



KUHeS-JOHNS HOPKINS RESEARCH PROJECT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE KUHeS-JOHNS HOPKINS RESEARCH PROJECT TO DEVELOP ITS FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2027-2031

JHP/2026/C/01

23 JULY 2026

TO: ALL INTERESTED CONSULTANTS

RE: INVITATION FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO SUPPORT THE KUHeS-JOHNS HOPKINS RESEARCH PROJECT TO DEVELOP ITS FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

1. JHP is an established clinical research site at Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital in Blantyre, Malawi, and a research affiliate of Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS). It partners with Johns Hopkins University (USA), the Malawi Ministry of Health, and other institutions. JHP has supported clinical trials and other public health research since 1988. JHP is developing a Strategic Plan to guide its scientific direction, sustainability, growth, and impact over the next five years. The Plan will address research portfolio development, funding diversification, partnerships, governance, human resources, operational systems, infrastructure, risk, performance, and implementation. The process will be externally led by the consultant, supported by the JHP Strategic Plan Development Steering Committee, and institutionally owned by JHP and its relevant partners.
2. You are requested to submit a Technical Proposal and a Financial Proposal by Friday, 7 August 2026, at or before 16:30 hours Malawi time. Each proposal shall be enclosed in a separate sealed envelope and clearly marked “TECHNICAL PROPOSAL” and “FINANCIAL PROPOSAL,” respectively. The two envelopes shall be enclosed in one outer envelope marked “Consultancy Services to Develop the JHP Strategic Plan 2027-2031” and delivered to: The Chairperson, Procurement Evaluation Committee, Johns Hopkins Research Project, Off Chipatala Avenue, Queen Elizabeth Central Hospital Grounds, P.O. Box 1131, Blantyre, Malawi. Email: procurement@jhp.mw
3. The Technical Proposal must demonstrate the consultant’s qualifications to perform the services and should include an understanding of the assignment, proposed methodology, relevant experience in comparable assignments, consultant qualifications or team composition, a detailed work plan, curriculum vitae of the consultant or proposed key experts, at least three references, and examples or extracts of comparable strategic planning work. The Financial Proposal must state a lump-sum price, with applicable taxes and reimbursable expenses clearly identified.
4. Proposals will be evaluated using the criteria shown in the Terms of Reference. The Terms of Reference, proposed contract form and integrity undertaking for the assignment are attached.
5. Requests for clarification must be submitted in writing by Friday, 31 July 2026, to info@jhp.mw and marked for the attention of the Chairperson of the JHP Strategic Plan Development Steering Committee.

Yours faithfully,



Dalitso Ngwalo

Chief Operating Officer and Chairperson, Strategic Plan Development Steering Committee

SECTION I: INSTRUCTIONS TO CONSULTANTS

1. This invitation package includes the following documents:
 - SECTION I: Instructions to Consultants
 - SECTION II: Terms of Reference
 - SECTION III: Proposed Contract Agreement Form
 - SECTION IV: Integrity Undertaking
2. The assignment period is expected to run from 24 August 2026 to 16 October 2026. The consultant must be available to begin the assignment on 24 August 2026 and to complete all final deliverables by 16 October 2026.
3. The consultant is expected to submit: comments on the Terms of Reference; an understanding of the assignment;
a concise methodology and approach; relevant experience on similar assignments, including the client's name, contract amount, dates, and contact information; consultant qualifications or team composition; the consultant's curriculum vitae and the proposed key experts' curriculum vitae; a detailed work plan; professional references; and a separate Financial Proposal.
4. **The Technical Proposal must not include financial information.** A Technical Proposal that includes material financial information may be deemed non-responsive.
5. The Financial Proposal shall be submitted as a lump sum and shall include all professional fees and reimbursable expenses. Applicable taxes shall be shown separately.
6. Technical Proposals will be evaluated independently of Financial Proposals. Financial Proposals shall remain sealed until the technical evaluation is complete. Only consultants who earn at least 60 of the available 80 technical points will proceed to financial evaluation.
7. The consultant with the highest combined technical and financial score will be invited to contract negotiations. If no agreement is reached, JHP may invite the next-highest-ranked consultant to negotiate.
8. The consultant shall bear the cost of any insurance, medical examination, travel documentation, or other personal requirements necessary to perform the assignment, unless an expense is expressly included in the contract.
9. The proposal must be received at the designated location for proposals no later than Friday, 7 August 2026, at 16:30 hours Malawi time. Late proposals will not be considered.
10. The consultant shall complete and submit the Integrity Undertaking in Section IV.
11. JHP reserves the right, subject to applicable internal procedures, to accept or reject any proposal, cancel the selection process, or reject all proposals before contract award, without incurring liability to the consultants.

