

**Request for Proposals for Primary Research
for the Tobacco Control Data Initiative
program**
Zambia



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Introduction

Project Overview

DG understands that now is crucial to invest in policy-relevant data and evidence to prevent an emerging tobacco epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). Despite the majority of governments committing to the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, tobacco use in SSA has been on the rise. This increase corresponds with industry-targeted expansion in countries with weak or weakly-enforced tobacco control legislation, and – despite ongoing surveillance efforts – a lack of timely, comprehensive data needed to guide policy response.

DG launched the Tobacco Control Data Initiative (TCDI), with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) to counter this trend. Since its inception in 2019, TCDI has worked to collect, aggregate, analyze, and visualize existing tobacco control data and new research into country-specific websites. Tobacco control advocates and legislators actively use these sites to create, apply, and monitor data-driven tobacco control policy in the six current TCDI focus countries (the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia). The participatory TCDI process of involving national stakeholders in the conception and testing of these data portals fosters trust in the evidence shared on these sites. It supports their adaptation to national tobacco control contexts and priorities. This helps to supply sub-Saharan African (SSA) governments with improved access to country-specific data that will inform better tobacco control policy design and implementation.

This program will design and implement research to address key data gaps concerning tobacco use among adults ages 15 years above in the six focus countries. This information will be showcased to meet the needs of government stakeholders, as well as civil society and academia. The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to identify data collection firms to conduct primary quantitative research on tobacco use in adults aged 15 years in Zambia. Applicant firms are invited to propose research that covers one or more of these countries related to the individual firm's expertise and capacity. Strong preference will be given to firms who have previously worked in these national contexts, especially with population-based household surveys and mixed-method studies.

Company background

DG is an international nonprofit organization that creates innovative information management and data visualization technology, implements data-focused programs, and conducts research and evaluation to further sustainable development. DG supports public and private sector actors in collecting, analyzing, and using data in the health sector for policymakers and development agencies to make more effective decisions and to improve service delivery. A more complete overview of DG can be found at <http://www.developmentgateway.org>.

During DG's implementation of the BMGF-funded **Tobacco Control Data Initiative (TCDI)** program, we have become increasingly aware of the dearth of data on tobacco prevalence. The TCDI project builds upon the relationships that DG's in-country coordinators have established across essential national ministries—health, agriculture, commerce, and finance—recognizing that tobacco control requires a whole-of-government approach.

DG is looking for firm(s) to join the TCDI research consortium that will comprise DG and key national and regional stakeholders from institutions such as (a) Ministries of Health, (b) tobacco control advocacy organizations, including youth advocacy organizations, (c) academic researchers, and (d) representatives from youth member organizations.

Scope of work

This work aims to collect data in Zambia on tobacco use among adults 15 years and above to help the government better identify smoking prevalence trends and complement existing data. Firm(s) or consortia may collect data in one or more TCDI countries depending on their regions of expertise.

Research questions

The proposed research should address the following primary research questions:

1. What is the trend in tobacco and nicotine product use among adults aged 15 years and above in high and low prevalence sites over time?
2. What are the factors associated with tobacco and nicotine product use in high and low-prevalence sites?

In addition to socio-demographic characteristics (such as age, sex, place of residence, educational level), core modules should include:

- Tobacco use (for both smoked and smokeless tobacco, including shisha and emerging tobacco products such as heated tobacco products), including type, quantity, frequency, dependency, age of initiation, quitting tobacco use, and second-hand smoke exposures. This data will enable us to compute the prevalence of tobacco use and other important estimates.
- Use of novel products such as electronic nicotine/non-nicotine delivery systems. Evidence shows a strong association between the use of these products and being an ever-smoker or having recently smoked combustible cigarettes (Erinoso et al. 2021) (Conner et al. 2021). Unfortunately, data on these products are not routinely collected in every country; it is optional for countries to collect this data in the Global Adult Tobacco Survey (GATS), the current main source of data related to tobacco use in different countries.

For each tobacco or nicotine product included, we will compute overall prevalence estimates and also disaggregate by different socio-demographic and geographic variables as the data allows.

Additionally, this study aims to answer the following secondary research question:

1. What are the knowledge, practice, and perceptions towards the use of various tobacco products and perceived barriers towards quitting and smoking cessation services?

