

UNAIDS Second Independent Evaluation  
Oversight Committee

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The Honorable Dr Mark Dybul  
Chair, UNAIDS Programme Coordinating  
Board  
c/o Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator  
US Department of State  
S/GAC SA-29, 2nd Floor  
20522-2920 Washington DC  
United States of America

16 July 2008

Dear Dr Dybul,

On behalf of the Oversight Committee (OC) for the Second Independent Evaluation, I am pleased to submit to the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB), our recommendation of the ITAD/HLSP consortium for the Evaluation Team contract. ITAD is an independent UK-based evaluation and management consultancy, and HLSP is an international consultancy in the health field with offices world-wide. For this assignment the consortium has established a network that comprises HLSP Mott MacDonald Africa Ltd (HLSP), Kenya, Jimat Consult, Zimbabwe, Catalyst Management Services (CMS), India, SHARAN Society, India, Curatio International Consulting, Georgia, and ESA Consultores, Honduras.

To ensure the independence and transparency of the process, the OC engaged the services of UNOPS for the selection process according to UN standards of international competitive bidding. The Request for Proposal (RFP) was posted on the UNOPS, Development Ex and UNAIDS websites on June 7<sup>th</sup> and subsequently on the Cosponsors' websites with close of bid for July 7<sup>th</sup>. Nine requests for bidding documents were received of which four companies indicated their intention to submit a proposal. Of these four, one did not proceed, and two others combined in one bid.

cc: Mr David Hohman, Chair, PCB Bureau  
Members, Oversight Committee

A comprehensive, detailed grid of 46 questions was developed by the OC and UNOPS for bid assessment. As indicated in the RFP, there were three weighted categories for assessment: firm expertise (20%), workplan and approach (30%) and Personnel (50%). "Workplan/approach" was subcategorized into overall methodology, country selection, and planning and scheduling; and "personnel" into composite team experience, qualifications of the team leader, and qualifications of core members of the team. Bidders were asked to submit two sealed envelopes containing the technical and financial components. A high technical merit threshold was established at 70 points (out of 100) as the OC felt that the Evaluation was very complex and required a firm with a wide range of expertise and experience across many different competencies. Only firms that met the technical qualification were considered in the price component.

The assessment panel was composed of the Project Manager and two technical experts from UNOPS, the Executive Assistant for the Oversight Committee, and an independent expert on institutional evaluations. The panel opened the bids on July 7<sup>th</sup>. The proposed team personnel were reviewed for any conflict of interest. The panel finished their report on July 9<sup>th</sup>. One bid achieved the technical threshold at over 90 points, and was declared the winning bid. The report of the assessment panel was submitted to the UNOPS Project Review Committee for approval of the review process and quality of the bid. The report was then discussed by the OC and a telephone interview with the proposed Evaluation Team Leader was held on July 16.

The ITAD/HLSP had a strong track record in all areas of competencies, but greater experience in institutional, multi-sector, multi-country and UN system evaluations, including the health and HIV/AIDS sectors. ITAD was one of the consortium partners of the First Five-Year Evaluation, but only the Evaluation Team Leader is part of the new consortium. The Oversight Committee was reassured that the Second Independent Evaluation would benefit from his experience with the Five-Year Evaluation as well as fresh approaches from subsequent work done by the firm, and the extensive complementary experience of HLSP and other associated institutions in their network.

Their proposal presented a coherent evaluation framework that incorporated all the questions and issues set out in the terms of reference. Their methodological approach was clearly presented with a mix of methods and questions grouped and linked for evaluating "UNAIDS overall". They presented a good rationale for country selection, based on the criteria in the terms of reference, but with additional considerations such as selecting one country from the previous evaluation for comparison purposes, considerations of all the current evaluations, pilot projects, and assessments of countries underway in the UN system at present. The proposal contained provision for a "pilot" country visit to test their methodology. A representative list was included, subject to actual selection in the Inception Stage of the Evaluation.

The proposal contained an impressive list of technical experts experienced in the health and HIV/AIDS sectors, monitoring and evaluation, governance and institutional change in national and international organizations, both public and private sectors, community development, human rights, gender, and child health. The team leader had many years of experience leading complex evaluations and managing multi-sector projects, as well as strong communication and presentational skills through teaching, research, publications and projects.

In the telephone interview the OC felt the Team Leader was sensitive to the needs and complexities of the Evaluation and its issues, was flexible and open to suggestions, and strong on a participatory approach for stakeholders, in particular at country level.

The OC feels confident, based on the quality of the bid and the telephone interview with the Evaluation Team Leader that the ITAD/HLSP consortium is well qualified to do the job, has the right balance of technical and evaluation experience, and can deliver the required outputs within the timeframe specified for the Evaluation.

Their price of UK£834,896 (USD 1, 653,259), based on 12 country visits, is within the range approved by the PCB for the Evaluation.

Therefore, the OC submits a unanimous, unqualified recommendation to the PCB. In order to keep to the very tight timeframe set by the PCB, we urge you to confirm approval of the recommendation at the earliest.

With kind regards,

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Catherine Hodgkin". The signature is written in a cursive style with a horizontal line at the end.

Catherine Hodgkin  
Chair  
Oversight Committee  
Second Independent Evaluation.