Humanitarian Evidence Programme Call for Proposals:

WASH Interventions in Disease Outbreaks

May 2015

Oxfam GB in partnership with Feinstein International Center

This Call for Proposals is soliciting applications to conduct an evidence synthesis on WASH practices in humanitarian emergencies as part of the Humanitarian Evidence Programme. The evidence synthesis is expected to bring together existing literature, rather than undertake field research.[1] This Programme has been funded by UK aid from the UK government; however the views expressed do not necessarily reflect the UK government's official policies.

Issue date: **Tuesday, May 19, 2015**
Deadline: **Tuesday, June 16, 2015,** 17.00 GMT, 13.00 EST (GMT-4), 18.00 BST (GMT+1), 20.00 EAT (GMT+3), 22.30 IST (GMT+5½)

Question: What is the impact of WASH interventions in disease outbreaks in humanitarian emergencies?

For additional Calls for Proposals, please consult the web page (www.oxfam.org.uk/hep). The Humanitarian Evidence Programme is currently commissioning separate reviews on the topics of (a) child protection; (b) WASH; and (c) urban humanitarian response. The programme expects to release subsequent Calls for Proposals in the fall of 2015. Individuals or teams can apply for any question; if applicants would like to apply for more than one question, separate applications for each must be made.

The Terms of Reference provide more details on the process. A briefing paper accompanies this question at the end of this document (in the annex of the Terms of Reference), detailing the programme's interest in the research question and providing relevant information for potential review teams. The guidance note on conducting an evidence synthesis in the humanitarian sector and the application can be found on the web page. **Applicants must use the template provided on the web page.**

Budget: Applicants should submit a detailed budget for the review, and value for money is a criterion for applications. As a guide, the WASH evidence synthesis in question is expected to cost between £20,000 and £40,000.

[1] We use the terms 'synthesis' or 'review' in this Call for Proposals to delineate the research outputs of this program from primary, prospective research. For more information on the format and utility of evidence synthesis reviews, please consult the Humanitarian Evidence Programme Guidance Note, available at www.oxfam.org.uk/hep.

Desired criteria for applicants: Applicants may apply either individually or form teams, and they will be reviewed based on their:

- Key competencies and staff composition;
- Management, including the timetable for deliverables;
- Quality of technical proposal; and,
- Budget, ensuring value for money.

The Humanitarian Evidence Programme accepts proposals from around the world. The Programme encourages proposals from applicants based in low- or middle-income countries, and proposals including such individuals in the team. Proposals will be reviewed by a panel and scored according to the criteria listed in Section 9 of the Terms of Reference.

Application process and deadlines:
Applications should be sent to eott1@oxfam.org.uk with 'Humanitarian Evidence Review Application' in the message title. Applications must be submitted ***in a single Word or PDF Document*** *(including CVs of relevant personnel)* no later than **Tuesday, June 16, 2015 at 17.00 GMT.** No late proposals will be accepted and incomplete proposals or proposals over the page limit may result in disqualification. The budget may be presented in the single Word/PDF document or via a separate Excel document. Please do not submit documents that are not requested.

Bidders MUST follow the application template available at www.oxfam.org.uk/hep.

The Humanitarian Evidence Programme encourages proposals from individuals and teams in low- or middle-income countries, as well as proposals including such researchers in the review team. Applicants must declare any real or potential conflicts of interest.

Any queries should be sent to eott1@oxfam.org.uk by 2 June 2015, and all answers will be posted on the Humanitarian Evidence Programme web page by 5 June 2015.

Terms of Reference

Humanitarian Evidence Programme

May 2015

1. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

The Humanitarian Evidence Programme aims to synthesize research in the humanitarian sector and communicate the findings to key stakeholders, with the ultimate goal of improving humanitarian policy and practice. Over the course of 2.5 years between June 2014 and December 2016, the programme will commission a series of reviews to distil evidence in areas of interest to the humanitarian sector and focus on research uptake.

The programme is a DFID-funded partnership between Oxfam GB and the Feinstein International Center (FIC) at Tufts University. More information is available on the Oxfam GB and FIC programme websites.

