**Request for Proposals (RFP)**

**Project Title:** Formative research to understand regional attitudes, beliefs and perceptions about KPs to inform communications

**Reference:** GFATM / KP REACH / M&C Saatchi/ 2016

**Deadline** 21 March 2016 by 13:00hrs GMT+2

**Expected Start Date** Commencing after terms and agreements of the contract are signed

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### 1. Organisational Context

M&C Saatchi is the world’s largest independent communications network, with nearly 30 global centres of excellence, and partner offices worldwide. We offer a powerful combination of global communication expertise with best-in-class capability.

M&C Saatchi World Services was established in 2011 to bring this body of communications knowledge and expertise to the international development sector. We are committed to the development sector and producing best-in-class social change communications. We work with a range of clients and partners, including UN agencies, bi-laterals, INGOs and foundations, as well as grassroots NGOs. The Research & Insight team within M&C Saatchi World Services offers the international development sector cutting edge primary research, monitoring and evaluation, combined with digital and social media data gathering and analytics, research communications and local capacity building.

M&C Saatchi World Services is part of a Programme being implemented in Southern Africa referred to as **KP REACH** (Key Populations – Representation, Evidence and Advocacy for Change in Health). KP REACH focuses on community systems strengthening to achieve its goal. The goal is the reduction in HIV infections and HIV-related deaths among key populations in Southern Africa through improved access by Key Populations to HIV prevention, testing and treatment services. The Programme targets KP communities, namely Men Who Have Sex with Men (MSM), Sex Workers (SW), Transgender people (TG), Women Who Have Sex with Women (WSW) and Gender Non-Conforming People (NCP).

#### 1.1 Background of the KP REACH Programme

According to the UNAIDS 2014 Gap Report, there are an estimated 24.7 million people living with HIV in sub-Saharan Africa, nearly 71% of the global total. Ten countries in sub-Saharan Africa, of which five are located in Southern Africa - Malawi, Mozambique, South Africa, Zambia and Zimbabwe - account for 81% of all people living with HIV in the region. The Southern African countries included in this proposal (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe) clearly form the epicentre of the global HIV epidemic.

Despite enormous achievements in the last decade in the provision of treatment and the reduction of AIDS-related deaths, which fell by 39% between 2005 and 2013 in sub-Saharan Africa¹, new infections among

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key populations (KPs) are on the rise, specifically among young KPs, sex workers (SW), men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender people (TG) remain disproportionately affected. Little information is available on people who inject drugs (PWID). For women who have sex with women (WSW), there is a growing body of evidence to suggest that WSW in Southern Africa are at greater risk for HIV infection than was previously believed. This research points to increasing vulnerability to gender-based and sexual violence and hence greater exposure to HIV. Further, recent research has found that forced sex is the most important risk factor associated with HIV infection among WSW in Botswana, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. So while not explicitly a KP, WSW need to be taken into account in the context of HIV in Southern Africa.

Prevention, treatment, and care programmes funded to reverse the epidemic often neglect these populations. Stigma and discrimination, deterring KPs from accessing health services, flourish with impunity in countries that receive significant donor funding for HIV. National planning documents and donor funding agreements at times mention MSM and SW, but little programming actually exists. Epidemiological surveillance that would help inform programmes serving these populations lags far behind strategic information collected on other populations. Little to no attention is paid to the needs of transgender people or WSW.

The evolving disease epidemiology in the region shows that:

- While HIV incidence is declining in many parts of the Southern African region, incidence among some KPs appears to be isolated from this progress.
- Studies conducted in Southern Africa have found HIV prevalence rates 10–20 times higher among SWs than among adults in the general population, with rates of HIV infection reaching 50% of all SWs tested, and HIV prevalence reaching 86% in one study from Zimbabwe. Among MSM, evidence shows prevalence is 9 times higher than among general population in contexts such as Southern Africa.
- Several recent studies make it clear that HIV does affect Southern African WSW including lesbians and bisexuals and even more significantly than was previously believed. Despite this, this group of women is completely ignored by policy and programming for HIV.
- Though data for transgender men and women in Southern Africa is next to nonexistent, evidence from more than 11,000 transgender people worldwide found HIV prevalence of 19.1%. In those settings analysed, transgender women were 49 times more likely to be infected with HIV compared to adults in the general population.

