

Request for Application #2020-053

Telecommunications Partner to support health workers in Guinea

I. Summary of Deadlines

The expected schedule for this application is outlined in the following table. Note that PATH reserves the right to modify this schedule as needed. All parties will be notified simultaneously of any changes through a modification posted on [Digital Square's website](#).

Release of Request for Application	October 8, 2020
Live question & answer (Q&A) teleconference	October 12, 2020 at 14:00 GMT (7:00am PT) Join: https://path.zoom.us/j/95978754129 Meeting ID: 959 7875 4129
Q&A teleconference recording and transcript posted to Digital Square's website	October 13, 2020
Applications due	October 23, 2020 at 23:59 GMT (4:59pm PT)
Applicants notified of decision	November 4, 2020

II. PATH Statement of Business

PATH is the leader in global health innovation. An international nonprofit organization, we save lives and improve health, especially among women and children. We accelerate innovation across five platforms—vaccines, drugs, diagnostics, devices, and system and service innovations—that harness our entrepreneurial insight, scientific and public health expertise, and passion for health equity. By mobilizing partners around the world, we take innovation to scale, working alongside countries primarily in Africa and Asia to tackle their greatest health needs. Together, we deliver measurable results that disrupt the cycle of poor health. Learn more at www.path.org.

III. Project Background

A. Project Background

In pursuit of our Mission: **connect health leaders with the resources necessary for digital transformation**, Digital Square offers a new way to invest in digital health—providing a space where countries and members of the global community can gather to think big and do good, together. By

convening government officials, technological innovators, donor and implementation partners, and others across borders and boundaries in the Digital Square, we can grow possibility into reality by focusing on our common goal: **connecting the world for better health**. Digital Square works in three key ways:

- Co-investment: We coordinate investments in digital health to maximize the impact of every dollar spent.
- Global goods: We scale tools and technologies that can be adapted to different countries and contexts.
- Digital market readiness: We create digital market readiness by building capacity with governments, local technology developers, and health workers.

Digital Square and our donors are working to support the Government of Guinea in partnership with Digital Square and a local telecommunications partner to develop a package of health telecommunication package for use by health workers and build local capacity of use and maintenance of this health information communications technology (ICT) systems to ensure long term availability of accurate data to guide informed decision making.

Through this RFA, PATH seeks partnership with a subrecipient that can work in close partnership with the Ministry of Health (MoH), GOG e-Government Agency, *Agence Nationale de la Gouvernance électronique et de l'informatisation de l'Etat* (ANGEIE), USAID Guinea, and Digital Square to develop a digital health telecommunications package (SMS, voice calls, internet) to exchange information on health services, good health practices and standards, disease outbreaks, public service announcements for health, and provide referral and alerts. The package will be tested in one region and implementation results will be closely monitored to inform a future scale-up of the project to the whole country and to document the impact of large-scale telecommunication services to the health sector. The partner must provide at least a 1:1 financial match (may include physical and/or technical resources, services).

B. Proposed Project Timeline

PATH anticipates that subawards will have 6 - 9 months of implementation and monitoring from the effective date and end by June 30, 2021. As part of Digital Square's due diligence, we will conduct pre-award evaluations of all shortlisted candidates. In addition to project-specific deliverables based on individual scopes of work, PATH will require applicants to provide, at minimum, quarterly narratives and financial reports to support their work. For more information about the project lifecycle for the selected applicant(s), please review Digital Square's [investment process](#).

Special Note on *Prohibition on Certain Telecommunication and Video Surveillance Services or Equipment*: procurement of telecommunications or video surveillance equipment and services produced by Huawei Technologies Company, ZTE Corporation, Hytera Communications Corporation, Hangzhou Hikvision Digital Technology Company, and Dahua Technology Company, or any other company, including affiliates and subsidiaries, owned or controlled by the People's Republic of China is strictly prohibited under this solicitation and applications will not be funded.

IV. Scope of Work and Deliverables

A. Scope of Work

Context

In recent years, the Ministry of Health and its partners have implemented a number of digital health initiatives and rolled out health information systems. It is expected that more and more services will be digitized in the future. A few examples are:

- The Health Management Information System uses the DHIS2¹ platform to allow collection of indicators at the facility level (for example, number of deliveries or number of malaria cases in a

¹ <https://www.dhis2.org/>

month in a given health facility), which are aggregated at district and regional levels. The data is then analyzed at regional and national levels.