Country-level data collection

Research approach

Applicant firms should propose a study design that allows for the sentinel surveillance sites (high or low tobacco use prevalent) specific estimates to monitor trends over time and propose a qualitative method to explore knowledge, practice, and perceptions towards the use of various tobacco products and perceived barriers towards quitting and smoking cessation services in Zambia. They should include a detailed sample size calculation, and sampling and recruitment

strategy outlining how they plan to identify, recruit, and/or incentivize survey participants. The firms should also outline their plans for recruiting and training research staff; data collection procedures (including data collection platforms and any software to be used); data management plan including quality assurance and control; data analysis plan; timelines including milestones and deliverables; and ethical considerations. We also expect that applicants will include, in their application, details of any assumptions made and justification of their proposed methods.

Proposed activities

DG invites data collection companies (or consortiums) to submit a proposal that develops a data collection methodology by the instructions in this RFP. The successful firm/consortium will have the capacity to conduct the study as per the protocol to answer the key research questions and provide data on the core modules in Zambia. This will include:

- Developing country-specific study protocols detailing design; methods; sentinel surveillance site selection, sample size; procedures for sampling and stratification, participant enrolment, data collection, security/confidentiality protocols, data quality assurance including data verification/validation, data analysis, reporting; ethical considerations; and timelines including milestones and deliverables,
- Adapting the data collection tools to the country context including pilot testing, and translations where relevant,
- Study implementation includes obtaining ethics and other relevant approvals, participant enrolment, and data collection. Ensure data collection is of high quality through verification and validation procedures during and after data collection. The firm/consortium must document and consistently carry out data quality checks during fieldwork and when entering and transferring data,
- Recruit and provide logistical and administrative support to survey teams during fieldwork; this will include any transportation, communication allowance, internet connection, etc., as necessary,
- Data cleaning and analysis,
- Produce detailed data analysis and field report and summary of results reports, successfully address substantive comments from independent experts,
- Present high-level findings to the TCDI team and other stakeholders; and

This work will be carried out in close collaboration with the TCDI team and other stakeholders. The final methodology may be adjusted based on conversations between the TCDI team and the vendor(s).

Requirements

The successful firm(s) or consortium will have the following qualifications and experience:

- Demonstrated experience designing, leading, and conducting quantitative epidemiological research and qualitative research including community-based household surveys, and mixed methods studies in the focus country. Where the firm is not local, a consortium that includes a local data collection firm with previous experience in large-scale efforts will be preferred;
- Demonstrated experience conducting non-communicable disease risk factor or tobacco-related research or tobacco surveillance;
- Proven experience designing quantitative data collection tools, including translating and back-translating survey tools into local languages;
- Demonstrated experience managing and analyzing large quantitative datasets, including ensuring data integrity;
- Extensive experience with ethics and other country-specific approval processes; familiar with standards and procedures for informed consent and data protection/privacy, preferably for research involving adolescents;
- Demonstrated experience writing research reports, including peer-reviewed journal publications;
- Excellent collaborative spirit, ability to engage positively with consortium partners including high-level government stakeholders with a constructive and solution-oriented attitude;
- Demonstrated capacity to deliver in the agreed-upon timeframe;
- No previous history working with or for the tobacco industry; and
- Understanding of the relevant data protection legislation.

Technical approach

The technical approach should respond in detail to the request for proposals in line with the instructions below:

- Understanding of the assignment including the problem being addressed and the scope of work;
- A clear statement of the country or countries covered in the proposal;
- Overall, of study design and details of the methods include the following:
 - Select a few locations/ sentinel sites (both high and low tobacco use prevalence areas) in the country.
 - Sample size. The narrative should clearly state any assumptions made, for example, response rates and any adjustments made for potential missing data.
 - Sampling procedures for data collection sites. The procedures for identifying/ recruiting/enrolling adults into the study should also be described. This narrative account should describe how site/location-specific estimates would be achieved (e.g., by gender, age, rural/urban, and socioeconomic status). If proposing to use a sampling frame describe in enough detail why it is appropriate and how it will be used.
 - Data collection and recording procedures: including data collection tools, software, technology, etc. This should include any details of procedures used to enhance response rates and data completeness.
 - An indication of the data/variables that will be collected;
 - Data analysis plan;
 - Data monitoring, verification, and validation procedures including the creation of dashboards for real-time monitoring ;
 - A data management plan, including details of the plan for data storage, access, cleaning, and transfer;
 - Recruitment and training of data collectors;
 - Ethical considerations including informed consent and data confidentiality/security procedures; and obtaining ethics and other approvals;
 - Timelines including milestones and deliverables;

