PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT PROJECTS (PEP NIGERIA)

Call for Application

Position: Junior Researchers

Number required: Twelve (12)

Duty Station: Abakiliki, Afikpo South, Eboyi, Essa South, Ikwo, Ohaukwu & Ohaozara LGAs of Ebonyi state

Contract Type: Individual Contract

Duration: 8 Days

Expected Start Date: February 17, 2022

I. About PEP NIGERIA

PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT PROJECTS (PEP NIGERIA), established in 2000, is a foremost civil society women led NGO working to support the practice that allows the participation of women and young people in decision-making and governance processes by promoting democratic ideals and increasing citizens engagement in democratic governance. The organization also promotes capacity building for institutional strengthening of democratic structures in national and sub national governments. In the Southeast zone, PEP has been leading the work on citizens engagement in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) by championing the uptake of Community Key Needs Identification model of participatory Budgeting. It advocates for change and connects citizens especially women, persons with disabilities and young people to knowledge, experience, and resources to contribute to their communities development. Over the years, PEP has contributed significantly to improving feedback between government and citizens for improved service delivery through the implementation of relevant interventions, policy influencing, and partnering with state and non-state actors in Nigeria. PEP is headquartered in Umuahia, Abia state with Zonal offices in Ebonyi (SE), Bayelsa (SS), Katsina (NW) and Adamawa (NE).

II. Background and Project Description

One of the most daunting challenges in Nigeria’s Local Government system is the unaccountable delivery of public goods and services in rural communities. Communities that are more accessible, visible, and networked often get goods and services that neglected communities should also get, but don’t. Projects in neglected communities, shielded from the oversight that comes with the visibility that more urban locations enjoy, offer more opportunities for corruption without being caught. Often, money that is earmarked for these communities is routed elsewhere, and community members themselves are none the wiser. Neglected communities have little to no access to their public office holders nor to information about public goods and services. This, coupled with a limited awareness of their rights, puts these rural communities at risk of becoming victims of corruption and left with unfinished infrastructural projects such as school buildings and healthcare. It is against this backdrop that PEP Nigeria is implementing a project titled “Ebonyi State Local Governments’ Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability (LFTAS) program” with support from
the USAID-State2State Project. The objectives are: I. To Strengthen local government fiscal governance, reforms & performance and enhance partnership, peer learning and coordination among project LGAs. II. Enhance government’s responsiveness to the needs of citizens (women, youth, and persons with disabilities in selected seven (7) project Local Government Areas (LGAs) of Ebonyi state. This program is in tandem with the current Ebonyi state Government’s focus of improving fiscal transparency and accountability in both the state and local governments. This aligns with the purpose of the DAI “State Accountability, Transparency and Effectiveness” (“State2State”) Activity which is to increase the accountability, transparency and effectiveness of selected state and local governments (LGAs) in Nigeria. It also aligns with two (2) of the stated objectives of the DAI activity, namely Objective 1: Increased Efficiency of Sub National Government Operations: strengthening governance systems (with a focus on public financial management [PFM] and procurement, as well as monitoring and evaluation) related to the delivery of services in the key sectors of basic education, primary health care, and water, sanitation and hygiene [WASH]); and Objective 2: Improved Sub National Government Responsiveness to Citizen / CSO Engagement: increasing government ability to respond to citizen needs and priorities.

III. Assignment Description
The essence of this assignment is to establish and document the baseline of the existing gaps, governance weaknesses, and reform issues in the LGAs. The baseline study will also determine the knowledge, attitudes, behaviours, practices and challenges of LGA staff and citizens in relation to the budget, procurement, IGR and citizens participation. The baseline research will enable the project to generate relevant baseline data with critical stakeholders from the state and nonstate actors, local governments, civil society, media, community members. It will interrogate capacities and knowledge of frontline actors and organizations across project target Local Governments in fiscal transparency, open government, budget tracking and participatory budgeting in Ebonyi state in relation to the key sectors of Basic Education, Primary healthcare and WASH. The findings from the assessment will inform PEP's decision in designing and delivering tailored technical support and results-driven interventions to project Local Governments and citizens groups working to improve participatory budgeting and open government partnership in Ebonyi state Nigeria.

IV. Scope of Work:
The Junior Research Consultant is expected to:
- Collect and review literatures relevant to current status of public Finance management in Local governments.
- Assist in the administration of qualitative (Checklist) interviews
- Conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and In-depth Interviews and transcribing them.
- Support the development of final report based on findings.
- Support in conducting FGDs and in-depth interviews and transcribing them.
- Develop final report based on the findings.

The junior researchers are expected to make use of their own resources to complete the assignment, but PEP team will provide support and input where necessary.
V. Deliverables: A policy brief will be the final product of this research study, which will be widely disseminated among policy makers and relevant stakeholders from the local to the sub-national and national level.

VI. Qualifications and Experiences:
- Bachelor’s degree in any field affiliated to social science. (Master’s degree preferred)
- Bachelor’s degree with minimum 1-2 years of professional experience in social research
- Experience in coordination with federal, provincial and local level government and relevant local stakeholders
- Knowledge in research designs and report preparation.

VII. Competencies and Abilities Required:
- Excellent grasp of English and Nepali language (written and spoken)
- Ability to organize, set priorities and complete tasks under designated timelines
- Ability to work in multicultural and multidisciplinary environment
- Competence to work in teams and collaborations
- A strong commitment to values and principles of PEP

VIII. Supervision
Junior researcher will work under the direct supervision of the Baseline Lead Consultant, and PEP’s LFTAS Program Manager. All deliverables must be approved by the Executive Director and Project Management Team prior to payment of the consultant’s invoice. The Consultant will also liaise with the Project Manager where appropriate.

IX. Logistical Support
PEP Nigeria will provide preparatory and logistical assistance to the consultant(s), which include:
- Background materials (Program Proposal/TOR, Log Frame, etc.);
- Preparation meeting with Executive Director and key program personnel;
- Joining Baseline research workshop and work together with research team
- Identify interviewees and set up interviews etc.

X. Timing:
The proposed timing of this assignment is on or about (o/a) February 21 through March 22, 2022, across various seven local Government areas (Abakiliki, Afikpo South, Ebonyi, Ezzi South, Ikwo, Ohaukwu and Ohaozara) of Ebonyi state Nigeria. Candidates interested in the above post should send their applications and (electronically only) to pepnigeria2016@gmail.com. Kindly put “Expression of Interest: Junior Researcher on Local Governments Fiscal Transparency, Accountability and Sustainability” in the Title/Subject of the email no later than February 18, 2022 (Midnight West Africa Time). Applications should include a cover letter outlining the following:
- Consultant’s professional background
- Relevant skills, experience and qualifications
- Consultant’s expected fee and availability during the specified period.
An updated Curriculum Vitae (of no more than 3 pages which shows past experience with similar assignments. Incomplete applications will not be considered. Only shortlisted applicants will be contacted. PEP encourages applications from women, people with disabilities and young professionals.