- The same DHIS2 platform is also used by the *Agence Nationale De Sécurité Sanitaire* (ANSS) and MoH for disease surveillance activities, which leverage aggregated data. More recently the DHIS2 tracker module is used to capture individual cases of priority diseases, which is also used for managing COVID-19 case data and producing dashboards.
- The open source system openLMIS² is used to manage stocks and deliveries of medical supplies.
- iHRIS is used to manage the health workforce and includes a database of all health workers at the different level of the health pyramid (except community health workers).
- RapidPro managed by UNICEF has been deployed for some maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) use cases.

The Health Information Systems described above are hosted on servers at Guilab. Where possible, the services are accessed via the government's fiber network managed by the ANGEIE. Collaboration with ANGEIE and MoH staff will be essential for success for this project, also in light of recent progress of the national Fiber network outside of Conakry, where investments may still be needed to assure last-mile access to health facilities. Regular phones, tablets as well as computers have been provided to different actors of the health pyramid, which can be leveraged for this activity. However other gaps in equipment may need to be addressed.

Since many applications rely on data entry and operations at the health facility level or by mobile units, access via mobile internet is needed. Additionally, due to the lack of reliable mobile internet in some areas and the lack of modern smartphones for health workers, some applications need to be accessed using 2G technologies like SMS or USSD.

Objectives

- Provide a basic telecommunications package for health workers which include a closed user group to other health workers for calls and SMS as well as a data package. This RFA is focused on a prototype and testing phase in Mamou, if successful, would be likely extended nation-wide in future.
- Facilitate affordable and reliable access to existing and future digital health programs and health information systems.
- Introduce bridge technologies to allow data entry and access for specific use cases using 2G technology (USSD, SMS) which feeds into the respective health information systems (DHIS2).
- Leveraging existing systems where possible. For example, the verification of access to health worker telecommunication services (closed user group) could happen by syncing existing records in the MoH's IHRIS instance for health worker management.
- Train ANGEIE, MoH and other key members of this partnership in the maintenance and monitoring of services, including data reporting and analysis.
- With support from Digital Square, train ANGEIE and MoH on data use including effective data visualizations to monitor response.
- Participate in regular coordination meetings with MoH, ANGEIE, USAID Guinea, Digital Square, and other partners.

The Ministry of Health has identified the region of Mamou as a target area representative for a rural and urban setting in Guinea.

The Mamou region is divided into three (3) districts: Dalaba, Pita, and Mamou.

Here are a few key pieces of information about the region of Mamou:

² <https://openlmis.org/>

Health workers (without CHW)	431
CHWs	32
Health facilities (health centers)	42
Health facilities (health posts)	202
Hospitals (public)	3
Laboratories	15

Furthermore, the following equipment has been provided to health facility staff in the different districts:

- Dalaba District :

Structure	Tablets	Computers (good condition)	Phones
Health centers	0	10	8
Prefectural Hospital	2	5 (office desktops) 1 (laptop)	1
DPS (Prefectural Direction of Health)	4	2 (office desktops) 2 (laptops)	2

- Pita District :

Structure	Tablets	Computers (good condition)	Phones
Health centers	0	14	14
Prefectural Hospital	0	6 (office desktops) 1 (laptop)	1
DPS	3	3 (office desktops) 3 (laptops)	1
DRS (Regional Direction of Health)	0	0	0

- Dalaba District :

Structure	Tablets	Computers (good condition)	Phones
Health centers	0	17	18
Prefectural Hospital	1	23 (office desktops) 1 (laptop)	1
DPS	4	2 (office desktops) 3 (laptops)	2
DRS	0	5 (office desktops) 3 (laptops)	0

Two priority use cases have been identified which will need to be targeted in addition to more foundational aspects (like availability of calls, SMS and data packages).

- Strengthening referral linkages - which occur when a patient is diagnosed at a health facility but needs to be transferred to a hospital. For example, this regularly occurs in the case of complications during deliveries.
- Increasing availability of quality information for evidence-driven decision-making. Ensuring that information is available, timely, accurate, and can be entered into a system in an automated manner without multiple steps involving phone calls or paperwork, which can introduce data quality challenges.