KP REACH aims to bend the HIV curve in the targeted eight countries (Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe) and address the above-mentioned gaps. A strengthened response from regional networks to share strategies, leverage progress in other contexts, and empower national organizations is a required and necessary component in CSS to enhance human rights and advocate effectively at both regional and national levels for improved provision of health and HIV services to key populations.

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2 UNAIDS. (2013). Getting to Zero: HIV in Eastern & Southern Africa. Geneva, Switzerland: Joint United Nations Program on HIV/AIDS. Page 21. In Kenya and SA, these key populations (SW, MSM and PWID) were estimated to account for 33% and 26% respectively of new HIV infections.


7 Sandfort et al., 2013 (as above)


12 See Cloete, Sanger & Simbayi, 2011; Matebeni et al., 2013; Poteat et al., 2014; Sandfort et al., 2013 (as above)

1.2 KP REACH Goals and Objectives

The goal is the reduction in HIV infections and HIV-related deaths among key populations in Southern Africa through improved access by KPs to HIV prevention, testing and treatment services.

Objective 1: To strengthen four existing and emerging regional networks in Southern Africa so that they work strategically and efficiently together and with others to contribute to the effective development, monitoring and reporting of HIV prevention, testing and treatment services, programmes and policies for KPs at regional and national levels by 2018.

Objective 2: To improve data collection/evidence and use, knowledge management, scale up and replication of best practice for more responsive national level programming and policies for improved access to HIV prevention, testing and treatment services for KPs in at least 75% of participating countries by 2018.

Objective 3: To develop a unified KP-led voice and disseminate messaging co-created with KPs that aims to shift attitudes and beliefs for reduction in stigma and discrimination as a barrier to HIV prevention, testing and treatment services for KPs in at least 75% of participating countries by 2018.

1.3 KP REACH Four Main Components

KP REACH IN - to strengthen the capacity and mobilisation of the existing and emerging regional KP networks for MSM, PWID, SW, and TG. These regional KP networks will be strengthened to be able to improve advocacy and representation at the national and regional level to contribute meaningfully to achieving the KP REACH goal, engage in the generation and use of quality KP-led data and reduction in systemic stigma and discrimination against KPs in the Southern Africa region. KP REACH IN will strengthen MSM, SW, TG and PWID networks by supporting community mobilising and linkages between regional and national network levels, addressing the chronic lack of human resourcing, security issues, and resources to improve organizational development and network functions. KP REACH IN will also provide an opportunity for the networks to ensure that they have up-to-date and resourced plans for capacity strengthening, advocacy and representation, and resource mobilisation to maximise the use of resources and improve sustainability.

KP REACH Learning - to facilitate the analysis, documentation and sharing of good practice working models and approaches from within the Southern Africa region, from the wider Africa continent and other continents through south-south learning. The identification of models and approaches will be focussed on those that address barriers to improved HIV prevention, testing and treatment for KPs in Southern Africa and promotion of good practice and creative solutions. This will be a core task for KP REACH Learning regional staff and in-country staff (KP REACH Evidence and Good Practice Officers) supported by national and regional level good practice workshops. The approaches and models will be drawn from all relevant sectors and will benefit all sectors not just the civil society sector. KP REACH Learning will also facilitate learning visits between KP experts from other continents and within Africa, as well as short learning placements for KPs from one national organization/network to another. KP REACH Learning will also package KP REACH KP-led research findings into strategic information for dissemination to different audiences, and develop advocacy resources on behalf of KP REACH OUT below.

