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Request for Expression of Interest (EOI)

PPA SOLIDARITY: COVID-19 RESPONSE IN THE

BRAZILIAN AMAZON REGION

Phase 2

Issuance date: **December 6, 2021**

Deadline for questions: **December 15, 2021, at 23h59 (Brasilia Time)**

Closing/ Deadline for application submission: **December 19, 2021, at 23h59 (Brasilia Time)**

Mode of application: **through e-mail to EXPAND.EOI@thepalladiumgroup.com CC: francia.poholchuk@thepalladiumgroup.com [use subject line: EOI/ NPI EXPAND BRAZIL PPA Solidarity Phase 2]**



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1. Overview of the NPI EXPAND project

The New Partnerships Initiative (NPI) Expanding Health Partnerships – NPI EXPAND Project – is a five-year project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) which aims to support Missions by increasing the availability and utilization of quality health services across all USAID priority areas.

USAID is committed to expanding its range of implementing partners by investing in new and underutilized local partners (NUPs) and strengthening their capacity to strategize, plan and implement health sector programs with USAID funds. Enhanced participation of capable local partners to increase demand for and deliver high-quality, high-impact health services will enable governments to meet crucial health goals equitably and sustainably. NPI EXPAND will catalyze opportunities to scale up innovative interventions by strengthening the capacity of NUPs with varying levels of capabilities and exposure to USAID.

2. NPI EXPAND in Brazil

In Brazil, USAID, NPI EXPAND, the Partnership Platform for the Amazon (PPA) and SITAWI Finances for Good, have implemented the “PPA Solidarity: COVID-19 response in the Amazon” initiative. Over the past year, PPA Solidarity engaged the private sector and strategic Brazilian partnerships to leverage innovative and scalable solutions to strengthen emergency preparedness and response to COVID-19. By strengthening the engagement of local organizations, NPI EXPAND PPA Solidarity has supported health systems and communities to become more resilient to COVID-19. Through a combination of grant-making and technical assistance, NPI EXPAND supports local organizations to expand the reach of innovative and locally relevant interventions that bolster community-based emergency response efforts and reach more people with lifesaving information, supplies, equipment, and services.

3. Background

Since the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the Coronavirus Disease-2019 (COVID-19) a pandemic due to the global spread of SARS-CoV-2 (“COVID-19”), with over 22 million confirmed COVID-19 cases and 614,681 deaths, Brazil is the second most affected country after the United States (Johns Hopkins Coronavirus Resource Center 11/30/2021).

The Brazilian Amazon Region continues to be extremely vulnerable to the devastating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has shed light on the medical desert that is the Amazon Region, where in addition to profound socioeconomic inequalities, there is a general absence of public health policies, equipment, and human resources. Indigenous, *quilombola*, traditional, riverine, and urban populations are severely affected by the pandemic, particularly due to the lack of medical supplies, equipment and infrastructure needed to treat more severe cases of COVID-19. As noted in Table 1 below, the Amazon Region has had over 2.8 million confirmed COVID-19 cases and over 64 thousand



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deaths. It is also very likely that cases have been dramatically underreported due to lack of testing and treatment.

Table 1. Brazilian Amazon Region Covid-19 Statistics (as of November 30, 2021)

	# Cases	# Deaths	% Population with 1st Vaccine Dose only	% Population Fully Immunized*
Brazil	22.094.459	614.681	74,46%	62,44%
Acre	88.213	1.846	61,98%	46,42%
Amapá	124.634	2.003	57,45%	37%
Amazonas	429.944	13.803	62,98%	49%
Maranhão	365.048	10.294	61,67%	46,85%
Mato Grosso	552.833	14.001	70,63%	55,16%
Pará	609.392	16.912	60,38%	40,01%
Rondônia	277.374	6.440	65,83%	53,95%
Roraima	128.408	2.051	52,56%	30,36%
Tocantins	232.575	3.918	65,21%	49,85%
Amazon Region	2.808.421	64.828	-	-

*Fully immunized with single dose and/or two doses.

