Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research

Request for Proposals

Assessing SunPlus

December 14, 2014

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists (GC) requests proposals for undertaking research on SunPlus accounting software in Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) organizations and institutions.

The name "SunPlus" has been applied both to the Seventh-day Adventist Church's SunSystems accounting software package and to the wider denominational project to introduce and utilize this software. The GC Office of Archives, Statistics, and Research (ASTR) is evaluating the entire church-wide project, which has grown since 2012 to encompass around 670 organizations and more than 2,600 users in 2014. The leadership of Office of Seventh-day Adventist Accounting Software (often known simply as the SunPlus team) considers that mission of the SunPlus project is to build up the entire denominational financial management system: success will thus consist of widespread and successful adoption of the software *and* of enhancing the capabilities of those church workers responsible for accounting and financial management.

The GC Executive Officers desire data on the perceived benefits, effectiveness and helpfulness of the SunPlus software and the SunPlus team. By this Request for Proposals, ASTR invites researchers to submit proposals for surveying select staff at Seventh-day Adventist organizations and institutions around the world on their perceptions and opinions of SunPlus.

I. Organizations to be surveyed

The research should survey staff in the Treasury of divisions, unions, conferences/missions, ADRA, and select denominational institutions, which have already implemented the SunPlus accounting system.

II. Research objective

To develop and implement a survey testing perceptions of the efficiency of SunPlus software and effectiveness of its team, the benefits of SunPlus implementation, and areas for improvement.

It is important to note that two changes were introduced at once: the adoption of software (SunPlus) and a change in the accounting system from commercial to fund. It is important to know which poses more challenges: the implementation of Sun Plus or the change of the accounting system?

III. Methodology

The instrument should not be complicated but focused—a short online survey would be preferrable; paper surveys or interviews will be considered but a specific case should be made. Proposals should inclue an outlined step-by-step methodology with Key Performance Indicators based on the scope of the project (no. IV), timeframe, and budget (no. VIII) should be suggested in research proposal.

IV. Scope and target audiences

The following groups should be included in the sample:

- Treasurers, accountants, and bookkeepers in divisions, unions, conferences/missions, and institutions that have already implemented the SunPlus system.
- The instrument should include a core body of questions, but also address different questions to each of the three types of workers specified above (see indicative list of questions below: no. V.2); this is one reason an online survey is envisaged.
- Since the audience is multilingual, the instrument should be translated into several major languages that SunPlus team is using in different territories: Spanish, French, Portuguese and others.

V. Indicative list of potential questions for research instrument:

1. The following questions could be considered for all respondents:

- Do respondents value the SunPlus software?
- What are the strong and weak points of SunPlus training process and implementation that they are dealing with in practice?
- What do they see as the positives and negatives of the SunPlus software?
- How do they feel the GC could address areas of potential improvement?
- To what extent do their major challenges arise from a change of software or from a change in accounting system (from commercial to fund)?
- Do they feel the SunPlus program is too complicated for unions and conferences/missions?
- What system did they use before implementing SunPlus?
- Have their professional competencies increased with the implementation of SunPlus?
- How effective has the SunPlus team been in helping them to solve problems and meet their challenges in this process?

2. Additional questions to the specified groups:

- Treasurers: Have they seen any benefits of SunPlus program and its implementation? Do they feel their staff is growing professionally?
- Accountants: questions exploring how SunPlus works from an accountant's point of view.
- Book keepers: How difficult is it to enter the data, work with it, etc., in SunPlus program?

VI. Data that can be supplied by ASTR

The following can be made use of by research teams:

- Lists of divisions, unions, conferences, and other SDA organizations/institutions that have already implemented SunPlus software.
- Lists of languages used by SunPlus support team.
- Contact information for designated liasons in the world divisions for SunPlus.

VII. Limitations and requirements

1. The names of respondents and participants in the study, and their locations, should not be exposed to any outside parties.

2. Data should be reported in division-by-division breakdown as well as global totals.
3. All the findings of the research will be confidential and should be submitted directly to ASTR. The researchers are not allowed to use the findings of the research or to reveal them to any other organization or company without prior written permission of ASTR.

VIII. Timeframe

- An outline proposal should be submitted to ASTR by January 26, 2014.
- Date of proposal approval: February 1, 2015.
- Draft research instrument should be submitted by March 5, 2014.
- The survey should be close on May 1, 2015.
- The research should be completed and a draft report submitted no later than May 20, 2014.
- The final report should be submitted by end June 5, 2015.

IX. Proposal

Your proposal should include the following:

1. Title of your institutional home, with full address and contact details (these should be on a cover sheet).
2. A brief statement of methodology: how will you achieve the objectives and investigate the target audience, stated in II and IV above?
3. Necessary documents/data you need to receive from ASTR or other organizations.
4. Foreseen problems and challenges.
5. Skills/expertise of the researchers – CVs should be included.
6. Time frame, including different stages of the research.
7. Research budget.
8. Key Performance Indicators associated with the timeframe and budget (nos. VII above).

Please email copies of outline proposals to Galina Stele at research@gc.adventist.org – for any queries or more information, please contact her or David Trim at TrimD@gc.adventist.org

X. Appendix

See Power Point presentation attached about SunPlus as of December 31, 2013.