Proposed activities and phases

Phase	Activity
Conception and Design	Develop a technical concept in close collaboration with stakeholders
	Develop a rollout plan in close collaboration with stakeholders
	Participate in a validation with MoH, ANGEIE, USAID Guinea, and Digital Square
Development and rollout	Establish a closed user group (CUG) for all health workers in Mamou and their frequent counterparts at the national level, as well as a data package for health workers. It should be considered that health workers may not own a dedicated official phone (especially CHWs).
	Develop a lookup service / address book either by mobile web, USSD, or a phone line within the CUG.
	Include a provision to allow sending mobile money to members of the closed user group.
	A portal should be developed as a single entry point for different existing and future digital health applications, and which includes information about the telecommunications package, help line etc.
	The database for the closed user group should sync with the iHRIS workers database to ensure that all numbers are known.
	Upgrading / activating existing SIM cards (via USSD or with the help of MNO's agent network) should be considered for health workers already using the mobile operator to avoid distribution of new SIM cards. CHWs especially tend to use the same phone for private use and their community activities.
	Configure USSD or SMS-based services for priority use cases, to allow access by health workers not equipped with smartphones, tablets or computers, which connect basic phones to existing health information systems (DHIS2 reporting).

	Training ANGEIE and MoH administrators in Closed User Group monitoring, dealing with abuses, producing reports and developing additional USSD / SMS applications.
Operations and Coordination	Participate in regular coordination meetings with MoH, ANGEIE, USAID Guinea, Digital Square and other partners. Report on usage of services, etc.
Handover	Handover of management of services to ANGEIE and MoH staff

B. Deliverables

Deliverables may include but are not limited to the following. Applicants may propose additional deliverables.

- Progress reports to Digital Square.
- Technical concept approved by the MOH for providing services.
- Roll out plan to enroll health workers, which minimizes required travel and leverages self-registration or existing mobile agent networks. Roll-out plan should include a capacity building plan developed in partnership with the MOH and Digital Square.
- Training materials including reports for trainings of ANGEIE and MoH staff (i.e. who was training, on what topics, outcomes).
- Monthly reports on service use after launch and before handover to ANGEIE and MoH staff
- Sustainability plan detailing what the MOH and ANGEIE will need to do to sustain this program and scale it for other use cases and other programs.
- Documentation of how the partner has provided at least a 1:1 match.

V. Application Requirements - Cost

The estimated size of award for this application is up to US\$400,000. This figure is just an estimate provided for informational purposes to the applicants and is not binding.

The applicant should provide a detailed explanation of costing and describe the reasonableness of each proposed cost in the budget narrative.

Digital Square will evaluate the quoted prices and hourly rates. No analysis will be performed on quotes determined as non-responsive or if the technical quote is determined to be technically unacceptable. The price/business evaluation will be conducted in accordance with the quoted utility-based solution and proposed labor categories, their rates and Evaluation Matrix. Digital Square will conduct an analysis to determine if all quoted prices are reasonable. This evaluation is conducted with the expectation of adequate price competition and will rely heavily on market forces to determine whether proposed prices are fair and reasonable. The comparison of proposed prices in response to this solicitation is the preferred and intended price analysis technique.

Digital Square will also compare the proposed prices to historical prices paid for the same or similar services and the independent government cost estimate. Other techniques and procedures may be used to ensure quoted prices are fair and reasonable. A cost realism analysis will be performed to determine whether the quoted Level of Effort is realistic for the work to be performed, reflects a clear understanding of the requirements and is consistent with the unique methods of performance set forth in the company's technical quote.

Required Elements

The Cost Application must include a budget narrative, detailing the cost and cost basis applied in generating the application. The Cost Application must also include a detailed budget that is itemized along the cost categories defined below. This detailed budget should be submitted in an unlocked Excel spreadsheet and must include the following information:

- Personnel at minimum the budget should detail:
 - All proposed staff/positions with daily rates.
 - Total number of days in total level of effort according to key staff.
- Itemization of all other costs (e.g., agency costs, service tax, administrative costs, supplies, etc.).
- Estimated schedule of other anticipated expenses (travel, subawardee resources, supplies, outside resources, etc.).
- Details of all subcontracting out of work, this includes proposed consultants as well as proposed sub awardees.