Sources: Vaccination in Brazil and the Amazon States updated November 30, 2021 <https://especiais.g1.globo.com/bemestar/vacina/2021/mapa-brasil-vacina-covid/>

COVID-19 cases and deaths in Brazil and the Amazon States updated November 30, 2021 <https://especiais.g1.globo.com/bemestar/coronavirus/estados-brasil-mortes-casos-media-movei/>

By mid-January 2021, with the Gamma variant causing widespread infections in Manaus, Amazonas, the city faced a serious shortage of oxygen that led to the deaths of hospitalized patients and those using oxygen at home. Gamma and Delta are the predominant variants in Brazil today, contributing to new waves of cases, and rates of RT-PCR testing and variant screening in the Amazon region are still low.

COVID-19 vaccination efforts have slowly begun to increase in the country. As of November

30, 2021, 74,46 percent of Brazil’s population (approximately 159 million people) have been vaccinated with their first dose, and 62,44 percent of the population (approximately 133 million people) are now fully immunized with a single dose and/or two doses.

In the last few months there have been increased efforts to promote vaccination the Amazon states (as noted in Table 1), with over 50 percent of the population having received their first vaccine dose. Except for Mato Grosso and Rondônia, no other Amazon state has over 50 per cent of their population fully immunized. Lack of information, fake news, confusion regarding the intervals between doses, absence of a national immunization campaign, shortage of vaccines, and fear of adverse effects are among the main causes for Brazilians not showing up for their first or second dose. The slow roll-out and uptake of vaccines is particularly concerning with the arrival of new COVID-19 variants in the Brazilian Amazon.

With the continued burden of COVID-19 in the Amazon Region, state and municipal health agencies need partners to support risk communication and community engagement, contact tracing, vaccine roll-out, and maintenance of essential health services. They also need partners that can provide hospitals and primary care facilities with equipment and supplies to manage the influx of cases that are straining health facilities. Healthcare providers in the region need to improve their knowledge and skills related to complex care for severe and critical illness with evidence-based tools and approaches that can be



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quickly adapted and translated for the local context. Community health workers need access to tools, approaches, logistics and supplies to promote vaccine roll-out efforts, reduce community transmission, and prevent hospitalization.

4. Purpose, goals, and objectives

NPI EXPAND will identify new and underutilized partners (NUPs) in the Amazon who are well-positioned to support the COVID-19 health response in the region. NUPs can serve as an extension of the health sector to indigenous and other vulnerable communities. They can create linkages between remote communities while building trust in healthcare workers and COVID-19 vaccination, surveillance, and treatment efforts. NPI EXPAND will support USAID Brazil and the Government of Brazil to provide immediate support to targeted vulnerable communities of the Amazon to prevent and respond to COVID-19. Vulnerable communities primarily include indigenous, *quilombola* and other traditional forest-dependent peoples, street populations, female-headed households, crowded and impoverished urban areas, remote rural populations, and Venezuelan migrants.

The specific objectives include:

- Accelerate widespread and equitable access to and delivery of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccinations.
- Reduce morbidity and mortality from COVID-19, mitigate transmission, and strengthen health systems, including prevention, detection, and response to pandemic threats.

5. Scope of work

NPI EXPAND is seeking applications from eligible organizations to support the PPA Solidarity COVID-19 Response in the Brazilian Amazon Region. The new and underutilized partners will implement targeted interventions in support of local health systems responding to COVID-19. Organizations are invited to propose locally led, evidence-based, sustainable solutions under the below listed areas of intervention. Concept notes do not need to respond to all technical areas/strategies below.

NPI EXPAND intends to award multiple grants to successful organizations. The expected period of performance is up to 12 months. Subject to the availability of funds, the estimated total funding available under this opportunity is USD \$5 million (approximately BRL 28 million), with estimated grant amounts of USD \$100,000 (approximately BRL 560,000) up to \$250,000 (approximately BRL 1.4 million) awarded per organization. Organizations may be eligible for multiple grants simultaneously up to \$250,000 per grant.

Local organizations must seek funding to work in one or multiple states of the Brazilian Amazon Region: Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima, Tocantins, Mato Grosso and Maranhão. Local organizations may also identify and collaborate with private sector organizations, and/or local partners including associations, cooperatives, community-based groups, NGOs, among others, to increase capillarity and reach the most vulnerable populations in the region.



