

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST TO CARRY OUT AN INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL REVIEW

Background

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is a £15m 10-year programme funded by DFID over two phases (2019-2014 £8.5m; 2014-2018 £6.5m) designed to strengthen African social science research by establishing a permanent, independent and sustainable organisation 'dedicated to raising the capacity and quality of social and political science research in selected countries'. Phase 1 was managed by the British Council, with the transition to PASGR taking place in 2014 under Phase 2 of the programme. In Phase 2 PASGR is expected to consolidate itself as an independent and sustainable research hub. To achieve this goal, PASGR runs programmes in 12 African countries¹ and has developed three major work strands: (1) Master of Research and Public Policy (MRPP) programme, (2) Professional Development and Training (PDT) programme, and (3) Research Programme on social policy and governance priorities in Africa.

An Independent External Mid Term Review (February 2014) confirmed that PASGR had in a short timeframe performed well, met most of the interim performance indicators, and delivering reasonable value for money. The review also found that whilst the MRPP and MMRC programme were considered to be performing very well, the research programme could improve the quality of outputs and value for money. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between DFID/PASGR therefore set out the need for a further independent review in 2016 on the quality of PASGR's research programme. In addition, the 2014 Mid Term Review and subsequent DFID Annual Reviews highlighted the need to ensure long term financial sustainability as an independent organisation. PASGR has developed a Funding Strategy/Action Plan with funding diversification part of their 2014-2018 Strategic Plan.

Review Activities

The review is expected to build on the findings and recommendations of PASGR's independent Mid Term review (2014) and DFID Annual Reviews (2015, 2016). It should assess a) the quality and value for money of the Research component; b) PASGR's Funding Strategy/Action Plan, recommending possible other avenues to explore to maximise opportunities (including cost recovery and commercialisation opportunities) c) Prospects and timescale for financial sustainability

1. Quality and Value for Money² of PASGR's Research programme
 - Assess quality of PASGR's Research work (using a recognised framework e.g. DFID's How to Note on Assessing the Strength of Evidence), including improvements to quality/value for money from changes introduced since 2014; uptake of evidence from research publications and programmes.
 - Review overall value for money of PASGR across programmes areas

2. Financial Sustainability

¹ Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe

² DFID's value for money lenses: Economy; Efficiency; Effectiveness, Impact

- PASGR's approach to diversify funding as set out in their Funding Strategy/Action Plan, progress in implementing the Funding Strategy
- PASGR's trajectory and timelines to establish a financially sustainable African-led organisation
- Future funding opportunities and areas to strengthen the current Funding Strategy – including the identification of potential income-generating activities, cost recovery options and donors
- Assessment of PASGR's position and competitive niche in the African market

Approach

Selection of the reviewer/team will be undertaken by a PASGR Board-appointed Review Executive Committee, which will include a DFID representative. The Board and DFID will formally approve the review. The review should not exceed 50 pages and contain concise and action-oriented recommendations on each area above.

The reviewer/team will be expected to use a mixed-methods approach, integrating quantitative and qualitative information, including selected interviews with Board, staff, programme beneficiaries and funding representatives. It is expected to conduct a field visit to observe PASGR programme activities and interview staff and beneficiaries. Subsequent to selection, the reviewer/team will propose a more detailed methodology for approval by PASGR's Executive Committee, prior to commencing the detailed work. PASGR will provide access to all documents, data, testimonials and other information sources relevant and available in-house.

Proposed Timeline

The final report of the review should be completed by 15 April 2017. A proposed time line to meet the deadline will be negotiated with the reviewers.

Selection of Reviewer(s)

The reviewer/team should be familiar with the African research and higher education communities, have business management/commercial expertise, and previously undertaken organisational reviews. Apart from the organizational review, the review will also include an academic quality aspect that will assess selected PASGR publications for their quality and relevance. The Board, in consultation with DFID, will identify a list of possible candidates who will receive invitations to submit proposals. In addition, DFID may identify possible reviewers/organisations to be included in call for proposals. The call-for-proposals will be disseminated through PASGR's website, mailing list and other sources.

The Review Executive Committee (comprising 2 Board members and 1 DFID Representative) will screen all submissions and submit a short list to the Executive Committee. Screening will focus on identifying those who meet the technical, financial and availability requirements. The EC will review the short list and make a final recommendation to the Board for approval. The EC may elect to conduct Skype interviews with candidates.

Application/Expression of interest



Interested applicants for the organizational and/or the academic review should submit their applications/ expression of interest by email no later than December 12th 2016 to The Executive Director, PASGR at info@pasgr.org with a copy to Jane Muema janem@pasgr.org. Applications/expression of interest should contain a brief statement of interest, experience with previous similar reviews and curriculum vitae of principal reviewers.