SECTION II: TERMS OF REFERENCE

CONSULTANCY SERVICES TO DEVELOP THE KUHeS-JOHNS HOPKINS RESEARCH PROJECT FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN 2027-2031

1. Purpose

The purpose of these Terms of Reference is to engage a consultant to lead and facilitate the development of a practical, evidence-based and implementable five-year Strategic Plan for the KUHeS-Johns Hopkins Research Project for 2027-2031.

2. Background

The Johns Hopkins Research Project (JHP) is an established clinical research site based in Blantyre, Malawi, and a research affiliate of Kamuzu University of Health Sciences (KUHeS). JHP works within a long-standing collaboration involving KUHeS, Johns Hopkins University, the Malawi Ministry of Health, research networks, funders, health facilities, regulators and communities

JHP has substantial capacity in clinical research, laboratory services, pharmacy, data and information technology, quality management, grants and finance, human resources, procurement, administration, and community engagement. The changing research and funding environment, increasing competition, rising operating costs, regulatory expectations, and the macroeconomic environment have created the need for a clear institutional strategy.

Management approved the development of the Strategic Plan, and staff was informed of the process. A Strategic Plan Development Steering Committee has been established to coordinate and support the process. The external consultant will lead the technical work and report to the Committee.

3. Objective of the Assignment

The objective is to develop JHP's five-year Strategic Plan for 2027-2031. The Plan will be used to:

- a. Remain scientifically relevant and responsive to global and Malawi's health priorities and to the evolving clinical research environment;
- b. Guide sustainable growth, diversify funding, build partnerships, and use resources efficiently;
- c. Clarify JHP's mission, vision, strategic priorities, institutional positioning, and major strategic choices;
- d. Establish a basis for implementation, accountability, monitoring, evaluation, learning, and periodic review; and
- e. Align scientific ambitions with governance, workforce, infrastructure, operational systems, risk management, and financial sustainability.

4. Scope of Work

The consultant will serve as the technical lead and facilitator for the strategic planning process. The assignment will be conducted in collaboration with the JHP Strategic Plan Development Steering Committee. The Committee will provide oversight, institutional guidance, access to information and stakeholders, review of deliverables, and consolidated feedback. The consultant will undertake the following tasks:

- a. Develop an inception report and detailed strategic planning process plan, including the methodology, work plan, stakeholder engagement plan, consultation tools, document and data requirements, responsibilities, reporting arrangements and review schedule.
- b. Conduct a desk review of JHP's establishment and institutional mandate; KUHeS, Johns Hopkins University and Ministry of Health arrangements; governance and structure; research portfolio and pipeline; study performance; quality and compliance; community engagement; finances; staffing and capabilities; laboratory, pharmacy, data and information technology; procurement; infrastructure; policies, risks and previous reports.
- c. Conduct an internal and external situational analysis using appropriate tools. The analysis should identify the strategic problems JHP must solve and the choices it must make.
- d. Conduct purposeful consultations with JHP staff and functional teams, KUHeS, the JHU (USA) CTU Principal Investigators, the Ministry of Health, relevant regulators and ethics bodies, the Community Advisory Board, and other partners.
- e. Facilitate structured strategic planning work sessions with the Steering Committee and relevant stakeholders.
- f. Facilitate agreement on the strategic direction and clear strategic pillars, including decisions on what JHP should protect, strengthen, grow, stop or phase down.
- g. Develop the content of the five-year Strategic Plan, including an implementation matrix; a monitoring, evaluation, and learning framework; a financial sustainability and resource mobilization framework; a risk register and mitigation framework; governance and accountability arrangements; and a first-year annual action plan.
- h. Prepare and present the first and second drafts, facilitate internal and external validation, maintain a feedback matrix, revise the drafts based on authorized decisions, and submit the final Strategic Plan and supporting products by 16 October 2026.