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Successful applications will address the objectives above through one or more of the following **Core Strategies:**

Objective One: Accelerate widespread and equitable access to and delivery of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccinations

Strategy 1: Scale-up COVID-19 vaccine demand generation, risk communication and community engagement (RCCE) activities to reach indigenous, *quilombola* and other vulnerable groups in the nine targeted states

Illustrative Activities

- Coordinate with relevant government authorities to support distribution of government-approved COVID-19 messages and materials (posters, flyers) using relevant community health and response structures.
- Reflect global and local best practices ensuring that populations are equipped with global, evidence-based strategies, job aides, and competencies to generate confidence, and address vaccine hesitancy through a combination of global best practices in messaging that are adapted and translated to the Amazon context.
- Support interpersonal risk communication and community engagement (RCCE). Loud-speaker, drama, key influencer training, and other locally relevant channels will be utilized to increase awareness and trust in local vaccination campaigns.
- Work with federal, state, and municipal authorities, and local community leaders to reduce misconceptions, stigma and discrimination that may arise from fear about COVID-19 vaccines.
- Deploy appropriate communication platforms (radio, text, posters, community health assistants, community health volunteers, social media) that transmit risk communication messages to religious and traditional leaders and other trusted community leaders and health workers to enable them to access up-to-date data, guidance, and best practices in COVID-19 prevention, testing, and treatment.
- Train and/or strengthen the capacity of health care workers and non-health care workers on risk communication and community engagement (RCCE).
- Provide informal education and peer support to alleviate psychosocial stressors exacerbated by COVID-19.

Strategy 2 & 3: Scale up COVID-19 Service Delivery and Human Resources for Health Trainings to reach target groups including the elderly

Illustrative Activities

- Support public and private health sectors with goods (e.g., cold storage kits, fuel, and logistics support, among others), evidence-based trainings on safe vaccination, and identification and management of adverse events following immunization.



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- Support municipal public health structures and health worker associations with logistics for roll-out/training of municipal supervisors to oversee vaccination outreach and reporting.
- Respond to local health worker training gaps, while leveraging/adapting existing training resources, complete with competency-based skills exercises to improve health service delivery.
- Support local governments in the delivery of vaccines to reach remote and vulnerable communities, particularly the elderly.
- Support communities with logistics to enhance vaccination outreach to the last mile.
- Train vaccinators in appropriate use of PPE and waste management, post-vaccination counseling and second dose follow-up.

Strategy 4: Communications and Advocacy

Illustrative Activities

- Support municipalities and emergency operations centers with strategies to help them more effectively provide trusted communications outreach to indigenous, quilombola, elderly, migrants, and other vulnerable groups.
- Inform public health structures about effective messaging, identify potential high-risk areas for infection, and provide two-way communication (rumor tracking) to allow municipal health authorities to mitigate rumors related to vaccine or COVID-19 care and treatment.
- Support vaccinators and mobilize outreach for rural areas as they provide rural health services.
- Link existing structures and fora in communities to health services and build the trust that is needed for effective vaccination and resilience of essential health services.

Objective 2: Reduce morbidity and mortality from COVID-19, mitigate transmission, and strengthen health systems, including prevention, detection, and response to pandemic threats

It will be critical to link NUPs to existing strategies, tools, approaches, and guidance, both from Brazilian Ministry of Health and Emergency COVID-19 Task forces, as well as the deep repository of online tools that have been created, vetted, and tested by USAID, WHO, Palladium’s HP+ Program, UCSF, and other implementing partners.

Strategy 1: Maintaining Essential Health Services

Illustrative Activities

- Strengthen primary health care services via training of frontline health workers with self-directed, off the shelf, rapid assessments (e.g., Hospital Equipment Assessment) and other resources such as training videos on: oxygen therapy, infection prevention control and risk communication.
- Champion mental health programming (e.g., WHO Psychological First Aid) integrated into all training for frontline and community health workers addressing COVID-19.
- Support health worker capacity with basic care guides, as well as using telehealth and/or digital platforms to engage with patients effectively (e.g., non-invasive oxygen, long COVID-19 symptoms, printed posters, and simple treatment algorithms).



