



## Terms of Reference

### **Systematic Literature Review: Locally available foods and dietary-based interventions associated with improved health outcomes for People Living with HIV (PLHIV)**

#### **1. ABOUT TICAH**

Trust for Indigenous Culture and Health (TICAH) is a cultural organization that promotes holistic health and community action. We dream of safe and just societies where barriers to equitable health and social outcomes are removed, rights are realized, holistic health is attained, and the beauty of culture and diversity is celebrated. Our definition of health recognizes the links between health, values and culture, the role of art in communication and the elevation of marginalized voices and ideas, that there is much to be gained by engaging with our traditional cultures, that access to quality health information, services is critical, and the power of nutrition and herbs in overall wellness cannot be overlooked.

Our priority areas are Gender Justice, Climate Justice, and Holistic Health. TICAH's 4 programs are:

- **Art for Connection & Healing:** Working with artists and through arts practices to build community, activate and revitalize public spaces, raise marginalized voices, and find healing and wellness.
- **Healthy Households:** working with households to stay healthy and prevent illness by incorporating practical, affordable, and sustainable practices by focusing on food and herbal remedies.
- **Indigenous Knowledge and Culture:** Working closely with cultural practitioners and elders to bring positive indigenous knowledge and culture into holistic health and solving community challenges.
- **Our Bodies, Our Choice:** A sexual reproductive health program encouraging more honest and healthy approaches to sexual life through curricula, training, peer discussions and a hotline.

#### **2. CONTEXT AND BACKGROUND TO THE ASSIGNMENT**

Nutrition is key to the prevention and management of diseases. In the case of HIV, studies have found that people living with HIV (PLHIV) who regularly eat healthy food in the right amounts

can better tolerate HIV drugs, maintain a healthy weight, and feel better overall. Malnutrition leads to further immune-deficiency and accelerates disease progression.

In the face of the global epidemic of diet-related chronic disease among PLHIV and the general population, there is increased experimentation with the use of foods and diet-based interventions to prevent, manage, and treat illness. These interventions are clinically based and medically tailored, and some are part of naturopathy and holistic medicine practice.

Integrating these and other emerging nutrition interventions into HIV management and primary healthcare (PHC) would require significant investment in rigorous research to test different approaches and address knowledge gaps. In response, TICAH in collaboration with the National AIDS and STI Control Program (NASCO), would like to commission a systematic literature review on ‘The effectiveness of locally available foods and dietary-based interventions associated with improved health outcomes for PLHIV.’

### **3. PURPOSE OF ASSIGNMENT**

The proposed systematic review will seek to synthesize research findings to show evidence that can influence HIV/Nutrition policy and practice, uncover the state of knowledge on this topic and identify areas in which more research is needed. This systematic review will require a flexible mixed methods approach to answer questions about ‘what works, but also ‘how’ or ‘why’ these foods and interventions work. This will draw from a wide range of documentation, including (1) experimental and quasi-experimental studies for evidence of impact and effectiveness; (2) associated project documents, HIV & Nutrition care project evaluations and other qualitative studies for evidence of effectiveness.

#### **Specific Objective for the Assignment:**

To undertake and support a systematic literature review on locally available foods and dietary-based interventions associated with improved health outcomes for PLHIV.

### **4. SCOPE OF WORK**

The consultant/s working in close collaboration with the research team that will include TICAH and NASCO staff, subject-matter experts, and other research partners, and will be responsible for defining the scope, production of the systematic review. Additional technical advisory support in evidence synthesis and knowledge management, linked to the consultants' sectoral knowledge, is required to produce related products upon request. Specifically, the consultant will be expected to:

- Lead the research team in clarifying the rationale and objective of the review.
- Lead the research team in defining the eligibility criteria, identifying databases and key terms of literature search, defining processes and tools for study selection, quality

assessment and data extraction, identifying data items to be extracted and data synthesis methods.