The Cost Application shall begin with a summary budget detailing costs in the following categories:

Description	Total Cost (USD)
Personnel	
Fringe Benefits	
Travel	
Equipment	
Supplies	
Other Direct Costs	
Contractual	
Consultants	
Total Direct Costs	
Indirect Costs	
Total Project Costs	

Special Note on Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are overhead expenses incurred as a result of the project but not easily identified with the project's activities. These are administrative expenses that are related to overall general operations and are shared among projects and/or functions. Examples include executive oversight, existing facilities costs, accounting, grants management, legal expenses, utilities, and technology support.

If your organization includes indirect costs in the budget, you must provide a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement with the US Government or three years of audited financials to PATH to validate the use of this rate.

VI. Application Requirements – Technical

Provide a narrative on your technical approach to accomplish objective(s) identified in the Scope of Work identified in section IV, including:

- Description of technical approach which includes:
 - Problem statement and solution approach.
 - A description of how your solution will accomplish each of the subtasks in this application
 - A description of how your solution will scale to growing needs of users across the globe.
 - Potential obstacles and plans to overcome them.
- National workplan for your chosen workstream(s), aligned to the subtasks in this application with illustrative timeline to meet deliverables.
 - This work plan should include illustrative results and describe specific interventions to achieve those results. The illustrative work plan should describe specific interventions (activities) planned for the relevant tasks and should include a timeline providing target dates for achievement of milestones and illustrative results.
- Identification of major internal and external resources.
- Past performance information sheets demonstrating
 - Profile of relevant corporate qualifications.
 - Profile of relevant experience and examples of related work.
 - Applicants may provide any information on awards or certifications.
- Staffing plan accompanied by Curriculum Vitae (CV) for key technical positions.
 - Offerors must include a staffing plan in accordance with the Cost Application personnel requirements, including specific position titles and the approximate level of must for each position.
 - A complete and current resume must be submitted for each key personnel position, detailing the requisite qualifications and experience of the individual. Qualifications, experience and skills shall be placed in chronological order starting with most recent information and include a list of certifications possessed by each key technical personnel.

Annual revenue

If your company has more than one location, please indicate the number of years in business and annual revenue amount for the site that is responding.

VII. Additional Attachments, optional

1. Third-tier Sub Awardee Agreements, Contracts or Commitments. Candidates may submit any agreements, contracts or commitments it has with any potential third tier-sub awardee.

VIII. Application Evaluation Criteria

The following is a list of significant criteria against which applications will be assessed.

1. Technical Approach that conforms to all of the components listed in Section VI above **(40 points)**
 - Description of technical approach.
 - Timeline to meet the deliverables.
 - Identification of major internal and external resources.
 - Qualifications
 - Profile of relevant experience and examples of related work.
 - Staffing plan accompanied by CVs for key technical positions.
 - List of certifications possessed by each key technical personnel.
 - Number of years in business.
2. Experience - to be validated by past performance references (as it relates to years in business, geographic reach, size of prior grants, prior funders, etc.). **(15 points)**
3. Experience with large-scale closed user groups or custom packages; configuring USSD or SMS-based services for priority use cases connecting to DHIS2. **(15 points)**
4. Costs - as detailed in Section V. **(30 points)**

Note: PATH reserves the right to include additional criteria.

IX. Instructions and Deadlines for Responding

A. PATH contacts

Program Contact: Clemence Couteau, ccouteau@path.org

Procurement Contact: Jessica Nguyen, jenguyen@path.org

Technical Lead Contact: Maguette Ndong, mndong@path.org

B. Applications Due: **October 23, 2020 at 23:59 GMT (4:59pm PT)**

Completed applications should be submitted in English by email to the contacts listed above. The subject line of the email should read: "RFA # 2020-053 - (Applicant name)"

We advise that you send files in commonly recognized MS formats. We will not accept responsibility for resolving technical transmission problems with applications.

