Subject: Consultancy to support the development of the national HIV Drug Resistance (HIVDR) prevention and control strategy and HIVDR surveillance protocols and plans in Belize.

Background:
Prevention, monitoring and timely response to population levels of HIV drug resistance (HIVDR) are critical to achieving the WHO/UNAIDS 90–90–90 targets for 2020. HIVDR emerges when HIV replicates in the presence of ARV drugs. Drug resistance is caused by mutations in the genetic structure and affects the ability of ARVs to block its replication and is associated with poor clinical outcomes and reduced effectiveness of ART. If HIVDR becomes widespread, ARVs currently used to prevent and treat HIV infection may become ineffective.

In response to increasing levels of HIVDR, the WHO coordinated the development of The Global Action Plan (GAP) on HIVDR (2017-2022). The overall goal of the global action plan is to forge synergies that will prevent HIVDR from undermining national and global objectives, while providing the most effective treatment to all persons living with HIV. The plan emphasizes five strategic objectives (Prevention and response, Monitoring & surveillance, Research and innovation, Laboratory capacity and Governance and enabling mechanisms) as critical components that should be integrated into broader efforts to ensure a comprehensive, effective, and sustainable HIV response. It is essential that actions to monitor, prevent and respond to HIVDR are implemented at the clinical, programme and policy levels to address the many drivers of HIVDR. WHO also recommends that HIV treatment scale-up be accompanied by measures to monitor and improve the quality of ART delivery and surveillance of HIVDR. At the country level, the strategy endorses country ownership, HIVDR surveillance, leveraging of enablers, and timely dissemination and use of available HIVDR information.

The last HIVDR study was completed in 2007 and following discussions with a national team, it was agreed to implement new HIVDR surveillance approaches, based on WHO recommended methodology, which will inform and support the implementation of a national HIVDR prevention and control strategy in Belize, aligned with the strategic lines of the WHO HIVDR GAP. As part of HIVDR surveillance activities, a nationally representative survey to estimate pre-treatment and acquired HIVDR will be conducted by the Ministry of Health and Wellness of Belize with technical support from the Pan American Health Organization and with financial support from the national Global Fund Project.

To support the implementation of the national HIVDR survey, which is expected to commence in 2021, the Ministry of Health and Wellness Belize in collaboration with UNDP, the Principal Recipient of the Global Fund Project is seeking support of a consultant to develop a national HIVDR prevention and control strategy, including a protocol and plans for HIVDR surveillance to be implemented in 2021.

Scope of work:
Under the direct supervision of the Laboratory Director of the Central Medical Laboratory, the Consultant will work in close collaboration with the Deputy Director of Health Services, Technical Advisors from PAHO and WHO Headquarters and the Advisor from UNDP Global Fund Project to:
   a. Review WHO references and HIVDR surveillance guidance, tools and existing appropriate HIVDR protocols as recommended by PAHO.
b. Review the concept note for the development of an HIVDR prevention and control strategy in Belize.

c. Facilitate a process of consultation with relevant national stakeholders to frame the purpose and public health objectives of HIVDR surveillance, prevention, and control in Belize.

d. Based on the revision of the recommended documents, develop: 1) a draft HIVDR prevention and control strategy; 2) a draft protocol and plan for the implementation of HIVDR surveillance in Belize.

e. Validate these documents with stakeholders.

f. Circulate the draft protocol to the country team for review by appropriate technical advisors.

g. Finalize the strategy and protocol and coordinate with the Ag. Laboratory Director submission for relevant ethical approvals.

**Deliverables & Dates**

1. Development of a work plan to support the key tasks to be executed under the consultancy. (Expected due date – March 17, 2021)

2. Submission of the drafts for review by the technical team. (Expected due date – April 2, 2021)

3. At the completion of the consultancy, submit the final documents for the implementation of HIVDR surveillance in 2021. (Expected due date – April 12, 2021)

**Qualifications of Consultant:**
The United Nations Development Programme requires the services of a professional with the following expertise to implement the above:

- Master’s in Public Health, laboratory experience and public health surveillance.
- Previous experience in HIVDR would be an asset
- Knowledge of HIV and the HIV response in Belize
- Prior experience as a consultant.
- Excellent analytical and writing skills

**Compensation**
The total remuneration for this consultancy should reflect professional fees only. No travel is anticipated to be conducted under the consultancy. All interested persons should submit a cost to conduct the consultancy based on the scope of work.

**Reporting Requirements**
The Consultant will communicate regularly with both the Laboratory Director and the UNDP Advisor on the progress. All identified challenges that can potentially affect the final product should be communicated immediately to the Project Officers.

**Timeframe:**
The duration of this consultancy is 30 days and will commence immediately upon signing a contract.

**Ownership:**
All products and other materials resulting from this consultancy is the property of the Ministry of Health and Wellness and subject to the rules and regulations governing copyrights. The Consultant may not make use of information gathered during this consultancy without the written consent of Ministry of Health and Wellness.

**Project Officers:**
- Dr. Castro, UNDP Global Fund Project Belize
• Mr. Chun, Ag. Lab Director Central Medical Laboratory, Ministry of Health and Wellness

**Recommended Presentation Offer:**
The following documents are requested:

a) Duly accomplished **Letter of Confirmation of Interest and Availability** using the template provided by UNDP;

b) **Personal CV**, indicating all past experience, as well as contact details (email and telephone number) and a Proposed Methodology for the completion of service

c) **Financial Proposal** that indicates the all-inclusive fixed total contract price, supported by a breakdown of costs, as per template provided.

**Criteria for Selection of the Best Offer**
The final selection will be based on the combined scoring method where the qualifications and methodology will be weighed a maximum of 70% and combined with the price offer which will be weighted a maximum of 30%

**Submission of Application Package:**
Proposals are required to submit by email or in 1 sealed envelope clearly labeled **RFP: Consultancy to support the development of the national HIV Drug Resistance (HIVDR) prevention and control strategy and HIVDR surveillance protocols and plans in Belize.**

**United Nations Development Programme**
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