



Request for Proposal 2019-014
2020 Vaccines Against *Shigella* and ETEC (VASE) Conference
Meeting Organization, Logistics, and Management Support

I. Summary of Timeline

Release of Request for Proposal	June 10, 2019
Confirmation of interest due	June 17, 2019
Fact-finding questions received by	June 21, 2019
Response to fact-finding questions	June 27, 2019
Proposals due	July 3, 2019
Interviews with short-listed suppliers	July 12-16, 2019
Conclusion of process	July 22, 2019

II. PATH Statement of Business

PATH is a global organization that works to accelerate health equity by bringing together public institutions, businesses, social enterprises, and investors to solve the world’s most pressing health challenges. With expertise in science, health, economics, technology, advocacy, and dozens of other specialties, PATH develops and scales solutions—including vaccines, drugs, devices, diagnostics, and innovative approaches to strengthening health systems worldwide.

For more than 40 years, PATH has been a pioneer in translating bold ideas into breakthrough health solutions, with a focus on child survival, maternal and reproductive health, and infectious diseases. With headquarters in Seattle, Washington, PATH has 1,500+ employees and works in 70+ countries. For more information, please visit www.path.org.

III. Project Background and Purpose of RFP

A. Project background

PATH’s Center for Vaccine Innovation and Access (CVIA) brings together expertise across every stage of the long and complex process of vaccine research, development, and introduction to make lifesaving vaccines widely available to children and communities across the world. CVIA’s current portfolio encompasses more than two dozen vaccines either in development or already in use to protect against 17 different diseases, including diarrheal disease, malaria, meningitis, pneumonia and polio.

Under CVIA, PATH is working with U.S. and international partners to develop effective and affordable vaccines against enterotoxigenic *Escherichia coli* (ETEC) and *Shigella*. These bacteria are among the leading causes of diarrheal disease in infants and young children in low-resource settings, causing thousands of deaths each year. Currently, there are no licensed vaccines against either pathogen.

PATH is currently initiating planning for the 2020 Vaccines Against *Shigella* and ETEC (VASE) Conference, which will mark the third gathering of this biennial scientific meeting series. The VASE Conferences bring together an international audience of scientists, public health professionals, immunization leaders, vaccine industry representatives, donors, and other experts to discuss developing and introducing new enteric vaccines. The inaugural VASE Conference, held from June 28 to 30, 2016, in Washington, DC, had more than 250 attendees from approximately 30 countries. After receiving 71 abstract submissions, the final conference program included 23 oral and 32 poster abstract-based presentations.

The second VASE Conference was held from June 12 to 14, 2018, in Mexico City, Mexico. Given the international location, there were fewer attendees (nearly 200), though still representing approximately 30 countries. Conference abstract submissions increased by more than 20 percent, with 86 abstracts submitted. The final conference program included 22 oral and 57 poster abstract-based presentations. Both conference agendas also featured break-out workshop discussions on key topics for deeper discussions among smaller groups of attendees.

For more information on the 2016 and 2018 VASE Conferences, please visit:
www.vaseconference.org.

B. Purpose of this RFP

In this RFP, PATH is soliciting proposals from meetings management organizations to provide support for planning, organizing, and implementing the 2020 VASE Conference.

IV. Scope of Work

A. Overview of Conference

1. Objective and Structure

The objectives of this meeting are to:

- a) Encourage and support sharing of research developments across the ETEC and *Shigella* scientific community;
- b) Connect researchers with potential development partners or funding organizations;
- c) Build enthusiasm and engagement of public health organizations about the development of new enteric vaccines; and
- d) Broaden the scope of the VASE Conference to be more inclusive of other neglected enteric pathogens.

The conference format will be similar to the 2018 meeting and will feature a combination of abstract-based presentation sessions and keynote speakers that appeal broadly to the conference participants, as well as time and space for breakout sessions (i.e., workshops) and participant review of abstract-based poster presentations. The conference will also include a welcome reception during the evening of the first day of the meeting, ideally at the same venue/hotel as the conference.

2. Location and Timeline

We have selected Washington, DC as the site of the next VASE Conference, as we have envisioned this meeting series alternating between this location and an international site with each conference. The successful contractor will be expected to provide assistance with selecting a conference venue in Washington, DC, in collaboration with PATH.

We anticipate scheduling the conference either in the latter half of June 2020 or fall 2020, preferring a Tuesday to Thursday meeting (3 full days) with attendees arriving Sunday or Monday and departing on Thursday evening or Friday.