- Suggested processes for managing logistics (recruitment, training, etc.), including a summary of procedures in case of adverse events that may occur as a result of data collection on the ground, and contingency plans;
- A dissemination plan including research reports, peer-reviewed manuscripts, policy briefs, and dissemination workshops; and
- An indication of how they intend to engage the government in the design, selection of sites, and implementation of the research and dissemination of outputs and to ensure the sustainability of these activities.

Technical qualifications (attachment I)

- Technical capacity overview, including a description of the organization's structure and experience, how the expected qualifications and experience described under 'requirements' are met, and examples of past similar projects;
- An affirmative statement that the firm is independent of the DaYTA and TCDI teams;
- Affirmative statement that the firm has never received money from the tobacco industry, or any of the tobacco industry's affiliate organizations;
- Statement of the size of the firm, the size of the firm's technical staff, the location of the office from which the work on this project will be performed;
- List of the names, qualifications, and CVs of the key personnel to be employed on this project, their roles and responsibilities, and the anticipated level of effort;
- List of references for cited work relevant to this proposal including the names and telephone numbers of these clients;
- Copy of the firm's corporate business registration and evidence of any necessary insurance for key personnel as well as the firm's plan to provide insurance coverage for individuals who will be hired for data collection;
- Copy of the firm's last audited accounts or a description of previous studies carried out and their budget.

The firm that is hired will be responsible for all necessary insurance for all staff contracted to work on this assignment – evidence should be noted in the contract. The contract will require an agreement to indemnify DG against any medical and ancillary costs that DG may incur on

behalf of the firm in any form. Please submit a separate brief outline of the approach you intend to take for this specific assignment.

Budget (attachment II)

In this attachment, please include a budget for the activities proposed in the technical approach. This should include a summary of expenses for personnel and any travel costs. Please note that due to funder requirements, administrative costs must be limited to 15%. Identify all pricing information broken down by activity in USD. The value and transparency in the budget proposal are worth 30% of the proposal's evaluation score.

Sample field reports or executive summaries (attachment III)

In the attachment, provide up to two sample field reports, executive summaries, etc. of previous surveys conducted (as allowed by previous contractual agreements). Do not submit more than 6 pages for this section. Please describe your firm's previous experience managing a consortium of data collection firms and conducting data collection across multiple geographies.

Requirements

To be successful in the central study and coordination role, the firm/consortium will have the following qualifications and experience:

- Proven experience developing international collaborations and research consortia with diverse members including academia, government ministries, and civil society organizations;
- Proven experience managing and coordinating research activities (epidemiological studies such as household surveys in particular) across multiple countries;
- Proven experience of successful collaboration with national counterparts to ensure the implementation of research studies in line with the approved protocols;
- Proven track record of setting up data collection systems and data management plans that cover multiple countries; and
- Proven track record of providing research staff training for epidemiological studies.

Proposal submission instructions

Instructions for proposal submission are included below. Information about your company's required lead time, if you receive this assignment, should also be included. Proposals may be submitted in English (if South Africa, Zambia, or Kenya) or French (for DRC).

The following material should be received by September 13th 2024 at 23:59 EAT for consideration:

1. Technical Approach; not to exceed 10 pages in length
2. Technical Qualifications (Attachment I); not to exceed 5 pages in length
3. Budget (Attachment II)
4. Sample Field Reports or Executive Summaries from prior projects (Attachment III); not to exceed 6 pages in length

Questions may also be sent to wawuor@developmentgateway.org or tagerfa@developmentgateway.org at any time before 30th August 2024.

Evaluation process

During the evaluation process, DG reserves the right to request additional information and/or clarification or to allow corrections of errors or omissions. A firm may be disqualified from further consideration upon failure to respond in a timely fashion to DG with the requested information (e.g. within 5 business days). At the discretion of DG, firms submitting proposals may be requested to make oral presentations as part of the evaluation process.