5. Timeframe and Indicative Work Plan

The consultant must be available to commence the assignment on 24 August 2026 and complete it by 16 October 2026. The proposal shall include a detailed work plan showing the consultant's level of effort and how activities will be completed within the assignment period.

6. Expected Deliverables

The consultant is expected to produce a coherent set of outputs covering the full strategic planning process, from inception and organizational assessment to strategy formulation, validation, and finalization. All deliverables will be submitted to the JHP Strategic Plan Development Steering Committee through the Chairperson for review, feedback, and acceptance. The consultant will incorporate the Committee's consolidated comments before proceeding to subsequent stages.

The expected deliverables are:

- a. **Inception Report and Detailed Work Plan** outlining the consultant's understanding of the assignment, proposed methodology, consultation approach, scheduled work sessions, information requirements, quality-assurance measures, and assignment risks.
- b. **Situational Analysis Report** presenting findings from the desk review, institutional assessment, environmental analyses, stakeholder analysis, organizational capability assessment, research

portfolio review, funding and sustainability analysis, partnership assessment, and strategic risk analysis.

- c. **Stakeholder Consultation Report** summarizing the stakeholders consulted, methods used, principal findings, areas of consensus and disagreement, stakeholder expectations, and implications for JHP's strategic direction.
- d. **Strategic Direction Framework** outlining the proposed mission, vision, values, strategic positioning, critical strategic issues, strategic priorities or pillars, objectives, and expected results.
- e. **First Draft Five-Year Strategic Plan** incorporating the approved strategic direction, priorities, objectives, proposed interventions, implementation arrangements, key performance indicators, risks, and resource implications.
- f. **Validation Report** documenting the validation process, stakeholders involved, comments received, decisions made by the Steering Committee, and revisions required to the draft Strategic Plan.
- g. **Final Five-Year Strategic Plan**, incorporating approved stakeholder and Steering Committee feedback, presented in a professionally edited, publication-ready format.
- h. **Five-Year Implementation Plan** outlining strategic objectives, key initiatives, responsibilities, implementation sequencing, performance indicators, indicative resource requirements, risks, and mitigation measures.
- i. **Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning Framework** containing indicators, baselines where available, targets, data sources, reporting responsibilities, reporting frequency, review arrangements, and mechanisms for organizational learning and adaptation.
- j. **Strategic Risk Register** identifying the principal institutional, scientific, financial, operational, regulatory, partnership, and implementation risks, along with proposed mitigation measures and risk owners.
- k. **Annual Operational Plan for the First Year of Implementation**, translating the Strategic Plan into prioritized activities, expected outputs, responsibilities, indicators, and indicative costs.
- l. **Final Presentation and Supporting Materials** comprising an executive presentation of the Strategic Plan, editable versions of all final documents, consultation tools, workshop materials, stakeholder register, and other relevant working documents produced during the assignment.

7. Consultant Requirements and Qualifications

JHP is seeking a consultant with the following qualifications and experience:

- a. At least a master's degree in strategic management, business administration, organizational development, public health, health systems management, or relevant fields.
- b. At least eight years of relevant professional or consulting experience, including substantial direct experience in organizational strategy and institutional development.
- c. A proven record of successfully leading at least three comparable strategic planning assignments, supported by references, examples, or extracts from previous work.
- d. Demonstrated experience in clinical research, public health, universities, research institutions, externally-funded organizations, or international research partnerships. Experience in Malawi or a comparable African setting is highly desirable.
- e. Strong facilitation, stakeholder engagement, consensus-building, analytical, report-writing, and presentation skills, including the ability to facilitate both in-person and virtual sessions.

