



# ELTON JOHN AIDS FOUNDATION

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE – EECA Portfolio Midterm Evaluation**

While in other regions of the world new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths are declining, in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) they continue to rise, demanding urgent action to turn the tide of the epidemic. In response to this, the Elton John AIDS Foundation is implementing a 5-year strategy in EECA.

We are seeking an external evaluator/evaluation team to undertake a Midterm Evaluation of the work conducted through our EECA portfolio since 2020.

### **About EJAF**

At the Elton John AIDS Foundation, we believe that AIDS can be beaten. Committed to overcoming the stigma, discrimination and neglect that fuels the spread of HIV, we harness local expertise, and mobilise networks of generous public and private supporters and partners, to build love, compassion and dignity for people living with or at risk of HIV and a future for young people free from AIDS. We meet people and communities where they are to prevent new infections and ensure access to care, treatment, and support.

Since its founding in 1992, the Foundation has pursued its vision of an AIDS free future for everyone, emerging globally as one of the foremost organizations fighting HIV and AIDS. Today, the opportunity to end AIDS amongst certain populations and geographical areas is achievable and will require working together to eliminate social, economic and health disparities while ensuring equity and inclusion for all. At the beginning of 2020, we began an ambitious 5-year strategic plan to further our vision and expand our staff and resources.

### **Programme Background**

To turn the tide on the HIV/AIDS Epidemic in EECA, we are working towards four strategic program objectives:

- HIV-related health outcomes of key populations (KPs) and PLHIV are significantly improved
- Concrete improvements delivered to health systems so that they provide HIV-related services for KPs and/or PLHIV more effectively
- Stigma and discrimination experienced by KPs and/or PLHIV are reduced
- Interventions, learnings, and results are documented and disseminated to help other EECA territories to end their HIV epidemics

The RADIAN 'Model Cities' programme invests in targeted interventions that deliver measurable impact across the care cascade in the response to HIV in eligible cities and regions. The programme showcases these cities/regions as examples for other cities and regions in EECA seeking to end their own HIV epidemics. Model Cities aims to achieve significant progress in HIV prevention, testing, diagnoses, ART initiation and ART retention for key populations and for PLHIV. Project learnings and results are documented and disseminated to support other cities across the region to end their HIV epidemics.

The RADIAN 'Unmet Need' fund supports local initiatives across EECA that address the most significant and urgent unmet needs of key populations and people living with HIV. Projects funded work to identify the most significant HIV-related needs of key populations and their sexual partners including people who use drugs (PWUD), sex workers (SW), men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender people (TG); and people living with HIV (PLHIV).

Since 2020, the Foundation has awarded 32 grants through the EECA Portfolio across 12 countries of the region: Armenia, Croatia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Tajikistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan. The duration of each grant is between 6 and 50 months. Of these grants, by June 30, 2023, 9 will have been completed; 3 will be in their third year of implementation; 7 – in their second year; and 13 – in their first year. The level of funding for each grant award is between \$50,000 and \$2,990,000, with a median of \$472,300, and a mean average of \$633,400.

## **Scope of Work**

The Midterm evaluation will provide an independent appraisal of progress made towards our EECA portfolio strategy. The evaluation will be used to demonstrate results achieved under this strategy, understand what activities led to desired outcomes and how, assess how likely achievements made will be sustained in the future, steer ongoing program improvement, and contribute to a broader evidence base of what works in the HIV/AIDS response in the region. The evaluation will be used by the EECA Grant Management and MEL team, our leadership, the communications and fundraising teams, donors, and partners in the EECA region.

At Midterm, we have elected to evaluate performance against the strategy against 3 of the OECD-DAC Criteria: impact, sustainability, and effectiveness. Recommendations from the evaluation will inform ongoing implementation of the EECA strategy until 2025.

The evaluation will answer the following questions:

1. What impact have we had on improving HIV-related health outcomes amongst key populations, PLHIV, and their networks in EECA?
2. Which results are likely to be sustained after the end of the strategy period and why?
3. What has worked and not worked to deliver target outcomes across the four strategic objectives?

The evaluation will be managed by an Evaluation Steering Committee, comprised of the EECA Portfolio Team and the EECA MEL Team. The evaluation will generate recommendations to inform future strategy design and implementation.

## **Methodology**

The selected supplier will propose a rigorous methodology to credibly respond to these evaluation questions. The final scope of work and associated methodology will be developed and agreed in partnership with the Evaluation Steering Group, including grants managers and MEL colleagues at the Foundation.

Bidders should consider proposing an overarching evaluation framework such as contribution analysis, collaborative outcome reporting, or process tracing to gather and credibly assemble available quantitative and qualitative data. The evaluation will be mixed methods and will rely on both primary and secondary sources. The Bidder may also consider a case-study approach, focusing on specific archetypes or categories of grants within the EECA portfolio.

