

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR POLICY CULTURES STUDY

Background

There is a growing discussion in the policy community about the need for sound evidence to inform policy making with varied terminologies and concepts¹. However, in most parts of Africa, the policymaking process is largely dominated by contextual forces such as politics, ideology, budgetary and resource availability as opposed to the best available evidence². Policy makers often rely on values, experience, and political expediency without recourse to evidence resulting in a mismatch between evidence informed policy making and actual evidence use in policy making leading to weak or inadequate policy uptake. There is a general agreement in the policy making and research communities that the policy making process has a culture – an enduring pattern of “how things are done”³. This culture includes the values and practices that hold policy makers and policy making together in a nation state. While on face value policy cultures may be interpreted to mean shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and practices that influence public policies outcomes, there is no consensus on its true definition due to the numerous issues around the way it is characterized.

Defining policy cultures has become the challenge of an emergent subset of public policy, namely, the politics and analysis of problem definition. It deals with “what we choose to identify as public issues and how we think and talk about these concerns⁴. In summary, there is no known dominant policy culture that can be relied upon by policymakers to solve a particular policy issue. Given this reality, PASGR commissioned a two-phase study to explore the policy culture as it exists and practiced in specific sectors around which it has organized Utafiti Sera⁵ House⁶. Utafiti Sera is an innovative approach that supports, builds and enhances a community of researchers and policy actors working together to ensure that appropriate and negotiated policy actions and uptake occur either through programmes, legislations, high quality policy debates, policy design or administrative and other forms of civic actions around issues for which there is either research evidence or rigorous synthesis of available knowledge. Utafiti Sera approach integrates rigorous research and evidence creation with active advocacy and influencing to enhance evidence uptake. The approach is responsive to both national, sectoral, and regional level policy engagement with the aim of informing, advocating for and contributing to appropriate and relevant policies and programmes.

Since its inception in 2015, PASGR’s Utafiti Sera Houses have been implementing projects that addresses pertinent policy issues of national interests within African countries. The Utafiti Sera

¹ J. N. Orem, D. K. Mafigiri, B. Marchal, F. Ssengooba, J. Macq, and B. Criel, "Research, evidence and policymaking: the perspectives of policy actors on improving uptake of evidence in health policy development and implementation in Uganda," *BMC Public Health*, vol. 12, pp. 1-16, 2012.

² J. Sohn, "Navigating the politics of evidence-informed policymaking: strategies of influential policy actors in Ontario," *Palgrave Communications*, vol. 4, no. 1, 2018.

³ S. Akoth, M. Atela, R. Lawrence, and J. Schechla, "Policy culture: Conceptual framing and study methodology. Working Paper. PASGR.2022.," PASGR, 2022.

⁴ D. A. Rochefort and R. W. Cobb, "Problem definition, agenda access, and policy choice," *Policy studies journal*, vol. 21, no. 1, pp. 56-71, 1993.

⁵ The Swahili phrase for Research Policy was coined creating a platform for knowledge sharing and engagement on policy issues

⁶ The concept of a house is used to represent a place, forum and a vehicle for shared knowledge and experiences to enhance research evidence uptake

Houses include; Urban Governance and City Transformation in Kenya; Urban Governance and City Transformation in Rwanda; Youth Employment Creation in Kenya; Action for Empowerment and Accountability (A4EA) in Nigeria; Social Protection in Africa; Water Governance in Kenya; African Youth Aspirations and Resilience (AYAR) in Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda and Kenya; Accountability for Water (AfW) in Kenya, Tanzania and Ethiopia; and Universal Health Coverage in Zambia.

The first phase of the study explored the method that would be used in policy culture studies. The study examined common practices and trends characterising policy making practices in on housing (slum upgrading in Kenya), urbanization and housing in Rwanda, electricity in Nigeria.; and the disconnect between the research process and policy making that hinders the uptake of evidence in policy making. The study established that evidence uptake in policy making is complicated by amongst other fact that policymaking process is not homogenous but non-linear crowded with many competing interests frustrating the uptake of evidence⁷. Policymaking terrain is always unpredictable with many actors interacting at various stages (formulation, implementation and evaluation) with a view to control the policy outcomes. In this terrain, policymakers have limited control or no control at all on the outcome and therefore unable to settle on the best evidence that can offer the best solution to the societal problem. On methodology, the study observed that policy making should be done at a convergence of interdisciplinary research; action research and participatory research as prerequisite conditions for transdisciplinary contributions that address complex societal challenges such as housing and urban planning.