KP REACH OUT - to allow the regional KP networks and their allies within the LGBTI, Human rights, and PLHIV communities to have a mechanism for collective action and voice. This will benefit advocacy coordination and unified message development and promotion, and mutual mentoring, lesson sharing, and understanding. KP REACH OUT will help to lessen duplication and to share resources for the work of its members. It will give KPs in the Southern Africa region more clout and provide an avenue for consultation for KP programming and policy formulation in the region.

KP REACH NET - to create a website which will house and promote the KP REACH programme content provided by KP REACH IN, KP REACH OUT and KP REACH Learning. KP REACH NET staff will not be responsible for developing content other than occasional podcasts and news headlines etc. which creates the infrastructure on the site to locate and introduce the content.
2. Purpose and specific objectives of the consultancy

In order to deliver on Objective 3 of KP-REACH (outlined above) and develop a unified KP-led voice and co-created communications strategy, M&C Saatchi World Services is seeking proposals from qualified consultants and research agencies interested in providing research services on stigma and discrimination against Key Populations in Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Namibia, South Africa, Swaziland, Zambia and Zimbabwe. The Key Populations include sex workers, men who have sex with men, women who have sex with women, transgender people and gender non-conforming people. The ideal consultants must have experience working in the region and be well versed on Key Populations and communications.

The purpose of this research programme is to gain a better understanding of stigma and discrimination experienced by Key Populations (KPs) that prevents them from accessing essential health services. These insights and lessons from this research will be used to design communications strategies to challenge and reduce stigma and discrimination as a key barrier to service access for these KPs.

Specifically, the research has the following key objectives:

1. To understand stigma and discrimination in general and in relation to the KPs in terms of definitions, language, context and experience;
2. To understand how change happens in relation to stigma and discrimination;
3. Firstly, to understand and map how KPs are portrayed and represented (visually and linguistically) in culture across the eight countries. Secondly, to identify and map widely held values and beliefs across the eight countries that provide an opportunity to reframe these harmful portrayals and develop a new narrative that aims to increase levels of acceptance and support of KPs;
4. Firstly, to test potential strategies, hypotheses and ideas about what a new narrative could be with key stakeholders, influencers and citizens, and secondly, to test creative concepts and specific language of a new narrative to shift stigma and discrimination faced by KPs in eight target countries.

Detailed research questions for each of these objectives will be shared with the selected Contractor upon commissioning.

The bidders may choose to put forward proposals for any one component of the research programme outlined in the scope of work, a combination of components or all the components, depending on their qualifications and previous experience. In their cover letters the bidders should clearly state which specific component of the work they are bidding for.

Submitted proposals should include:

- A cover letter, indicating the component(s) of the research that the proposal relates to;
- A detailed technical proposal, including:
  - Examples of previous experience of similar subject matters and/or methodologies and with formative research, designed to inform communication strategies/campaigns.
  - An outline of the proposed approach and the work plan;
  - CVs for all core team members and an outline of their role and responsibilities within the proposed project team;
  - Proposed timeline for delivery of the work;
  - Contact details of at least two clients for whom the bidder has previously conducted similar research.
- A detailed financial proposal.
  - All cost estimates should be all-inclusive (including any applicable tax, VAT or service fees), including any recruitment or incentive costs for the interviewees, and quoted in US $.
  - The proposed cost should be broken down by research component, with clear indications of proposed day rates for all members of the project team and separate budget line items for each element of the research (e.g. survey scripting, quality control, transcription, translation, etc.).
3. Scope of Work

The research programme consists of four components, as outlined below.

M&C Saatchi World Services expects the bidders to address the research objectives by utilising research methodologies specified in this scope of work. However, over and above these approaches we are also open to considering other methodologies that the bidders might propose to respond effectively to the research questions.

(1) Rapid Review
This component will focus on addressing Research Objectives 1-2, as outlined above.

We are particularly interested in understanding stigma and discrimination as it relates to sexual orientation, gender identity and sex work, and how this intersects with the stigma and discrimination of being HIV positive.