3. Attendees

We expect up to 300 participants, primarily from the scientific community, but also representatives from government and donor/funding organizations. We had a large local (i.e., from the Washington, DC area) presence at the 2016 VASE Conference, and we expect to have similar, if not increased, participation from this region in 2020.

In an effort to keep this meeting as accessible as possible, we do not charge a registration fee for the VASE Conference. In addition, we plan to cover and arrange travel for a number of attendees, either through PATH funds or sponsored travel from other organizations. The successful contractor will be expected to assist with the management of travel grant applications, which will be submitted through the conference website. Travel arrangements will be booked directly by PATH.

4. Organization

PATH is planning this conference with the guidance of two committees:

Organizing Committee: This committee determines the meeting objectives/goals and overall agenda and is the key decision-making body. The 2020 committee will be comprised of representatives from PATH and other key stakeholder organizations. (Some members will change from the previous conferences.) We will have the final committee in place by August 2019.

Scientific Advisory Committee: This committee reviews solicited abstracts, provides feedback, and recommends abstracts for oral or poster presentation. The 2020 committee will be comprised of a select group of scientists working actively in enteric vaccine development. (Some members will change from the previous conferences.) We will have the final committee in place by September 2019.

In addition to these committees, there are five key PATH staff members that work on logistics and planning for the VASE Conference. These individuals will be your main points of contact:

- a) Scientific/agenda lead
- b) Marketing/communications lead
- c) Logistics/implementation lead (2 staff)
- d) Finance and agreements lead

B. Required Services of Contractor

- Venue sourcing and contract negotiation
 - Identify short list of venues that match conference criteria and availability of target dates
 - Arrange site visits to potential venues
 - Negotiate directly with venues on PATH's behalf to secure appropriate package and pricing for contract (venue to contract directly with PATH)
- Meeting marketing and communications
 - Develop original content to advertise meeting to the target audience (e.g., email blasts to PATH's contact list for VASE, flyers, etc.)

- Prepare and print conference collateral (in collaboration with PATH communications team), including printed agendas, abstract booklet, signage, and other materials
- Distribute online communications to registrants via email (in collaboration with PATH communications team)
- Update and manage meeting website (<http://www.vaseconference.org>)
- Registration management
 - Manage registration of all attendees via an online conference management system and on-site registration
 - Manage online system for travel grant application submissions
 - Manage registration of attendees for specific break-out workshops to appropriately plan room space and layouts
- General logistics
 - Source contractors/vendors in compliance with PATH procurement policy and manage relationships with contractors/vendors, including venue/hotel, A/V company, poster board rentals, printers, and general suppliers
 - Identify, design, and order swag items (e.g., bags, water bottles)
 - Manage selection of all food and beverage for conference attendees, with input from PATH team
 - Provide on-site management during meeting
- Travel logistics
 - Organize local transportation for attendees (if needed)
 - Manage hotel bookings and maintain rooming list, including working with PATH to identify direct bill vs. self-pay attendees
 - Assist in collecting information for travel grant recipients and providing visa letters (PATH will book air travel for PATH employees and travel grant recipients)
- Conference content and speaker management
 - Identify potential opening keynote speaker(s) in collaboration with Organizing Committee and manage logistics of speaker (e.g., travel, contracts, etc.)
 - Manage online system for break-out workshop topic ideas
 - Develop or source and manage tool for abstract submission; tool should allow for collection of formatted abstracts (e.g., allow special characters) in a consistent manner that is easily accessible; tool will allow for generation of customizable reports of abstract entry content that can be used for decision-making; ideally tool will easily track regular vs. late-breaking abstract submissions as well as oral vs. poster presentations
 - Notify abstract submitters of status of their submission and next steps for their presentation, in collaboration with PATH staff; develop and manage robust tool for tracking abstract submissions status
 - Manage logistics of presentations and poster sessions (collect slides, ensure presenters are prepared)

- Ensure sufficient poster boards are ordered, delivered, and arranged to present posters throughout meeting
- Serve as “stage manager” during the event to ensure smooth meeting flow to/from stage and staff “mic runners” for Q&As during plenary sessions
- Work with venue contacts to ensure that slide presentations, microphones, etc. are available and properly functioning
- Budget and schedule monitoring
 - Work with PATH finance lead to ensure project stays within budget for vendor and venue costs
 - Develop and maintain project schedule to ensure timely progress of meeting development
- Sponsor management
 - Prepare signage and other necessary items to fulfill sponsorship obligations

V. Proposal Content Requirements

A. Organization Background

Provide information about the history of the organization and key staff in providing similar services. Describe why your organization is uniquely qualified to work on this project. Examples of specific meetings are preferred.

