

Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) to Host the Second Phase of Utafiti Sera (Research Policy Community) on Social Protection in Kenya.

About PASGR

The Partnership for African Social and Governance Research (PASGR) is an independent, non-partisan pan-African not-for-profit organisation established in 2011 and located in Nairobi, Kenya. PASGR's vision is a 'vibrant African social science community addressing the continent's public policy issues'. PASGR seeks excellence in social science research for public policy. In partnership with individual academics and researchers, higher education institutions, research think tanks, civil society organisations, business and policy communities both in the region and internationally, PASGR supports the production and dissemination of policy relevant research; designs and delivers suites of short professional development courses for researchers and policy actors; and facilitates the development of collaborative higher education programmes.

Background

In 2016, PASGR with financial support from Department of International Development (DFID), completed a pilot study on Social Protection (SP) in five African countries including Botswana, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria and Uganda. The studies suggested that social cash transfers is one of the most effective safety nets to materialise so far in the attempt to support Africa's poor and vulnerable. Although poverty and vulnerability remain prevalent, the findings of the studies suggest a need to unbundle political willingness by providing opportunities for negotiated political settlements among key stakeholders to enable the governments develop and pursue public policies that are widely endorsed by society. Recognising the existence of many similar studies conducted on Social Protection in Kenya; the frustration researchers encounter in getting policy actors to take forward research findings; as well as the understanding that policy actors also feel they could do better if they have new knowledge based on research findings, PASGR developed an idea to bridge the gap between research and public policy – *Utafiti Sera* (Research-Policy Community).

PASGR in collaboration with the African Institute for Health and Development (AIHD) and with funding from the Dutch Platform for Inclusive Development (INCLUDE), piloted the first phase of this idea by establishing the *Utafiti Sera* (Research – Policy Community) on Social Protection in Kenya. The community currently has a membership of about 40 organisations including Government ministries, County representatives, private organisations, researchers and research organisations, and civil society organisations. So far, forums have been convened around to five policy areas namely: Legislation on social protection; Universalism as a way of reducing targeting errors; Exit/graduation mechanisms; Financing mechanisms; and Effective coordination of social protection. The outcome of the forums, which were informed by existing and new policy relevant research evidence are available in research-user friendly formats such as policy briefs, info-

graphics, reports and news articles. These can be found on the PASGR website: www.pasgr.org.

The evidence and lessons emerging from the forums points to the need to understand public perceptions on Social Protection and that this understanding, together with institutional modalities to support the poor and vulnerable, is important for building a consensus towards improving well-being and livelihoods. Therefore, sustaining the research-policy community of practice (*Utafiti Sera*) on Social Protection is crucial step in supporting the improvement of government policies and programmes and building on existing gains. As such, we are seeking a partner to host the second phase of this project, to be supported by funding from the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

About Utafiti Sera

Utafiti Sera, a work in progress, supports, contributes to building and enhances a community of researchers and policy actors working together to ensure that appropriate and negotiated policy actions and uptake occur either through programmes, legislations, policies or administrative and other forms of civic actions around issues for which research has provided evidence or for which a synthesis of available evidence has been made. *Utafiti Sera* is a combination of many things that ensure and enhance policy outcomes. It is a 'process', 'place', 'forum', 'platform', or a 'vehicle' for transforming research evidence – based knowledge for policy uptake. As a 'process' *Utafiti Sera* involves sequences of activities that enable the building of a community of interests and practice from where existing and new ideas and evidence flow from members of the community resulting in collective action and interventions to improve policy design and implementation.

As a 'place', *Utafiti Sera* provides a space for key stakeholders with interest, power, capacity and motivation to act in diverse ways to ensure that research evidence becomes available and is used to make informed policy decisions and practices. As a 'forum', it provides a non-partisan platform for knowledge engagement, 'outreach' and 'in-reach' by different members of the community irrespective of theoretical and ideological differences, in order to build bridges and work together to establish common ground for the pursuit of agreed upon goals. And as a 'vehicle', *Utafiti Sera* constitutes motor and pathways, transmission belts or/and channels for shared knowledge (common areas on which there are agreements and consensus), and experiences to enhance policy uptake. In short, *Utafiti Sera* is a phenomenon whose form is determined by the specific conjuncture or/and context in which it is expressed or put in place. It has no permanent form except that of community formation or action of a collective of researchers and policy actors in the pursuit of policy uptake.

