Tool 4: Template for Letter of Invitation to Co-Authors

Paragraph 1: Extend an invitation to be a co-author
As we discussed [insert time/place of prior discussion regarding potential authorship of the manuscript], I would like to invite you to participate as a co-author on the journal manuscript that I am developing on [insert topic of journal article]. Before you decide whether or not to accept this offer, it is important to understand the expectations and obligations associated with co-authorship.

Paragraph 2: Explain the expectations and obligations associated with being a co-author
Becoming a co-author of a journal manuscript is a significant commitment. Jhpiego follows established standards for authorship. I have enclosed a copy of the Jhpiego Authorship Guidelines for you to review. In practical terms, co-authors of this manuscript must be prepared to:

- Actively participate in the entire manuscript development process, which may take nine months to a year, even if all goes smoothly;
- Attend two off-site writing workshops to launch and later to finalize the manuscript;
- Help interpret the data;
- Draft, critically review, and revise portions of the manuscript;
- Accept responsibility for other tasks, for example, conducting a literature review or scanning possible journals for submission;
- Read and approve the final manuscript prior to submission; and
- Respond to review comments from the journal editor and peer reviewers.

Paragraph 3: Describe the timeline for the manuscript, including the proposed dates, duration, and location of the writing workshops
[Insert four or five sentences that describe the:

- Proposed date and location of the orientation meeting for co-authors;
- Time that will be allotted for co-authors to complete preliminary tasks related to the manuscript;
- Proposed dates, duration, and location of both writing workshops;
- Estimated time needed to finalize the manuscript; and
- Approximate target date for submitting the manuscript to the journal.]

Paragraph 4: Give the recipient an opportunity to decline
I appreciate your interest in this manuscript and know that you could make a valuable contribution as a co-author. As described above, however, being a co-author will require a major commitment of your time over the coming year. Please think carefully before accepting this offer of co-authorship. If you do not have enough time to participate as a co-author, you may still contribute to the manuscript in other ways, for example, by acting as a critical reviewer.

Sincerely,
[The lead author signs here.]