B. Detailed Scope of Work

Based on the scope described above, provide a detailed plan for how you would assist PATH in managing this conference, including description of sourcing any third-party tools and management plan (e.g., abstract management tool). The successful contractor will also provide scenario planning (general timeline and staff budget) for holding the conference in either June 2020 or fall 2020.

C. Detailed Budget

Prepare a budget for your services. Please include estimates for personnel, supplies, printing and publications, and other project costs.

We anticipate the contract will be a time and materials (T&M) reimbursement contract, with a negotiated administrative fee for pass-through costs (e.g., vendors and travel expenses). A “not to exceed” level will be established based on the proposed budget.

Projections on costs for venue, catering, transportation, etc. are **not** required at this time.

VI. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

The following is a list of significant criteria against which proposals will be assessed. The criteria are listed in order of priority, however they are not weighted.

- A. Experience (institutional and personnel) with scientific meetings
- B. Experience (institutional and personnel) managing events in Washington, DC
- C. Costs

D. Location of supplier/ease of doing business

Note: PATH reserves the right to include additional criteria.

VII. Instructions and Deadlines for Responding

A. PATH contacts:

Procurement Contact: Amanda Thraen, athraen@path.org

Technical/Program Contact: Alexandra O'Neill, aboneill@path.org

B. Confirmation of interest:

Please send a statement acknowledging receipt of this solicitation and your intent to respond or not respond no later than June 17, 2019. Send the confirmation to the contacts listed above.

C. Fact-finding questions:

Questions on this solicitation will be accepted via email to the contacts listed above through June 21, 2019. Questions and answers to all questions will be provided to all participants who confirmed interest per Section VII.B on June 27, 2019. Inquiries after this date cannot be accommodated.

D. Proposals due: July 3, 2019

Completed proposals should be submitted by email to the contacts listed above. The subject line of the email should read: **RFP 2019-014 Response [Company name]**

We advise that you send files in commonly recognized MS office or PDF formats. We will not accept responsibility for resolving technical transmission problems with proposals. A hard copy of the proposal should not be sent. Your proposal should only include information specific to accomplishing the scope of work. Additional information submitted outside of the proposal requirements will be reviewed at PATH's discretion only. Elaborate materials, artwork or other information not directly related to the scope of work are not suggested.

E. Selection of short-list:

PATH reserves the right to select a short list from the bids received. PATH has the option to interview and discuss specific details with those candidates who are on the short list.

F. Conclusion of process:

Applicants will be notified of PATH's decision by no later than July 22, 2019. Final award is subject to the terms and conditions included in this solicitation, as well as successful final negotiations of all applicable terms and conditions affecting this work.

IX. Terms and Conditions of the Solicitation

A. Notice of non-binding solicitation:

PATH reserves the right to reject any and all bids received in response to this solicitation, and is in no way bound to accept any proposal.

B. Confidentiality:

All information provided by PATH as part of this solicitation must be treated as confidential. In the event that any information is inappropriately released, PATH will seek appropriate remedies as allowed.

Proposals, discussions, and all information received in response to this solicitation will be held as strictly confidential, except as otherwise noted.

C. Communication:

All communications regarding this solicitation shall be directed to appropriate parties at PATH indicated in Section VIII. A. Contacting third parties involved in the project, the review panel, or any other party may be considered a conflict of interest and could result in disqualification of the proposal.

D. Acceptance:

Acceptance of a proposal does not imply acceptance of its terms and conditions. PATH reserves the option to negotiate on the final terms and conditions. We additionally reserve the right to negotiate the substance of the finalists' proposals, as well as the option of accepting partial components of a proposal if appropriate.

E. Right to final negotiations:

PATH reserves the option to negotiate on the final costs and final scope of work, and also reserves the option to limit or include third parties at PATH's sole and full discretion in such negotiations.

F. Third-party limitations:

PATH does not represent, warrant, or act as an agent for any third party as a result of this solicitation. This solicitation does not authorize any third party to bind or commit PATH in any way without our express written consent.

G. Proposal validity:

Proposals submitted under this request shall be valid for 90 days from the date the proposal is due. The validity period shall be stated in the proposal submitted to PATH.