Building on the findings from Phase I, PASGR is designing a more comprehensive policy cultures study to document the dominant policy cultures in the policy making processes in Africa. PASGR is inviting proposals from qualified experts in public policy and governance to conduct this study (rapid research-to-policy study).

Objectives of the study

The aim of the study is to examine the nature of policy cultures in the policy making process across selected three African countries (Kenya, Rwanda and Nigeria) where PASGR's Utafiti Sera houses operate. In so doing, the study also aims to unpack the opportunities and constraints to evidence uptake in policy making.

Research Questions

1. What policy cultures are dominant in the policy making process in Africa?
2. How does evidence uptake, as framed by the Utafiti Sera house model, fit for policy making in targeted African countries?
3. What specific institutional design and governance objectives enhance evidence uptake in Africa?
4. What best practices and other programming actions/actors in the sectors with Utafiti Sera House models could guide policy culture framing in Africa?

⁷ R. Geyer and P. Cairney, Handbook on complexity and public policy. Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015.

Scope of the study

The study will examine common practices (nature) and trends characterising policy making practices in Africa with focus on **Kenya, Rwanda and Nigeria** with specific interest in Utafiti Sera thematic areas namely youth employment creation, urban governance, water governance, food systems transformation, action for empowerment and accountability, Africa youth aspirations and resilience, and social protection policies.

The scope of this study includes the following activities;

- a) Conducting comprehensive scoping review on policy cultures prevalent in the African policy making process.
- b) Designing a comprehensive study methodology clearly indicating approaches, data collection tools and platforms.
- c) Documenting the research ethical approval process (actors, costs, and time etc) for obtaining the research ethics/permit approval certificate in the three countries.
- d) Piloting of the data collection tools, conducting field data collection, data cleaning analysis in the three countries and developing country reports.
- e) Developing a policy brief and a synthesis paper/journal paper based on the findings of the study.

Duration of the study

This study will take a maximum of six months.

Qualifications and requirements

The Consultant or team selected to conduct this study should possess the following qualifications:

- a) We prefer a PhD with more than 5 years' experience (or Master's degree with 8 years' experience) in any of the following Social Science fields; Political Science, Governance, Public Policy, Economics, Anthropology, Gender Studies, Development Studies or other related fields.
- b) Demonstrated experience in conducting research to inform evidence-informed policy making in developing countries based on sample of past research outputs.
- c) Previous work experience with PASGR research will be an added advantage.
- d) In-depth knowledge of governance, political economy analysis, policy review process and other related thematic areas of the Utafiti Sera Houses.
- e) Proven ability to develop and maintain effective relationships, networking, and partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders including donors and civil society.

Application Procedure

Interested consultants are invited to submit their technical and financial proposals in English via the email address bids@pasgr.org and copy research@pasgr.org.

Technical proposals

The technical proposal shall include:

- a) A detailed work plan and timelines: This should be a detailed plan of all activities and strategy to deliver the assignment in less than 6 months.
- b) Verifiable proof of previous engagements in similar assignments
- c) Individual Profile or Company Profile outlining experience and expertise in Policy Research.

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- d) Certificate of incorporation of the company if applicant is a company.
- e) Proposed team members, qualifications and their corresponding level of expertise (CVs) citing relevant experience in conducting similar activities. CV should not be more than 5 pages.

Financial Proposal

A budget breakdown for proposed costs for all tasks and logistics requirement for delivering this assignment inclusive of taxes

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- a) Relevant experience and qualifications.
- b) Clarity and comprehensiveness of the project plan.
- c) Cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget.
- d) References and past performance.

The closing date for this tender is **February 7, 2025 at 5:00 pm EAT.**

The shortlisted candidate will be invited to make presentations for the final selection and may be invited to submit modifications where necessary.

Contact Information

For inquiries, kindly send an email to research@pasgr.org