

## Call for Expressions of Interest

### Strategic Purchasing for Primary Care - Building Capacity for Results at the Regional and Global Level

Strategic Purchasing Africa Resource Center (SPARC)

December 2017

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The past 20 years has seen unprecedented financial commitment to health among governments of low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). However, mobilizing government resources is not enough to increase access to services and improve health outcomes across all population groups. These funds must be directed to priority populations, interventions, and services, as well as used efficiently to deliver high-quality care and prevention.

Strategic health purchasers use information and policy levers to decide which interventions, services, and medicines to buy, from which providers, using which contracting and payment methods to encourage efficient behaviors and decisions among both providers and service users. When implemented well, strategic purchasing can generate efficiency gains and free up resources to cover a larger share of the population with more generous service packages and greater financial protection.

As interest in and experience with strategic purchasing grows in LMICs, there is an opportunity for a more regionally-owned model for providing strategic purchasing support that harnesses and deploys Africa-based expertise, and brings in on-the-ground experience with the process of change, institution-building, and management of the political economy challenges inherent in strategic purchasing reforms.

To support these efforts, we are pleased to announce the launch of the new *Strategic Purchasing for Primary Care – Building Capacity for Results at the Regional and Global Levels* project funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to establish a Strategic Purchasing Africa Resource Center (SPARC) housed in an existing Africa-based institution. The SPARC will be supported by implementing partner Results for Development (R4D) – a leading non-profit global development partner with established technical expertise in strategic health purchasing and mature administrative and financial capabilities. With this call for expressions of interest, we invite existing Africa based institutions interested in serving as the institutional home for the SPARC to submit an application for consideration.

#### Project Background

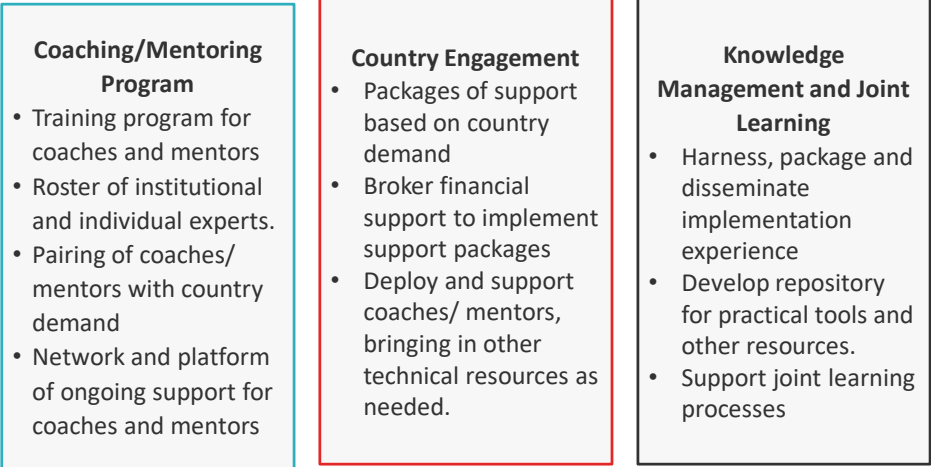
This project aims to establish and launch the SPARC, which will introduce a new model of supporting countries in sub-Saharan Africa to overcome technical, institutional, and political economy obstacles in implementing effective strategic purchasing and “graduate” to higher levels of maturity in purchasing. The SPARC, which will be housed within an existing Africa-based institution, is envisioned to serve as a “go-to” resource for strategic purchasing demands in Africa. Countries will be able to approach the SPARC with their strategic purchasing needs and the SPARC will broker access to packages of assistance that will primarily leverage Africa-based expertise, complemented by global expertise and resources. To develop a strong pipeline of Africa-based experts (individuals

and institutions) in strategic purchasing, the SPARC will invest heavily in building the capacity of regional experts to provide technical support, process facilitation, and guidance to navigate both technical and political economy challenges in strategic purchasing. As a platform that will link different local, regional, and global actors working in the strategic purchasing space, the SPARC will also aim to improve cohesion in responding to country’s strategic purchasing demands.

**Objectives**

The primary objective of the SPARC is to support countries in sub-Saharan Africa overcome technical, institutional, and political economy obstacles to implementing effective strategic purchasing by creating a vibrant network of experts across the region who are supporting and implementing strategic health purchasing, and providing this network with crucial high-quality technical resources and create solutions to navigate political economy challenges.