2. AUDIENCE AND USE OF FINDINGS

The outputs should be aimed at the humanitarian policymakers, practitioners, and researchers. Thus, the audience for this work will be individuals and institutions responsible for the funding, design and delivery of assistance in the humanitarian sector. Specifically, this includes:

- Humanitarian practitioners, and organisations involved in standard setting, training and capacity building in the humanitarian sector;
- Policy makers, which—for the purpose of this programme—will include the DFID Humanitarian Advisory Cadre, DFID'S Conflict, Humanitarian, and Security Department (CHASE) and the humanitarian cluster system,[2] public policy officials (e.g. civil servants, international civil servants, local government officials, legislative staff, advisors etc.) and politicians (e.g. Members of Parliament, ministers, councillors, etc.); and,
- Researchers and academics in the humanitarian field.

The findings will be made publically available, including on DFID's Research for Development (R4D) platform. The findings may be used in a research uptake plan, including at events and in policy briefs. Additionally, successful applicants are encouraged to disseminate their findings within their networks, and budget is available to submit findings to a peer-reviewed journal as an open-access article.

[2] The UN has introduced thematic clusters for coordination at both the field and global levels, with each field-level cluster led by an international agency functioning as "provider of last resort" and which is accountable to the UN Humanitarian Coordinator. The clusters, together with their lead agencies, are nutrition (UNICEF); health (WHO); WASH (UNICEF); shelter (UNHCR/IFRC); camp coordination and management (UNHCR/IOM); protection (UNHCR); early recovery (UNDP); logistics (WFP); food security (FAO/WFP); education (UNICEF/Save the Children); and telecommunications (WFP).

The ultimate beneficiaries of this work will be those affected by natural disasters and conflict, who should receive better quality assistance. It is expected that sectoral evidence generated by this Programme will have cross cutting relevance.

3. BACKGROUND FOR REVIEW QUESTIONS AND OBJECTIVES

Please see the Annex I for the briefing note on the review question.

4. REVIEW QUESTION

What is the impact of WASH interventions in disease outbreaks in humanitarian emergencies?

Applicants may propose and justify a review question that is more focused or broader than this question. Some reasons for the selection of the question are provided in the Briefing Paper in Annex 1.

5. APPROACH TO EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS

The methodological approach to evidence synthesis in the Humanitarian Evidence Programme is provided in the document 'Guidance Note: Evidence Synthesis in the Humanitarian Evidence Programme' found on the programme web page (http://www.oxfam.org.uk/hep). Reviewers are expected to consult the guidance note and listed resources in assistance for completing their reviews.

6. ETHICS AND RISKS

Please see Section 13: 'Guidelines for Undertaking Research with Ethics' for general ethics guidelines. Although reviewers are not expected to undertake primary research, ethics is of primary importance including being transparent about search methods, inclusion criteria, methods of synthesis, risks of bias in included studies, and any potential conflicts of interest. Studies and results must be presented in a way that respects those impacted by humanitarian crises and aims to be honest and transparent, thereby protecting the author and Oxfam against libel. Selected applicants will be provided with guidelines for undertaking research with Ethics in Section 13 and guidelines for avoiding libel in Section 12.

7. EXPECTED OUTPUTS

Reviewers will be expected to provide the following outputs:

- A customised timetable for the review process;
- A list of Advisory Board members for the question and Terms of Reference for the Advisory Board;
- A scoping assessment, where requested;
- A full review protocol, containing all elements listed in the Guidance Note;
- A brief on ideas for dissemination of the full review;
- A revised review protocol;

- A full draft of the review, including a 1-4 page plain language summary, clear and concise main text, appendices detailing technical information, and all relevant citations in the agreed format;
- A revised draft, incorporating comments from the peer review process, for final submission.

The length of the final document will depend on a variety of factors including the number and complexity of the question and studies included. All documents should include a 1-4 page plain language executive summary and appendices detailing methodology. For similar review studies, please see:

- http://r4d.dfid.gov.uk/SystematicReviews.aspx,
- http://www.3ieimpact.org/evidence/systematic-reviews/, and
- http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/cms/Default.aspx?tabid=3437.