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- Support community health workers, on Home-Based Care for COVID-19. The digital training on pulse oximetry can be utilized to strengthen household capacity to manage illness and prevent intra-household infection, while knowing when and where to seek care. can be utilized to strengthen household capacity to manage illness and prevent intra-household infection, while knowing when and where to seek care.
- Carry out risk communication for COVID-19, which can include drawing on resources for behavior change for COVID-19 symptoms in malaria endemic environments, technical notes for integrating gender into COVID-19 response (including safeguarding breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic), and the COVID-19 Communication Network for vetted, trusted COVID-19 messaging materials.
- Develop and/or expand existing health services, including at the facility level and/or at the community level.

Strategy 2: Scale up infection prevention control (IPC) measures to targeted populations in the nine states

IPC is critical to preventing transmission among healthcare workers and community members. Poor IPC practices jeopardize the health and safety of patients as well as health workers. In May 2021, WHO issued a Global IPC study which stressed the need to address poor IPC practices especially in low and medium resource healthcare settings.

Illustrative Activities

- Address IPC effectively through existing videos, job aides, inputs and strategies which discuss the practical aspects of IPC such as: donning/doffing PPE, mediating common mistakes and misperceptions, prioritizing respiratory and cough hygiene while making handwashing facilities accessible between patient exams and more.
- Support healthcare providers to ensure they receive standardized, state-of-the-art IPC and WASH guidance and training that can be scaled up across primary health centers and hospitals.
- Support health facilities with IPC for COVID-19, including WASH, ventilation, patient flow, PPE donning/ doffing, cleaning, etc.
- Support continued provision of refresher training on IPC practices and the use of PPE, and on up to date COVID-19 technical content and protocols to assess, triage, test, and treat patients as relevant to roles.
- Procure PPE, cleaning supplies, targeted training on proper ventilation, and patient flow advice to mitigate facility-based infection.
- Adopt quality improvement processes to strengthen IPC and hygiene practices, adapting and translating existing IPC training guides (e.g., HP+ Preventing the Spread of SARS-CoV-2: Practical Guide to Improve Infection Prevention Control Practices in Healthcare Settings; MOMENTUM essential IPC supplies and equipment inventory for health facilities; RISE Case Management & O2 Ecosystem Briefer, etc.) that can be tailored to the Brazilian Amazon context while protecting frontline workers and patients.
- Support and strengthen the capacity of community leaders and/or community health agents in IPC with necessary PPE and other equipment that enable them to respond to COVID-19 infections and/or support vaccination efforts by local health officials.



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- Procure and donate non-medical facial masks and distribute hygiene kits to both urban and rural vulnerable populations in the Brazilian Amazon Region.

Strategy 3: Surveillance, rapid response teams, and case investigation

NUPS will work in alignment with local guidance on contact tracing and surveillance, to support local health and surveillance secretaries. This is especially important for states and municipalities neighboring other South American countries including Venezuela, Colombia, Peru, Bolivia, Suriname, Guyana and French Guiana, in addition to rural and remote areas that are not yet experiencing widespread community transmission of new variants.

Illustrative Activities

- Support state and municipal health and surveillance secretaries to carry out surveillance and increase testing and contact tracing services among vulnerable target communities in the nine Amazon States.
- Train municipal and state health staff and community health agents on surveillance and rapid response, including case investigation, contact tracing, and case finding for COVID-19.

6. NPI EXPAND PPA Solidarity Phase 2 selection process

The NPI EXPAND PPA Solidarity Phase 2 seeks to identify local partners who can implement context-specific, innovative, integrated solutions in response to the COVID-19 crisis in the Brazilian Amazon Region. Through a two-step selection process, NPI EXPAND wishes to pre-select qualified organizations with experience in the field of health and/or responding to COVID-19 in the Amazon.

STEP 1: Invitation for Expression of Interest (EOI)

NPI EXPAND invites local CSOs with experience and technical capacity to implement health and/or COVID-19 response projects in the Amazon Region to express their interest by providing required documentation and EOI concept note.

A concept note containing a detailed description of the approach the organization will use to address the issues described in the expression of interest. The concept note should include a project description, situation analysis, project implementation and management approach (including main project activities, impact areas, implementation approaches, objectives, strategies and expected results), a budget summary with key budget lines, and a project timeframe (which must not exceed 12 months). The concept note should be no longer than 5-7 pages, and should be submitted in Portuguese, in 12-point Times New Roman font.