Utafiti Sera at national, local and regional levels is an innovative mechanism to inform and positively advocate, proffer and contribute to appropriate and relevant policies and programmes that address inclusive development and the wellbeing of citizens through research evidence for policy. Given that policy formation is always and often a dynamic work in progress, there are other possible routes. Where circumstances permit such as the presence of most of the actors and conditions, *Utafiti Sera* may take what can be termed a shorter route towards ensuring policy uptake. In contexts that require more preliminary work of bringing the different players and actors together, facilitating contacts, networks and identifying interests; it is more of what can be termed a longer route of communication, building bridges, working out advocacy plans, facilitating ownership, and identifying and mobilizing collective and individual champions. This involves a more detailed set of incremental activities. For more details on *Utafiti sera* please see link: <http://www.pasgr.org/utafiti-sera/>.

Activities the Host Organisation will Deliver

The host organisation, in close collaboration with PASGR, will undertake a series of activities to inform and influence policies and programmes on social protection in Kenya. Apart from activities stated below, the host organisation will demonstrate, encourage and facilitate the ownership of the community of practice along with other Rwandese institutions and individuals active in the field. The activities envisaged to be implemented in the 2017 – 2018 period includes:

1. Synthesis of Existing Evidence on Social Protection globally, with specific relevant lessons identified for the Kenyan process.
2. Organising forums on Social Protection in Kenya guided by research evidence;
3. Facilitating and enabling an active community of practice around Kenyan Social Protection issues;
4. Identifying and involving potential champions of Social Protection issues as part of the *Utafiti Sera*;
5. Communication, reporting and media engagement of research evidence materials developed.

Eligibility:

1. Research institutions, civil society organisations and NGOs domiciled in Nairobi, Kenya. This may include institutions and organisations which finance or conduct research, or synthesise research and ensure policy uptake and use of research based knowledge to promote public policy or/ and advocate for public policy e.g. research institutes, think tanks, civil society, advocacy organisations with county-wide and /or national reach, research councils and research consortia. The applicant must be legally registered. Commercial actors and individuals cannot apply.

2. The applicant will have experience in developing technical research products such as literature synthesis, stakeholder mapping, policy briefs, info-graphics, video documentaries, and also write reports. PASGR does not encourage 'copy and paste' – we are deliberate about simple but potent language to fit donor requirements and the policy audience.
3. The applicants must be able to document the competence and capacity to implement agreements. This includes research competence, administrative competence and financial management.
4. The applicant must have experience in convening a broad array of stakeholders including government agencies and ministries, civil society, academia, development partners, private sector, and other stakeholders relevant to the thematic area.
5. The applicant must be conversant with developing content to engage the media, including the newspaper, radio, television as well as social media (blogs).

Submission of EOI

Interested organisations are required to submit their EOI no later than **06/10/2017**, 0000hrs Nairobi time by e-mail **ONLY** to 'Femi Balogun at femi@pasgr.org. Please indicate in the e-mail subject field: – **EOI/2017/SP/KE/II – Name of the organisation**.

The EOI should provide the following information:

1. Organisational status and profile.
2. Evidence of experience that demonstrates capacity and competence in hosting and organising similar programmes.
3. Links to research or reports on the thematic area of Social Protection.
4. In a separate one-pager, describe in some detail, the unique and innovative approach(es) the organisation would use to deliver the 'Utafiti Sera' in the stated area, including how to achieve sustainability for this particular house.
5. Any other information that can help PASGR judge the organisation's suitability for hosting the programme.

Please note that PASGR will invite a potential host organisation for discussions before making the final decision.