A template for the final review will be provided in the final contract. In addition to the above outputs, reviewers will be expected to consult technical and content experts as appropriate and to participate in a brief, 30-minute discussion over the phone or other audio medium (e.g. Skype) with the programme team every two weeks.

8. TIMETABLE

Upon awarding of the contract, the programme team and selected reviewers will agree to a timeline for the delivery of programme outputs. A sample timeline is provided below, though it is subject to change based on conversations with the selected reviewers.

Week no.	Reviewer deliverable	Programme Team deliverable
1		Notify reviewer of their success
2	Contract, Timetable agreed	
6	Advisory Group assembled with Terms of Reference for group	
10	Protocol	Written feedback (within 4 weeks)
14	One-page map of the reviewers' networks and ideas for dissemination of the full review	
17	Revised protocol	Notify review team via email that they can commence the process of conducting the review (within 3 weeks)
28	Full draft of review	Written feedback from peer reviewers (within 6 weeks) on the review
40	Finalised review	

9. CONTRACT AWARD CRITERIA

Applicants will be notified of their application status within six weeks of the closing date of this Request for Proposals. Proposals awarded based by a bidding review committee based on the criteria below.

Scoring matrix for Humanitarian Evidence Programme proposals

CATEGORY	CRITERIA
Key Competencies and Staff Composition (35%)	▪ Subject-matter expertise on the topic of the review ▪ Adequate understanding of the review methodology and of the

	ability to apply it to the topic at hand ▪ Quantitative and qualitative skills necessary to conduct proposed synthesis ▪ Ability to convey information clearly in writing ▪ Familiarity with information management and search processes ▪ Access to information management systems necessary to conduct the review ▪ Experience with evidence synthesis, research, and/or evaluation (as a user, producer, or peer reviewer of evidence synthesis products) ▪ Meaningful involvement of individuals based in low- and middle-income countries in the review
Management (10%)	▪ The review plan matches the time commitment of the Primary Investigator and team members (where applicable). ▪ The proposed timeline is appropriate. ▪ For review teams: The team has a clear management strategy.
Budget (15%)	▪ Clear, comprehensive, and reasonable budget ▪ Budget represents best value in regard to consistency of quality, reliability, availability and performance at a competitive cost.
Quality of Technical Proposal (40%)	▪ Suitability of proposed methods to the research question ▪ Clearly articulated primary and secondary research questions ▪ Clear plan to account for heterogeneity in the data ▪ Identification of relevant definitions and strategies for focusing the question

Oxfam GB reserves the right not to award any bids if none meet the minimum standards for applicants. Recommendations for procurement will be reviewed by the designated Oxfam Procurement personnel to further ensure best value (i.e. value for money).

10. REVIEW MANAGEMENT

The first point of contact for the review will be the Humanitarian Evidence Programme and Communications Manager at Oxfam GB. Successful applicants are also expected to work with individuals from Oxfam's partner, Feinstein International Center (FIC) at Tufts University. Primary investigators are expected to participate in fortnightly conference calls with the programme managers at Oxfam and FIC.

11. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE REQUIRED

Researchers are required to demonstrate competency in the parameters listed below:

- Subject-matter expertise on the humanitarian question of the review;
- Understanding of the methodology of systematic reviews as an approach to evidence synthesis;
- Experience in information search and management or access to information specialist/experienced librarian to assist with the search process for eligible studies;
- Knowledge of qualitative/narrative synthesis methods;
- Ability to convey information in clear, simple, non-technical language;
- Fluent written and spoken English.
- Knowledge of methods for quantitative analysis and statistical meta-analysis *if applicable*.

12. AVOIDING LIBEL

Successful applicants will be expected to ensure they avoid libel: the publication of any statement that harms the reputation of another. More information on avoiding libel will be provided to successful applicants.

13. UNDERTAKING THE REVIEW WITH ETHICS

Successful applicants will be expected to undertake the review with ethics. More guidelines on undertaking research with ethics will be provided in the final Terms of Reference.

ANNEX 1.