C. Live Q&A Teleconference

During the RFA submission process, one live teleconference will take place on Monday, October 12, 2020 at 14h00 GMT (7:00am PT) to address any questions related to RFA # 2020-053. All applicants are welcome to join and for those unable to attend, or for those wanting to reconfirm answers to questions, a recording of the Q&A session will be posted on the Digital Square wiki page found here: https://wiki.digitalsquare.io/index.php/Main_Page. Attendance at the Q&A session will not affect the scoring of applications.

Anonymity

As this will be a live teleconference, submitters choosing to attend are requested to follow the steps outlined below to assist in maintaining applicant anonymity.

Signing into the meeting

To join the teleconference, there are two options, dial-in and browser-based. Please see the appropriate instructions based on your available resources.

Either entry will require the following meeting ID when prompted: **959 7875 4129**

Browser-based

Please join by clicking the following link: <https://path.zoom.us/j/95978754129>

If you are new to zoom, you will be prompted to enter your email address and name. Please enter the following:

- Email Address: please leave this field blank
- Name: "Anonymous"

Note: If you already have a Zoom account, please be sure to log out of your account so you are not automatically identified upon joining the meeting.

Dial-In

To join the meeting over the phone, please visit this website to locate your international and toll-free number: <https://zoom.us/u/abZgmMZwDj>

Note: If you are joining by phone, your phone number will show up as your participant name in the list of participants on the browser-based version, thus participants are encouraged to join via the browser-based version when available. The host will change your number to "Anonymous" upon entry, but this is not guaranteed as multiple participants will require management during the call.

Asking a question

Participants are encouraged to join the teleconference with prepared questions, feel free to submit these questions in the chat box and we will address them during the session. There are two options for submitting a question during the Q&A teleconference:

- Chat: when accessing the teleconference via a browser, an option to select "chat" will appear in the bottom of the screen. Please feel free to type your questions to "everyone" and they will be addressed during the session.
- Voice: during the meeting, please place yourself on mute so that others in the meeting can easily hear the moderator. However, when prompted, please feel free to unmute your microphone and state your questions directly to the moderator.

For additional questions, Zoom User guides and support can be found at <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us>

D. Conclusion of Process

Applicants will be notified of the decision by November 4, 2020. Final award is subject to the terms and conditions included in this solicitation, as well as successful final negotiations of all applicable terms and conditions affecting this work.

X. Terms and Conditions of the Solicitation

A. Notice of non-binding solicitation

PATH reserves the right to reject any and all bids received in response to this solicitation and is in no way bound to accept any application. The applications submitted through this RFA process are the responsibility of the submitter and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the United States Government, or PATH.

B. Confidentiality

All information provided by PATH as part of this solicitation must be treated as confidential. In the event that any information is inappropriately released, PATH will seek appropriate remedies as allowed. Applications, discussions, and all information received in response to this solicitation will be held as strictly confidential, except as otherwise noted.

C. Conflict of interest disclosure

Suppliers bidding on PATH business must disclose, to the procurement contact listed in the RFA, any actual or potential conflicts of interest. Conflicts of interest could be present if; there is a personal relationship with a PATH staff member that constitutes a significant financial interest, board memberships, other employment, and ownership or rights in intellectual property that may be in conflict with the supplier's obligations to PATH. Suppliers and PATH are protected when actual or perceived conflicts of interest are disclosed. When necessary, PATH will create a management plan that provides mitigation of potential risks presented by the disclosed conflict of interest.

D. Communication

All communications regarding this solicitation shall be directed to appropriate parties at PATH indicated in Section IX. A. Contacting third parties involved in the project, the review panel, or any other party may be considered a conflict of interest and could result in disqualification of the application.

E. Acceptance

Acceptance of an application does not imply acceptance of its terms and conditions. PATH reserves the option to negotiate on the final terms and conditions. We additionally reserve the right to negotiate the substance of the finalists' applications, as well as the option of accepting partial components of an application if appropriate.

F. Right to final negotiations

PATH reserves the option to negotiate on the final costs and final scope of work, and also reserves the option to limit or include third parties at PATH's sole and full discretion in such negotiations.

G. Third-party limitations

PATH does not represent, warrant, or act as an agent for any third party as a result of this solicitation. This solicitation does not authorize any third party to bind or commit PATH in any way without our express written consent.

H. Application Validity

Applications submitted under this request shall be valid for 90 days from the date the application is due. The validity period shall be stated in the application submitted to PATH.