

USAID Advancing Nutrition

Scope of Work: Consultant to Support the Development of a Breastfeeding Counseling Mentorship Program for Kenya

A. Background

USAID Advancing Nutrition is the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)'s flagship nutrition project, led by JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc. (JSI), and a diverse group of experienced partners. Launched in September 2018, USAID Advancing Nutrition implements and provides technical support to nutrition interventions across sectors and disciplines for USAID and its partners. The project's multi-sectoral approach draws together global nutrition experience to design, implement and evaluate programs that address the root causes of malnutrition. Committed to using a systems approach, USAID Advancing Nutrition (USAID AN) strives to sustain positive outcomes by building local capacity, supporting behavior change and strengthening the enabling environment to save lives, improve health, build resilience, increase economic productivity and advance development.

Breastfeeding is globally accepted as an essential action for achieving optimal nutrition and development outcomes in children as well as health outcomes later in life. As in many low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), exclusive breastfeeding and early initiation of breastfeeding rates in Kenya are far lower than needed for the health of women and children. Significant efforts have been made in Kenya to ensure that women have access to breastfeeding information, education, and counseling. However, there is a need for evidence of effective, scalable approaches to strengthen skilled breastfeeding counseling by health care providers throughout the system. To help address this challenge USAID Advancing Nutrition is collaborating with the Kenya Ministry of Health, USAID Kenya and East Africa, USAID Bureau of Global Health, and key country stakeholders to design and test a mentorship program to strengthen capacity to provide breastfeeding counseling in Kenya.

This work includes three separate but related work streams:

- Work stream 1: Intervention design process, involving the MOH, the maternal, infant, and young child nutrition (MIYCN) technical working group (TWG), and other stakeholders;
- Work stream 2: Develop the breastfeeding counseling capacity strengthening intervention;
- Work stream 3: Develop a protocol to test the intervention using implementation research methods.

Work stream 1 focused on USAID Advancing Nutrition-supported workshop that was organized by the Division of Nutrition and Dietetics of the Ministry of Health Kenya through the Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative (BFHI) Task Force of the MIYCN TWG, which was held from 1-3rd November 2021. The goal of the workshop was to design a capacity strengthening intervention to build the skills of health workers providing breastfeeding counseling. The three-day intervention design workshop brought together 18 stakeholders from organizations at all levels of implementation: national, county departments of health, implementing partners, civil society organizations, and health facilities.

From this workshop, stakeholders agreed to focus the capacity strengthening intervention on a facility-based mentorship program aimed at strengthening the competencies specifically covered in the BFHI Training Course for Maternity Staff (WHO and UNICEF, 2020).

While we are still finalizing the specific objectives of the structured facility-based mentorship program, the goal is to provide mothers with the skilled breastfeeding counseling at three priority contact points to successfully achieve early initiation and exclusive breastfeeding.

We expect that the specific objectives will include:

- Reinforce and strengthen counseling competencies covered in the BFHI Training Course for specific cadres
- Support counselors to apply skills learned in the BFHI Training Course during counseling sessions with clients
- Improve the quality of counseling delivered

This consultancy supports work stream 2 (led by a local consultant in Kenya), to develop the materials for the facility-based mentorship program. This mentorship program will be designed using a cascade approach (including national and county levels), leveraging a team of facility-based mentors at a County Referral Hospital to build skills among selected cadres of health workers who are well-positioned to deliver breastfeeding counseling across specific contact points in the health facility (e.g. antenatal care, during and immediately after birth, and in the neonatal period). The mentorship program will include building competencies in lactation management and skilled breastfeeding counseling, as well as mentorship. However, it is also critical that the mentorship program also be grounded in the global-level work to strengthen the quality of breastfeeding counseling.

B. Objectives

This consultant will contribute their technical expertise into the development of the mentorship program. The consultant will share global experience and perspectives on mentorship related to the generic BFHI package and the WHO Competency Verification Toolkit with the USAID Advancing Nutrition team and two local consultants; provide examples of existing mentorship-related training materials and monitoring and reporting tools; and will advise and provide periodic written feedback to the team as the components of the mentorship program are developed.