- f. Ability to analyze scientific, operational, financial, human resources, governance, partnership, and risk information and translate it into a practical strategy.
- g. Availability to commence on 24 August 2026 and to complete the assignment by 16 October 2026.
- h. When a team is proposed, the proposal must identify the lead consultant, the qualifications and responsibilities of each key expert, and each expert's level of effort. The lead consultant must personally facilitate the principal work sessions. Replacement of key experts requires prior written approval from JHP.

8. Services to be Provided by JHP

JHP, through the Strategic Plan Development Steering Committee, will provide:

- a. Relevant institutional, scientific, operational, financial, human-resource and partnership documents and available data;
- b. Access to designated staff and stakeholders;
- c. Coordination of meetings, invitations, venues and approved virtual consultations;
- d. Support in scheduling engagements with KUHeS, the Baltimore Clinical Trials Unit, core Principal Investigators and other stakeholders;
- e. Consolidated feedback on submitted deliverables; and
- f. Reasonable administrative and logistical support necessary for performance of the assignment.

9. Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated in two stages: technical evaluation, followed by financial evaluation. Financial Proposals will remain sealed until the technical evaluation is complete. Only consultants scoring at least 60 of 80 technical points will proceed to financial evaluation.

Evaluation criterion	Sub-criteria	Weight
Understanding of the Terms of Reference	Clarity of understanding of JHP's context, objectives, governance and expected outputs	5%
Methodology and approach	Evidence-based methodology; stakeholder engagement; analytical tools; validation; quality assurance	15%

Evaluation criterion	Sub-criteria	Weight
Relevant experience in conducting similar assignments	Comparable strategic planning assignments (20%); relevant clinical research/public health/university/research-institution context (10%); references and quality of previous outputs (10%)	40%
Consultant qualifications or team composition	Academic and professional qualifications; suitability of lead consultant/key experts; roles and level of effort	10%
Timeframe and work plan	Comprehensiveness, practicality, sequencing and ability to meet the 24 August-16 October schedule	10%
Technical subtotal		80%
Financial proposal	Evaluated lump-sum price. Financial score = lowest evaluated price / consultant's evaluated price x 20	20%
Total		100%

The consultant obtaining the highest combined technical and financial score will be ranked first and invited to negotiate the contract. Before award, JHP will conduct due diligence to verify the consultant's qualifications, availability, references, relevant assignments and proposed personnel. Contract award will be subject to satisfactory verification and successful completion of negotiations.

10. Payment Schedule

The assignment will be contracted on a lump-sum, deliverable-based basis. The indicative payment schedule is:

- a. 20% - final inception report and the detailed work plan;
- b. 30% - final situational analysis, the stakeholder consultation report, and the strategic direction framework; and
- c. 50% - final validation and approval of the Strategic Plan and all supporting materials.

SECTION III: PROPOSED CONTRACT AGREEMENT FORM

THIS CONTRACT AGREEMENT is made this [insert date] day of [insert month and year] between the KUHeS-Johns Hopkins Research Project, P.O. Box 1131, Blantyre, Malawi (hereinafter referred to as “the Client”) and [insert name and address of the Consultant] (hereinafter referred to as “the Consultant”).

WHEREAS the Client wishes the Consultant to provide consultancy services to lead the development of the JHP five-year Strategic Plan 2027-2031, and WHEREAS the Consultant is willing to provide the services.

The following documents shall form and be read as part of this Agreement:

- This Contract Agreement;
- The Client’s Notification of Award;
- The agreed Terms of Reference;
- The Consultant’s accepted Technical and Financial Proposals; and
- Minutes of the Contract Negotiation Meeting.

