors the political environment and other donor activities to inform USAID/Zambia's lab strengthening funding and programmatic decision making.

REQUIRED QUALIFICATIONS:

A. Education: A minimum of Master's Degree or local equivalent in public health, laboratory sciences, or related field is required because of the complexity of the work to be performed.

B. Prior Work Experience: A minimum of five years of progressively responsible professional-level experience in the field of public health and/or laboratory sciences is required. Prior work experience with the Government and/or international organizations is required.

C. Post Entry Training: Post entry training will include technical and programmatic training as well as coverage of USAID established policies, procedures and regulations that govern: specific activity management such as Contracting Officer's Representative/Agreement Officer's Representative (COR/AOR 104), including monitoring and program assessment/evaluation and procurement systems. Necessary post-entry training will be provided on-site or at regionally based facilities.

D. Language Proficiency: Level IV (fluent) written and oral English proficiency is required. Ability to write and edit technical documents in English and concisely summarize complex ideas is essential.

E. Job Knowledge: In-depth professional knowledge of development principles, concepts, and practices, especially as they relate to the assignment is required. This includes thorough knowledge of laboratory system strengthening issues in Zambia and the approaches to address them. Job holder should have some knowledge of the host government health care system and structures including familiarity with Ministry of Health policies, program priorities and regulations. A solid working knowledge of management techniques to plan, organize and direct multi-disciplinary project teams and activities is critical to the success of this position.

F. Skills and Abilities: Strong written and oral communication skills are required. Must possess the ability to establish and maintain effective working relationships and an extensive range of contacts with USAID, Implementing Partners, Ministry of Health officials and non-governmental organization counterparts. Must possess high quality analytical skills and the ability to assess ongoing public health interventions to evaluate their efficiency in relation to significant economic, political and social trends.
in Zambia. Ability to plan, organize, manage and evaluate important and complex projects. Excellent interpersonal skills and an ability to work in a team environment also required.

**TERMS OF APPOINTMENT:**  
Subject to availability of funds, this will be a five-year contract, with an option to extend, depending upon continuing need of the services.

**BENEFITS:**  
The position is classified at FSN-11 level. The final salary of the successful candidate will be negotiated within that range, depending on qualifications and previous earnings history.

**APPLYING:**  
Qualified candidates should send:  
1. A formal application letter or cover letter;  
2. A current CV;  
3. Photocopies of all professional certificates and degrees;  
4. A fully complete application form DS-174 (available online at https://eforms.state.gov/Forms/ds174.pdf); and  
5. Contact information for at least three professional references.

**SUBMIT ALL APPLICATION MATERIALS TO:**  
EXOZambiaHR@usaid.gov (E-mailed applications required.)

The email subject heading must read either of the following (the location of the position must be clear):

**Application: Laboratory Advisor, AID-002-20**

*Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.*