C. Activities

This consultant will work closely with the Activity Lead (Director of Nutrition and Health Systems team), the Director of Capacity Strengthening, a Senior Technical Advisor, and two local consultants in Kenya, to ensure that the mentorship program is grounded in breastfeeding counseling best practices and developed according to global guidelines. The consultant will support the tasks outlined below.

1. Share global experience and perspectives on mentorship related to the generic BFHI package and the WHO Competency Verification Toolkit with the USAID Advancing Nutrition team and two local consultants.
 2. Provide examples of existing mentorship-related training materials and monitoring and reporting tools.
 3. Advise the USAID Advancing Nutrition team and two local consultants in Kenya on the components that will make up the mentorship program, which may include:
 - a. **Guidance for facility-based breastfeeding counseling mentorship:** This will provide a guide for how to set up and deliver the facility-based mentorship program,
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including identifying a health facility and county, selecting master trainers, delivering trainings, assessing competencies, and structuring the delivery of the mentorship approach within the health facility (identifying mentees, schedule of mentorship visits, linkages with other mentorship or QI systems, etc.).

- b. **Mentorship program training package:** A module on mentorship that can be added to the BFHI Training Course for training mentors, including any tools or job aids needed during the delivery of the module.
 - c. **Tools for mentorship:** These may include measurement tools to track mentee progress, including observation checklists and other mentoring aids; and breastfeeding session observation checklist and/or other tools from the BFHI Training Course that can be used by mentees while delivering breastfeeding counseling.
4. Provide periodic written feedback on and inputs into the development of the components of the mentorship program in collaboration with USAID Advancing Nutrition team and two local consultants in Kenya.

D. Deliverables and Schedule

The Contractor is responsible for the timely submission of the following deliverables, as part of the SOW:

Del. No.	Deliverable Name	Deliverable Description	Due Date
1	Share global experience and perspectives on mentorship related to the generic BFHI package and the WHO Competency Verification Toolkit and provide examples of existing mentorship-related training materials and monitoring and reporting tools.	Meeting notes from discussions related to global experience and perspectives on mentorship related to the generic BFHI package and WHO Competency Verification Toolkit. Documentation of sharing examples of existing mentorship-related materials and tools.	February 28, 2022
2	Written inputs into the components of the mentorship program package	Inputs (which can be in the form of comments/tracked changes on a document developed by the USAID Advancing Nutrition team and local consultants on the components of the mentorship package materials.	March 15, 2022
3	Written inputs into the first draft of the mentorship program package	Inputs (which can be in the form of comments/tracked changes) on the first draft of the mentorship package components developed by the USAID Advancing Nutrition team and local consultants.	April 15, 2022
4	Written inputs into the second draft of the mentorship program package	Inputs (which can be in the form of comments/tracked changes) on the second draft of the mentorship package components developed by the USAID Advancing Nutrition team and local consultants.	May 15, 2022

The total Level of Effort is approximately equivalent to 4 days.

E. Consultant Qualifications

1. Master's degree or higher in public health, nutrition, or a relevant field.
 2. 15-20 years of work experience in public health and nutrition, particularly in relation to breastfeeding, breastfeeding counseling, and capacity strengthening.
 3. Knowledge and deep understanding of global policies, strategies, guidelines, protocols, and experiences related to breastfeeding and breastfeeding counseling globally.
 4. Professional connections with global breastfeeding experts, UN and donor agencies, etc.
 5. Experience in designing and/or implementing relevant preservice or in-service breastfeeding counseling training (lactation management) for health professionals and/or peri-professional such as peer counselors or community health workers.
 6. Experience in designing and implementing relevant field research and/or implementation research would be additional value.
 7. Ability to communicate effectively (strong oral and written communication skills); ability to engage with key stakeholders; and ability to plan and exercise COVID-19 precautions.
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