Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research and the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office

Improving Programme Implementation through Embedded Research (iPIER)

CALL FOR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE
Deadline: 10 April 2015

I. Background

The Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (AHPSR) and the South-East Asia Regional Office (SEARO) are implementing a new program of embedded implementation research to support health programmes. The initiative is entitled Improving Programme Implementation through Embedded Research (iPIER). This program will support the development of and demand for research that is problem-focused and action-oriented. The iPIER initiative will develop health program implementers’ capacity to identify implementation barriers and opportunities which can be appraised through research. It will further facilitate partnerships between implementers and researchers in the context of iterative improvements in programme implementation. iPIER will in turn foster demand for implementation research that is aligned with needs, and of particular relevance to health systems in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

The overarching goal of the iPIER initiative is to inform programmatic changes towards maximization of health interventions’ benefits and improvements in population health status. Since embedded research aims at generating insights that enable more effective implementation of programmes, specific objectives of the iPIER initiative are:

1) To support the embedding of implementation research within existing implementation processes and programme activities in South East Asia;

2) To catalyse the use of research by implementers to improve programme implementation and scale-up in South East Asia.

As part of a call for embedded research proposals launched in January 2015, the AHPSR and SEARO will select and fund 8-10 implementation research projects in the Region.

Through this call for expressions of interest, the AHPSR and SEARO are recruiting a TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTRE to provide ongoing technical assistance and coordination for this new programme of implementation research.

Please note that this is NOT a call for research projects!

II: Objectives and specific tasks of the technical assistance centre

The role of the technical assistance centre will be to support SEARO and AHPSR in the overall management of the embedded research studies conducted by 8-10 teams recruited after a call for research proposals. The technical assistance centre will be responsible for the following:

a) Organization of a training workshop and support to 8-10 teams for development of their research protocols;
b) On-going monitoring of research projects;
c) On-going monitoring of programmatic improvements;
d) Analysis and dissemination of results.

Specifically, the technical assistance centre will be responsible for the following tasks:

1. Facilitate a protocol development workshop. This includes contributing to the draft iPIER generic protocol and facilitating the workshop;
2. Provide training to implementers on how to develop implementation research protocols that directly respond to existing implementation challenges faced in programmes;
3. Support selected teams in developing their data collection instruments, submitting the material to relevant ethics committees (country level and SEARO/WHO), responding to ethics review questions;
4. Organize the launch of the iPIER initiative in the Region;
5. Take the lead in identifying the needs of selected teams; support them in collecting primary and/or secondary implementation research data within study sites including but not limited to development of databases; assist the teams towards completion of their intermediate and final deliverables;
6. Provide oversight of the engagement of implementers with researchers, and provide ongoing training to develop the implementers’ research abilities;
7. Prepare and facilitate a workshop on data analysis, interpretation of results and integration of IR evidence into health programmes;
8. Review intermediate and final deliverables from embedded research teams and provide comments;
9. Devise a strategy for developing of cross-cutting results and lessons from the iPIER initiative, including i) action plans for implementation research knowledge translation and ii) manuscript for peer-reviewed publication.

The work is expected to take approximately **12 months**.

### III. Institution profile

The selected institution will have an established reputation in the field of health systems and/or Implementation Research. This reputation should be based on demonstrated records of publications, teaching, mentoring related to health systems and/or Implementation Research.

The selected institution will be expected to work independently while maintaining an ongoing collaborative relationship with the AHPSR Secretariat and SEARO.

**Only institutions based in countries within the WHO South-East Asia Region are eligible to apply.**

### IV. Application process

All applications must be submitted by **10 April 2014**. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be considered.
Submissions should include the following:

- Identification of the institution
- Composition of the proposed team: names, expertise, function in institution, role in team
- Description of the team’s expertise in health systems and/or Implementation Research, with supporting references of academic records and field experience
- Description of the approach that will be used to:
  - Support research teams in developing their protocol
  - Provide ongoing support to research teams
  - Draw cross-cutting lessons from the programme and disseminate results
  - Proposed budget, not exceeding a maximum of USD 80,000

V. Submission details

- Applications should be submitted via email to the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research (alliancehpsr@who.int).
- The subject field of the email should be titled “EOI – IPIER SEARO Technical Assistance Centre”.
- The Alliance will notify all applicants of receipt of their applications.
- All question should be directed to alliancehpsr@who.int