- Conduct a literature review to identify proven, effective locally available foods and food-based interventions to improve health outcomes of PLHIV that are consistent with current standards for literature searching, risk of bias appraisal, and (especially) quantitative synthesis and qualitative synthesis.
- Submit a draft report of literature review findings for review by research partners.
- Present the study report for validation by other external stakeholders.
- Submit the final report incorporating any feedback from research partners.
- Communicate effectively with research partners and colleagues to execute the production of the systematic review, enhance communication, manage knowledge and potential utilization of the final product, and fulfil contract requirements.

## **5. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES**

It is expected that through this assignment, the consultant will produce the following deliverables:

- An Inception report detailing the methodology, including critical search criteria, sources of information and methods for systematic review.
- The final systematic literature review report identifies and provides evidence of the efficacy of locally available foods functional for dietary-based interventions associated with improved health outcomes for PLHIV.

## **6. WORKPLAN AND BUDGET**

The systematic review will be undertaken from August 2024 to November 2024 (from inception to report delivery). During this time, the consultant is expected to work up to 29 days (contract level of effort).

The scope of work above is broken down into key activities, with the total number of days required to deliver each:

Description of activities	Level of Effort
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Attend a briefing meeting with TICAH and NASCOP to clarify the expectations from the assignment.	1 day
Brief the research committee on the expectations of the assignment and clarify the research objective and scope	1 day
Define the methodology for the study, as well as the tools and other necessary materials.	2 days
Develop an inception report with proposed methodology, list of stakeholders to be consulted, draft tools, foreseen limitations, risk matrix and proposed work plan	2 days
Presentation of the Inception report to the research team	1 day
Review of literature, data synthesis and drafting of the report	15 days
Presentation of the draft report and summary of findings to TICAH, NASCOP and research committee	1 day
Review of the draft report based on feedback.	3 days
Present the study report for validation by other external stakeholders.	1 day
Incorporate comments from TICAH and NASCOP partners and submit final report.	2 days

## 7. DURATION AND REMUNERATION

The Consultant/s in discussion with TICAH will agree to a suitable timeline and schedule for the assignment. The consultancy is expected to last 29 paid days.

The interested individual(s) or firms will offer daily fees based on prevailing market rates. TICAH will arrange accommodation and transportation for any field or conferencing activity, and TICAH's rates will be applicable in cases where allowances may be paid. The consultant will cover insurance and tax.

## 8. APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

TICAH aims to contract a research scholar on a consultancy basis. Key qualifications include:

- Research Scholar with experience conducting systematic literature reviews, preferably a PhD holder attached to a research institute or university.
- Knowledge in HIV and Nutrition programming, especially management of Advanced HIV Disease (AHD) and chronic illnesses among PLHIV.
- Previous experience in implementing Nutrition and HIV work and conducting related research assignments.
- Familiarity with data structure and functions of bibliographic and specialized databases and access to electronic bibliographic databases.
- Experience in technical and methodological issues of searching.
- Knowledge of and experience in information retrieval.
- Strong skills in analyzing and drawing conclusions based on information presented
- Organization of substantial amounts of quantitative and qualitative data/ information
- Familiarity with major credible players, including multilateral, bilateral, and NGO practitioners, and academia and research bodies that generate knowledge in HIV, nutrition, and diet-based interventions.

## **9. SUBMISSION OF PROPOSAL AND CONTACT**

The deadline for submission of expressions of interest is **Monday, 12th August 2024**.

The consultant shall submit applications and support documents for the application to undefined, [procurement@ticahealth.org](mailto:procurement@ticahealth.org) and copy the Senior Program Manager at [fanis@ticahealth.org](mailto:fanis@ticahealth.org). Please indicate **TICAH/08/024 - Food as Medicine Research** on the email subject.

The consultant shall make inquiries to the Senior Program Manager at [fanis@ticahealth.org](mailto:fanis@ticahealth.org).