STEP 2: Invitation to respond to a Request for Applications (RFA)



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For organizations who concept notes and qualifications meet the program objectives, NPI EXPAND will send a request for applications to invite them to submit a full technical application, budget and budget narrative. If the organization provides a sound technical application and budget, NPI EXPAND expects to prepare a grant agreement based on the concept note.

Organizations that have passed the EOI stage will also be invited to participate in a bidder’s conference. NPI EXPAND staff will also provide guidance in the preparation of technical applications and budgets. Please note, however, that acceptance of the EOI/concept note and invitation to an RFA does not guarantee funding under this program.

7. Evaluation criteria

NPI EXPAND will take into account the following criteria when pre-selecting local NGOs:

- Demonstrated technical capacity or expertise in the implementation of health and/or COVID-19 response in the Brazilian Amazon Region or demonstrated capacity to begin implementing activities in the Brazilian Amazon Region.
- The proposed states for Interventions must take place in one or more of the nine Brazilian Amazon Region states: Acre, Amapá, Amazonas, Mato Grosso, Maranhão, Pará, Rondônia, Roraima and/or Tocantins.

NPI EXPAND PPA Solidarity Phase 2 funds **cannot be** used for the following activities:

- Procurement and donation of food baskets.
- Loans, credit or cash flow for economic resilience and/or recovery for cooperatives, associations and/or small businesses during or after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Construction or building infrastructure.
- Activities that are not taking place in or benefiting vulnerable populations in the Brazilian Amazon Region.

Evaluation Criteria	Max Points
Organization has technical capacity and/or expertise in implementation of health projects and/or COVID-19 response	20
Experience in the Brazilian Amazon Region or demonstrated capacity to begin work in the Amazon.	20
Situation/ context analysis	15
Responding to program objectives - integrated solutions are highly encouraged.	15
Strategy and clarity on expected results	15
Experience in multisectoral coordination	15
TOTAL	100



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8. Eligibility criteria

- Copy of Registration/ certificate of incorporation. Proof that the organization is registered in Brazil under relevant government regulations.
- National tax/ registration number.
- Tax exemption certificate (if applicable).
- Preference will be given to organizations registered for 1+ years.
- Most recent (3 years) audit reports and/or donor financial reviews. *(If audit reports are not available, please justify in writing and present the following certificates: Certidões negativas débitos tributários e fiscais junto aos respectivos Estados e Municípios; Certidão Negativa de Débitos relativos aos Tributos Federais e à Dívida Ativa da União (CND) ou Certidão Positiva com Efeitos de Negativa de Débitos relativos aos Tributos Federais e à Dívida Ativa da União (CPEND); Certificado de Regularidade do FGTS (CRF); and, Relação Anual de Informações Sociais (RAIS).*

9. Documents required for application

- A concept note (5-7 pages) containing a detailed description of the approach the organization will use to address the issue described in the expression of interest.
- Short bio of 1-3 senior managers/ technical staff who will work on the project.
- Two references/ recommendation letters from other donors and/or development partners are encouraged and may be submitted at the application stage.

10. Instructions for submission

The Concept Note in response to this EOI MUST be submitted via e-mail to:

EOI.EXPAND@thepalladiumgroup.com with copy to francia.poholchuk@thepalladiumgroup.com

Use e-mail subject line: **EOI/ NPI EXPAND BRAZIL PPA Solidarity Phase 2**

To the attention of: **Francia Pohlchuk, Grants Management Director NPI EXPAND.**

Closing/ Deadline for application submission: **December 19, 2021, at 23h59 (Brasilia Time)**

Deadline for questions: **December 15, 2021, at 23h59 (Brasilia Time)**

All questions relating to this EOI/ Concept Note should be sent to EOI.EXPAND@thepalladiumgroup.com with copy to francia.poholchuk@thepalladiumgroup.com [Use subject line: Questions EOI/ NPI EXPAND BRAZIL PPA Solidarity Phase 2]

ANNEX I: Concept Note Template NPI EXPAND BRAZIL PPA Solidarity Phase 2