HUMANITARIAN EVIDENCE PROGRAMME BRIEFING PAPER: EVIDENCE SYNTHESIS ON WASH INTERVENTIONS IN DISEASE OUTBREAKS

Purpose of this document: This Briefing Paper provides background information on the interest of the commissioning team in an evidence synthesis in the topic area of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) interventions for disease outbreaks in humanitarian emergencies. It provides additional information on the scope of the review and on the parameters that reviewers should take into account when drafting the review protocol. Ultimate responsibility for defining the terms and scope of the review lies with the reviewers, but this Briefing Paper, coupled with the Guidance Notes on Evidence Synthesis in the Humanitarian Evidence Programme and Call for Proposals, can assist reviewers in the initial stages of planning for the proposed evidence synthesis.

Review question: What is the impact of WASH interventions in disease outbreaks in humanitarian emergencies?

Relevant guidance to reviewers:

Scope: Some disease outbreaks, such as Ebola Virus Disease and cholera, are classified as humanitarian emergencies. Using a risk framework, humanitarian emergencies can also be an aggravating factor that exacerbates existing vulnerabilities, increasing the risk for disease outbreaks, including diarrheal and Hepatitis E outbreaks. The actions broadly defined under WASH (i.e. water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion) programming are of interest for this review. WASH interventions may differ based on a host of factors, including risks for different categories of pathogens and whether the risk is acute or endemic. There is increasing research on the impact of WASH interventions, such as hand-washing, in outbreaks of diseases such as Ebola Virus Disease, Hepatitis E, and cholera, but no synthesis on effectiveness could be found at the time of writing this briefing paper.

More broadly, the evidence in the WASH sector in low- and middle-income countries is continually developing. 3ie has recently mapped out a Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene Evidence Gap Map with impact evaluations and systematic reviews meeting their

definitions. Much of the WASH evidence is collected in development settings, and it is important to understand how applicable this evidence is for emergency contexts. A review of the evidence base for WASH interventions in emergency responses noted that there was no systematic review and assessment of pathogen pathways within different emergency contexts or of how these are affected by the physical and social environment. The Humanitarian Evidence Programme is interested in understanding the evidence about WASH interventions in disease outbreaks, incorporating both quantitative and qualitative studies as well as academic and 'grey' literature. Reviewers may choose to broaden or narrow the question. Reviewers will define which interventions or approaches are of particular interest, as well as synthesize evidence on the effectiveness on reducing the prevalence of different types of diseases and on other outcomes. Reviewers should pay particular attention to context and should assess the quality of the evidence from included studies.

Indicators and outcomes: If there are particular WASH interventions or approaches for which there is little or no evidence on impact, reviewers should note the lack of evidence. Reviewers should note any impacts on the prevalence of disease of the outbreak as well as other reported outcomes, such as proxy indicators and effects with regards to other health outcomes. To the extent that information about the cost-effectiveness or value-for-money of different interventions is available, reviewers should include it in their analysis. If the evidence is tailored to a particular type of WASH intervention or to a particular disease outbreak without being generalisable to other interventions or diseases, reviewers should also note that in their synthesis.

Context: The programme team is interested in understanding the evidence for an array of contexts, including outbreaks of Ebola Virus Disease, Hepatitis E, and cholera. If a large body of evidence arises with regard to a particular region or context (e.g. West Africa, urban areas), reviewers should note this in their evidence synthesis, as well as discuss the applicability of the findings to other contexts.

Data disaggregation: Where possible, data should be disaggregated by sex and age. If additional considerations arise in eligible studies that specifically affect a particular group (e.g. children, older persons, the ultra-poor), reviewers should note this in their evidence synthesis. Reviewers should also note variations in findings between rural and urban areas, as well as variations that arise between types of interventions and approaches. It is expected that review teams will name further parameters for disaggregation as they arise in their protocol development process.

Next steps: Bidders interested in undertaking this review as part of the Humanitarian Evidence Programme should take the above information into account when drafting their application and proposal. They may propose a question that is more focused or broader and should justify all decisions. Guidelines and standards for bids and their assessment are discussed in greater detail in the Call for Proposals, while information about how to conduct an evidence synthesis in the Humanitarian Evidence Programme can be found in the accompanying Guidance Note. The successful bidder will then use this Briefing Paper, coupled with conversations with the commissioning team, to guide the process of drafting the protocol for this review.