The foundation will compile a list of available sources to draw from and will agree and develop this with the appointed external evaluator. This will likely include:

- Key Performance Indicator results reported throughout strategy period
- Grant Reports
- Project publications, including manuals, blueprints, or other documentation of project models
- Key informant interviews with Grant management team, Grant Recipients and other stakeholders
- Focus Group Discussion with Grant Recipients and other stakeholders
- Validation Workshop
- Data gathered through site visits where feasible to select sites
- Previous evaluations or learning synthesis produced by grant recipients or within the foundation

Bidders are invited to propose a preferred evaluation design and methods to be used, and to suggest dissemination activities. The evaluation approach may be underpinned by a diversity of possible evaluation methods and approaches but should align to the following high-level principles:

- Comprehensive – the proposed design should comprehensively answer the evaluation questions outlined, selecting appropriate methods to answer each question.
- Rigor – the evaluation should be methodologically rigorous, with generalizable evaluation claims emanating from relevant sources and methodologies.
- Feasible – the design should be operationalizable within the agreed timeframe and resource allocation.
- Independent – independent in sampling and in analytical conclusions.
- Contextual – the evaluation should be embedded in the regional and country contexts: country-level dynamics, stakeholders, and processes should be accounted for.
- Inclusive – the evaluation should include all stakeholder groups targeted by the EECA portfolio, including grant recipients, project participants, and other key stakeholders.

## **Deliverables**

**Inception Report:** The selected supplier will submit a draft and final Inception Report. The report should provide their understanding of the evaluation context and objectives as well as an evaluation framework, approach, and methodology, which should build on their initial proposal. The report should include data collection methods; analysis tools; data collection tools; limitations; methods; sampling protocols; and an overview of all tentative country- or grant-focused evaluation processes.

**Draft Evaluation Report:** After data collection and analysis the selected supplier will prepare a draft report for feedback from the Evaluation Steering Committee. The report will form the basis for subsequent validation activities.

**Validation Workshop:** The supplier will convene and facilitate a validation workshop or series of virtual sessions with all relevant stakeholders consulted to present key findings from the draft report, gather additional evidence, and validate findings.

**Preliminary Findings Presentation:** The supplier will prepare a preliminary findings presentation outlining the emerging findings for key stakeholder groups. The supplier will integrate one round of feedback on the presentation.

**Draft & Final Evaluation Report:** The supplier will prepare a draft report and a final evaluation report integrating feedback from the Evaluation Steering Committee and from validation activities. The report will be structured around each of the evaluation questions, following a template agreed with EJAF. The final report will need to be signed off by the Evaluation Steering Committee prior to the deliverable being accepted.

**Presentation and Dissemination Materials:** The supplier will provide a draft and final PowerPoint presentation to support with wider dissemination of midterm findings. The provider will propose a set of dissemination materials which can be used in future conferences and events, including tentatively at AIDS 2024.

## **Timeframe**

Bidders should plan to follow the below timeframe:

- May 24<sup>th</sup>: Terms of Reference published
- June 30<sup>th</sup>: All proposals submitted
- July 14<sup>th</sup>: Supplier Appointed
- July 19<sup>th</sup>: Inception meeting held
- August 7<sup>th</sup>: Presentation of Draft Inception Report to Evaluation Steering Committee
- August 14<sup>th</sup>: Inception report finalized, including data collection tools
- September: Data collection
- September-October: Data analysis, reporting, and validation
- October 16: Preliminary Findings Presentation
- November: Draft Report, Final Report, Presentation and Dissemination Materials signed off

## **Required Qualifications**

- The selected Supplier will be an organization, company, or team of consultants with significant experience in HIV/AIDS programming
- Qualifications and background in public health or related field
- Fluent in Russian
- Knowledge of relevant stakeholders, including donors, mechanisms, and sector actors in at least one country supported by the EECA program

## **Desired Qualifications**

- Evaluation team with extensive knowledge of HIV/AIDS response in EECA, ideally with peer-reviewed publications on HIV/AIDS epidemic control in the EECA region

- The Team leader should have 8-15 years of experience implementing or leading HIV/AIDS projects or programs
- Collaborative and adaptable team player
- Mixed-methods data collection experience in EECA region
- Knowledge of other language(s) spoken in target region is desirable
- Experience producing and disseminating compelling written products on one or several strategic objectives of EJAF's EECA portfolio
- Previous work experience with UNAIDS, PEPFAR, the Global Fund, or other international institution operating in the fields of HIV prevention and technical assistance provision
- Excellent written and oral communication skills, experience in academic setting desirable
- Ability to travel to Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and potentially other countries in the EECA region depending on feasibility

### **Application Process**

Interested Bidders must submit a (1) technical proposal not exceeding 6 pages; (2) CVs of all team members, (3) two samples of relevant past work, (4) an itemized financial proposal inclusive of all costs. The technical proposal should describe their understanding of the requirements of the evaluation and how it will be implemented, the conceptual evaluation framework, the proposed evaluation approach and methods, and a summary of the team or organization's experience and capabilities.

Proposals must be submitted to [eecamidterm@eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org](mailto:eecamidterm@eltonjohnaidsfoundation.org) by midnight UK time on June 30th, 2023.