Evaluation

Proposals will be evaluated by members of the TCDI Team from 16th September 2024. The shortlisted firm(s) will be notified the week of 23rd September 2024.

Firm selection

The award will be made to a firm whose offer strictly adheres to the instructions within this RFP, meets or exceeds the minimum required specifications of the project, and whose offer is judged to be technically acceptable.

Firms that have previously been hired by or received funds from the tobacco industry or largely tobacco industry-funded organizations are ineligible for selection. If you are unsure if you qualify, please feel free to reach out to the DG contacts.

DG reserves the right to negotiate the exact terms of the contract. Both parties agree to negotiate in good faith to reach a mutual agreement. Work is expected to begin in October 2024.

DG is an equal opportunity employer and expects those we work with to prioritize equity in recruiting—as much as possible—women/other marginalized groups.

The proposals will be scored based on the following criteria:

Topic Area	Points
Overall study design	10
Sentinel site/location selection	10
Sample size considerations	10
Proposed sampling & recruitment methodology	20
Survey tool development	10
Data collection plan	10
Data analysis plan	15
Data management plan	10
Ethical considerations	10
Logistical support	5
Prior experience	20
Budget	50
Total Points	180

Right to reject proposals

DG reserves the right to refuse any or all proposals and to provide each participating firm their award status only, without further explanation of evaluation.

Confidentiality

Given the sensitive nature of the data and information to be shared with the successful applicant, care should be taken to protect such information. This information submitted to DG will not be communicated to any other party.

Intellectual property/licensing

Upon completion of the project, the raw datasets that are generated will become the property of Development Gateway, with the provision that the datasets be made available to the public for unrestricted access and reuse. This approach is consistent with the Open Access Policy of The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Price, terms and conditions

By submitting its proposal, the firm certifies that:

1. The prices in its proposal have been arrived at independently, without consultation, communications, or agreement for the purpose of restricting competition as to any matter relating to such prices with any other firm submitting a proposal or with any competitor;
2. Unless otherwise required by law, the prices quoted in the proposal have not been knowingly disclosed before the due date for proposals, directly or indirectly, to any other firm or any competitor unless that other firm is part of a consortium; and
3. No attempt has been made or will be made to induce any other person or firm to submit a proposal or to take or refrain from any action for the purpose of restricting competition.

Please note that DG will not be responsible for expenses incurred in preparing the proposal. Such costs should not be included in the proposal. If it should become necessary for DG to request the contractor to render any additional services to either supplement the services requested in this RFP or to perform additional work as a result of the specific recommendations included in any report issued on this engagement, the additional work shall be performed only if set forth in an addendum to the contract between DG and the firm. If the firm identifies additional services or costs needed to complete the agreed-upon scope of work in the contract, the firm cannot charge for such additional work without first obtaining approval from DG in writing.

The final price of the services and payment schedule will be agreed upon prior to contract execution.

For the activities, the anticipated payment schedule will be structured as follows:

- 20% at contract signing.
- 20% upon delivery of Deliverable 1: Country-specific study protocols detailing design; methods; site selection, and sample size; procedures for sampling and stratification, participant enrolment, data collection, security/confidentiality protocols, data quality assurance including data verification/validation, data analysis, reporting; ethical considerations; and timelines including milestones and deliverables.
- 20% upon delivery of Deliverable 2: Finalized country-specific data collection tools programmed in an electronic database, SOPs, and manuals.
- 20% upon delivery of Deliverable 3: Data analysis and report. This should include details of any deviations from the original study protocol with justification, challenges, and resolution of issues.
- 10% upon delivery of Deliverable 4: Complete/cleaned dataset of survey results that must be in a widely accepted format (e.g., Excel) that can be imported for data analysis. The original dataset will also need to be submitted. Code used to clean and analyze the data and metadata describing the dataset and all variables in the dataset are also required (e.g., Stata or R code).
- 10% upon delivery of Deliverable 5: Presentation of high-level findings in PowerPoint format to the TCDI team and their key stakeholders.

Making international development data easier to gather, use, and understand.



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