Methodology: Rapid literature review of existing evidence on shifting stigma and discrimination.
Deliverable: Final analytical report covering key findings of the literature review.
Timeline: April 2016 (we expect the Contractor to spend no more than 20 days to complete the literature review)

(2) Cultural Analysis and KP Portrayals
This component will address Research Objective 3 outlined above.

In addition to understanding how KPs are portrayed across the eight countries and identifying opportunities and values upon which to base a new narrative, we are also interested in obtaining insights on potential target audiences and cohorts of citizens who might be most amenable to joining a coalition for social change, i.e. who are the ‘early adopter’ segments of the populations across the eight countries and who are most likely to champion a new narrative, beyond the activists and advocates already working on these issues.

Methodology: We expect this research to utilise methodologies such as content/discourse analysis and semiotics to assess portrayals of KPs in the media and popular culture. In addition, we anticipate that the selected Contractor will conduct around 16 Key informant interviews (final number to be confirmed on commission) to identify and map widely held values and beliefs across the eight countries, to identify opportunities in culture to reframe these harmful portrayals and develop a new prosocial narrative and to gather insights on potential target audiences, as noted above.

M&C Saatchi World Services is also open to considering other methodologies proposed by the bidders to address this objective.

Deliverable: A detailed analytical report, covering key findings on the KP portrayals and insights from the cultural analysis, based on content/discourse analysis, semiotics and key informant interviews.
Timeline: April 2016

(3) Hypothesis testing
This component will be designed to focus on Research Objectives 3 and 4.

We are interested in exploring potential strategies, approaches and hypotheses developed as a result of Research Component 1 (Rapid Review) and Research Component 2 (Cultural Analysis and KP Portrayals), before moving into a creative development phase. This requires a nuanced and sensitive approach by a contractor that is used to developing communications strategies based on audience insight.

Whilst testing hypotheses and potential strategies, we are also aiming to assess what drives stigmatisation and discrimination of KPs and to identify the beliefs and values around which a new prosocial narrative can be created.
Methodology: This component will utilise in-depth interviews (IDIs) and focus group discussions (FGDs). There will be a minimum of 24 IDIs and 24 FGDs (approx. 3 FGDs and 3 IDIs per country) with a cross-section of society, including but not limited to following target audiences:

- Religious leaders
- Community leaders
- Health workers
- Media professionals/commentators
- Cultural experts
- General population

Each IDI will last between 45-60min. The list of interviewees will be prepared by the selected Contractor, in collaboration with M&C Saatchi World Services Research & Insight team and key stakeholders. The M&C Saatchi World Services Research & Insight team will also be responsible for approving all research instruments and the final report.

Each FGD will include approximately 6-8 participants and will last approximately 2 hours. The participants will be recruited from the general public based on pre-set criteria, including gender, age, social class and their attitudes towards KPs. In their proposals all bidders should include their recommendations regarding any other demographic factors that they believe need to be taken into account.

The proposals should also outline the proposed strategy for the recruitment of the interviewees and focus group participants and proposed locations for the focus groups discussions.

In addition to the methodologies above, M&C Saatchi World Services is open to considering other methodologies proposed by the bidders to address these objectives.

Deliverables:

- In-depth interviews: Audio recordings of all interviews and verbatim transcripts of the recordings. Transcripts should be submitted in excellent quality English that is true to the original-language verbatim responses. We also require the Contractor to provide a topline summary within one day after each interview, reporting key findings, insights, the length of the discussion, and any particular issues that arose during the discussion.

- Focus-group discussions: Audio recordings of all focus groups and verbatim transcripts of the recordings. Results from all individual and group exercises should be made available both in an original form, and translated into high-quality English. Transcripts should be submitted in excellent quality English that is true to the original-language verbatim responses. We also require the Contractor to provide a topline summary from moderators within one day after each focus group, reporting key findings, insights, the length of the discussion, and any particular issues that arose during the focus group.

Timeline: May – June 2016

(4) Creative testing

This component will focus on addressing Research Objective 4.