NOW THEREFORE the parties agree as follows:

1. Services	The Consultant shall perform the services and submit the deliverables specified in the agreed Terms of Reference. The Consultant shall provide the personnel identified in the accepted proposal, unless any replacement is approved in writing by the Client.
2. Term	The Consultant shall perform the services from 24 August 2026 through 16 October 2026, or such other period as may be agreed in writing by the parties.
3. Contract Price and Payment	For satisfactory performance of the services, the Client shall pay the Consultant a lump-sum amount of [insert amount in words and figures], inclusive of the Consultant’s costs and profit and subject to applicable taxes. Payments shall be made against approved deliverables in accordance with the agreed payment schedule.
4. Project Administration	The Client designates the Chairperson of the JHP Strategic Plan Development Steering Committee as the Client’s Coordinator. The Coordinator will manage formal communication, facilitate Committee review, consolidate feedback and communicate acceptance of deliverables and approval of invoices.

5. Performance Standards	The Consultant shall perform the services with the highest standards of professional and ethical competence, integrity, impartiality, diligence and quality.
6. Confidentiality	The Consultant shall not disclose proprietary, confidential, scientific, financial, personnel, participant, contractual or institutional information without the Client's prior written consent. This obligation shall survive expiry or termination of the Contract.
7. Ownership of Materials	All reports, tools, data summaries, presentations, frameworks, drafts and other materials prepared for the Client under the Contract shall belong to the Client.
8. Conflict of Interest	The Consultant shall disclose any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest and shall not undertake activities that compromise independence or objectivity in performing the services.
9. Insurance and Taxes	The Consultant shall be responsible for appropriate insurance and for taxes and statutory obligations applicable to the Consultant, except as otherwise expressly stated in the Contract.
10. Assignment and Subcontracting	The Consultant shall not assign the Contract or subcontract any material part of the services without the Client's prior written consent.
11. Governing Law and Language	The Contract shall be governed by the laws of Malawi. The language of the Contract and all reports shall be English.
12. Dispute Resolution	The parties shall first seek to resolve any dispute amicably through consultation. If the dispute is not resolved, it shall be dealt with in accordance with the laws of Malawi.
13. Termination	Either party may terminate the Contract for material breach after written notice and a reasonable opportunity to remedy the breach. The Client may also terminate for persistent delay, failure to meet quality requirements, misconduct, conflict of interest or breach of confidentiality.

14. Entire Agreement

This Contract and its listed documents constitute the entire agreement between the parties and may only be amended in writing and signed by authorised representatives of both parties.

SIGNED FOR AND ON BEHALF OF THE CLIENT:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Witness signature: _____

Name: _____

Occupation: _____

Date: _____

SIGNED BY THE CONSULTANT:

Signature: _____

Name: _____

Title: _____

Date: _____

Witness signature: _____

Name: _____

Occupation: _____

Date: _____

SECTION IV: INTEGRITY

UNDERTAKING BY CONSULTANT ON ANTI-BRIBERY, INTEGRITY AND CODE OF CONDUCT

I/We, [insert name of consultant], place importance on a competitive selection process that is fair, transparent, and free from abuse. I/We confirm that I/we will not, directly or indirectly, offer, give, solicit, or facilitate any improper inducement, payment, gift, reward, or advantage to any JHP or KUHeS officer, employee, Committee member, representative, relative, business associate, or other person in connection with this proposal or the subsequent performance of the Contract.

I/We further undertake to:

- Disclose any actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest;
- Provide accurate information about qualifications, experience, personnel, and previous assignments;
- Not improperly influence the proposal evaluation or the contract award process;
- Maintain the confidentiality of information received during the selection and assignment;
- Comply with applicable Malawian laws and relevant KUHeS-JHP integrity requirements; and
- Report any request for an improper payment, inducement, or advantage related to this procurement.

Name of Consultant: _____

Authorized Representative: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____