The SPARC will be built around three main functions (Figure ): (1) Coaching/mentoring program to build and support capacity in the region for technical experts and process facilitators to assist countries to implement strategic purchasing approaches based on demand; (2) Country engagement to link to coaches/mentors and technical nodes with country demand and design packages of support to meet that demand; and (3) Knowledge management and joint learning to harness, package and disseminate practical implementation experience.



Specifically, SPARC will:

- Support effective “agenda-setting” to drive coherent learning and dissemination of collective purchasing knowledge across multiple platforms (e.g. the African Collaborative on Health Financing Solutions, WHO, JLN, COPs).
- Partner with existing regional institutions and initiatives to gather intelligence about countries that have prioritized strategic purchasing reforms and their specific needs, constantly assessing demand, particularly political economy challenges.
- Create a platform for Africa-based experts (individuals and institutions) to access training and skills development to serve as strategic purchasing process coaches and technical mentors, network and learn

from each other, build demand for their services, and receive support during country engagement providing packages of assistance on strategic purchasing based on country demand.

- Develop a capacity-building program to build understanding and expertise in health financing and strategic purchasing among current and future policymakers and practitioners
- Maintain a roster of strategic health purchasing experts (individuals and institutions) both within the region and globally, and serve as a broker to pair experts with country technical assistance needs;
- Link institutions and individuals in regions implementing strategic purchasing, as well as policy makers who influence strategic purchasing decisions, to on-the-ground resources, knowledge products and training materials grounded in implementation reality;
- Create linkages between Africa-based purchasing agencies and purchasing agencies in “resource countries” with mature purchasing functions, such as Chile’s Fonasa, Estonia’s Health Insurance Fund, South Korea’s HIRA, and Thailand’s National Health Security Office.
- Develop demand-driven packages of support for strategic purchasing at the country level that pair policymakers and practitioners with coaches that provide process facilitation and bring in technical resources as needed
- Collect and manage regional and global evidence, knowledge products, tools and guides to support the development and implementation of strategic purchasing policies.

The SPARC will be housed within an existing Africa-based institution with strategic linkages to regional and global partners. The SPARC will be linked to “technical nodes” to inject bottom-up and cutting-edge implementation experience into the joint learning process. The technical nodes will be either government implementing agencies or their partners, academic institutions, or NGOs that can provide specific implementation-related contributions or capacity-building. As such, government implementing agencies may be both the recipients and providers of technical support and coaching.

Strong partnerships will be built with global and regional partners to ensure coherence in demand identification, country engagement, capacity-building and regional learning and dissemination. In identifying these potential partnerships, the R4D team will work closely with the USAID-funded African Collaborative for Health Financing Solutions, which is currently undertaking a thorough landscaping of global and regional partners supporting health financing in sub-Saharan Africa and an extensive on-the-ground consultation phase to understand country demand for health financing support.

### **Role of the Africa-Based Institution:**

Along with delivering on the aforementioned activities, interested institutions will be expected to integrate the SPARC into existing operations and functions. In addition, the prospective institution is also expected to partner with R4D to fully develop the SPARC operational model, technical expertise and sustainability plan for full financial and operational transition of the SPARC to the home institution, which includes sharing of financial, administrative and technical functions.

## Instructions and Deadline for Submission

To submit an Expression of Interest, prospective institutions should prepare a 2-3 page document that:

- Summarizes your organization's background, interest in the opportunity, and core competencies
- Highlights past-experience implementing similar activities (UHC, health financing, capacity building, developing training programs, process facilitation, network building knowledge management/ joint learning, etc.)
- Describes why your organization is best placed to serve as the SPARC.
- List out existing and/or past partnerships and clients and briefly describe partnership (include as annex)
- Identifies a contact person, including name, title, phone number/Skype name, and email.

The SPARC team will review all Expressions of Interest. We welcome interest from all Africa-based institutions that meet the necessary qualifications. Please submit your Expression of Interest to [dgaye@r4d.org](mailto:dgaye@r4d.org) by **January 9, 2018**. Short-listed organizations will be invited to participate in a comprehensive Request for Proposal (RFP) process which will include assessment of technical, operational, and administrative/financial capabilities. All Expressions of Interest will be reviewed and decisions communicated by February 2, 2018.

## Evaluation Criteria

Prospective institutions should meet the following criteria:

- Must be an existing Africa based institution
- Strong reputation within development community (governments, donors, civil society) across sub-Saharan Africa at both the regional and country-levels
- Competence in capacity-building, facilitation
- Possess sub-Saharan Africa geographic and linguistic reach
- Credibility and capacity to convene/coordinate across Africa
- Track record in specific technical areas (UHC, health financing, strategic purchasing, etc.)