In this phase a number of creative territories will be tested to determine which route has the most power to shift the perceptions and attitudes of the target audience to be more open, understanding and supportive of the target KP groups.

To this aim, a set of 24 focus group discussions (3 per country) with members of the general population will be conducted.

Each focus group discussion will include approximately 6-8 participants and will last approximately 2 hours. The focus group participants will be recruited from the public based on pre-set criteria, including gender, age, social class and their attitudes towards KPs. In their proposals all bidders should include their recommendations regarding any other demographic factors that they believe need to be taken into account. The proposals should also outline the proposed strategy for the recruitment of the focus group participants and proposed locations for the focus groups discussions.
In addition to the focus group discussions, M&C Saatchi World Services is open to considering other methodologies proposed by the bidders to address these objectives.

**Deliverables:** Audio recordings of all focus groups and verbatim transcripts of the recordings. Results from all individual and group exercises should be made available both in an original form, and translated into high-quality English. Transcripts should be submitted in excellent quality English that is true to the original-language verbatim responses. We also require the Contractor to provide a topline summary from moderators within one day after each focus group, reporting key findings, insights, the length of the discussion, and any particular issues that arose during the focus group.

**Timeline:** September 2016
4. Contractor Responsibilities

(1) In-Depth Interviews

For each set of in-depth interviews in this RFP, the Contractor will be responsible for:

- High quality translation of research instruments into local languages in each of the 8 countries. English versions of all research instruments will be provided by M&C Saatchi World Services;
- Conducting in-depth interviews, as outlined in this RFP. The interviews will be conducted by an experienced, local native speaking interviewer;
- Organising a note taker, who will take notes on the key discussion points during the interview, where possible;
- Audio recording of all interviews;
- Verbatim transcription of interviews in high quality English;
- Delivering final materials, including audio recordings, transcripts and interview summaries via e-mail to M&C Saatchi World Services.

(2) Content/Discourse Analysis And Semiotics

- Utilising content analysis and semiotics (and any other agreed method) to assess the portrayal of KPs in the media and the popular culture;
- Delivering final materials, including a list of raw materials used, and a detailed analytical report via e-mail to M&C Saatchi World Services.

(3) Focus Groups

For each set of the focus groups outlined in this RFP, the Contractor will be responsible for:

- Recruiting research participants, in line with specifications defined by M&C Saatchi World Services;
- High quality translation of research instruments into local languages in each of the 8 countries. English versions of all research instruments will be provided by M&C Saatchi World Services;
- Venue booking, respondent refreshments and incentives;
- Moderating focus groups by a professional, local, native language speaking moderator;
- Providing simultaneous translation services for M&C Saatchi World Services fieldwork observers, where necessary;
- Organising a note taker, who will take notes on the key discussion points during the focus groups;
- Audio recording of the focus groups;
- Verbatim transcription of focus group discussions in high quality English;
- Delivering final materials, including audio recordings, transcripts and focus group notes via e-mail to M&C Saatchi World Services.
5. Evaluation Criteria

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<td>Experience with formative research designed to inform communication strategies and campaigns</td>
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6. Submission of Proposals
All proposals must be submitted electronically, to WSprocurement@mcsaatchi.com by 13:00hrs GMT+2 on Monday 21 March 2016.

Technical and financial proposals should be submitted separately (as two separate documents in one email), labelled as follows:
- KPStigma_research_Technicalproposal;
- KPStigma_research_Financialproposal.

Please note that proposals received after the deadline and submissions where the technical and financial proposals have not been submitted as separate documents, will not be considered.

Please note that, if none of the submitted bids for any one component of this research programme are found to be technically acceptable, M&C Saatchi World Services reserves the right not to accept any of the received proposals and re-advertise the Terms of Reference for those particular components.

Any questions with regard to the scope of work before the submission deadline should be sent to Klara Debeljak, Director of Research, at Klara.debeljak@mcsaatchi.com. All pre-submission communication regarding the proposal must be made via this e-mail address only.

Deadline: 21 March 2016 by 13:00hrs GMT+2