REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS - CONSULTANCY WORK FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PUBLICATION ON DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES FOR HEALTHY SOCIETIES AND ECONOMIES

Summary
The NCD Alliance (NCDA) is a registered non-governmental organisation (NGO) based in Geneva, Switzerland, dedicated to supporting a world free from preventable suffering, disability and death caused by noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). Founded in 2009, NCDA brings together a unique network of over 300 members in more than 80 countries into a respected, united and credible global civil society movement. The movement is unified by the cross-cutting nature of common risk factors including unhealthy diets, harmful use of alcohol, tobacco smoking, air pollution and physical inactivity, and shared health system for chronic NCDs including cancer, cardiovascular disease, chronic lung disease, diabetes, mental health conditions and neurological disorders.

The NCD Alliance is looking to appoint a consultant to refresh a policy brief “Realising the promise of digital health for NCDs and UHC”, developed in 2019 based on the report developed by the Working Group on Digital Health of the Broadband Commission, and align it with the lessons learnt from the pandemic to ensure that innovations, resources, and technologies mobilised can also have a transformative impact to address NCDs.

Background

With the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), there has been increasing recognition that harnessing the potential of digital information and communication technologies (ICTs) for health can result in long-lasting benefits for economies and help accelerate human progress. There is now a growing consensus in the global health community that the strategic and innovative use of digital and cutting-edge ICTs will be an essential enabling factor towards ensuring that 1 billion more people benefit from universal health coverage (UHC).

Despite considerable progress, many countries still require institutional support for the development and consolidation of national eHealth and/or digital health strategies and the implementation of their action plans, in particular to place ICT at the heart of strategies to address non-communicable diseases (NCDs). Issues relating to the cost and complexity of implementation of certain systems, as well as the resistance of healthcare professionals to the digitalization of health services are important obstacles to the broad adoption of digital health solutions for NCDs. There is also a myriad of digital health initiatives that often lack a clear strategy and coordination. This limits the number of solutions that can be integrated into national health policies and systems as part of a broader UHC agenda. For digital health to be seen as a relevant investment for governments, it must support equitable and universal access to quality health services; enhance the efficiency and sustainability of health systems in delivering quality, affordable and equitable care; and strengthen and scale up health promotion, disease prevention, diagnosis, management, rehabilitation and palliative care including before, during and after an epidemic or pandemic, in a system that respects the privacy and security of patient health information.

In 2019, NCDA developed its first policy brief on this issue, drawing upon a report of the Broadband Commission Working Group on Digital Health entitled “The Promise of Digital Health: Addressing Non-communicable Diseases to Accelerate Universal Health Coverage in LMICs”. Articulated around six building block identified to drive interventions, the brief highlighted the potential of digital health for NCDs, the
ways civil society can bridge global policy to national advocacy and action for eHealth and NCDs and stressed the importance of meaningful involvement of people living with NCDs.

**Overview of the consultancy**

While many digital health tools during the pandemic went from being viewed as a potential opportunity to becoming an immediate necessity, and their use increased substantially, it’s now clear that if health systems are to retain added value from greater use of digital health tools, active strategies are needed now to build on the current momentum around their use, especially for NCDs. Therefore NCDA intends to update the brief to reflect the lessons learnt from COVID-19 and opportunities going forward. NCDA organised a roundtable event at the UN General Assembly in September 2022 on this topic, and a summary report from this event will serve as input to the updated brief.

The briefing note will be released in advance of the 2023 UN high-level meeting on UHC, which will be pivotal to achieve the SDGs target. Using the core concept of the continuum of care as a framework for thinking, the updated briefing note will provide examples of impactful solutions for strengthening the response to NCDs through the different building blocks described in its previous iteration. In particular, the briefing paper will:

1. Highlight the benefits of digital transformation across the continuum of care through examples and/or case studies.
2. Showcase the impact of collaboration across sectors and their potential to achieve the health-related SDG and beyond and outline the success factors of these initiatives.
3. Position digital health as a driver for inclusive access and health equity and provide recommendations for collective multisectoral action to ensure effective development and implementation.

**Target audience:**
Policy makers and civil society.

**Briefing format:**
The report will be delivered as a fully edited Word document written in (copy edited) English language.

**Consultant deliverables:**
The end product the consultant will deliver is an updated version of the NCDA brief *Realising the promise of digital health for NCDs and UHC*.

Key milestones in the preparation of the end product will include:

- A draft outline of the updated brief, for review and comments by NCDA.
- Outreach to key NCDA stakeholders for case studies covering digital health initiatives across the continuum of care, including a survey.
- A first full draft of the updated brief, for review and comments by NCDA.
- Final draft of the updated brief, for review by NCDA.

**Profile of consultant(s):**
The ideal consultant will have:
- A background in global health or sustainable development.
- Knowledge and experience in global or national digital health/ICT policies and solutions, ideally within the context of NCDs.
- Track record in drafting policy briefs / briefing documents / publications for a policy maker audience and civil society for advocacy purposes.

**Period of engagement:**
The consultant will start by the end of October 2022, with final deliverables submitted by mid-December. Exact dates for the above milestones to be agreed with consultant.

**Process to follow**
Interested consultants should send a proposed scope of work and budget, their CV, as well as a sample written resource (ideally related to the topic) via email to Romain Dissard, Senior Officer Partnerships and Membership (rdissard@ncdalliance.org) by November 9, 2022 (COB). Please make sure to describe your capability to conduct this project in the email.