Call for applications

Selection of a consortium of institutions for the organization of two workshops to develop a regional network on surveillance, diagnosis and control of vector-borne emerging diseases in the Caribbean region

Deadline for submission: 20 April 2015, 17:00 CET

Institutions working on health systems, surveillance, diagnosis and research on emerging Vector-Borne Diseases (VBD) from the Caribbean Region\(^1\) are invited to submit collaborative proposals to organize and host two workshops, one on surveillance and diagnosis of emerging vector-borne diseases and one on vector research and control, both to analyse the requirements and feasibility of the implementation of a regional surveillance and research network on emerging vector-borne diseases.

The proposal should include at least two to three institutions based in the Caribbean region\(^1\). The workshops will be jointly organized by the consortium of institutions and each workshop will be hosted by one of the institutions. In order to have a large representation of the Caribbean countries at the workshops, the consortium should preferentially be multi-lingual and include institutions from countries in which the three most important international languages in the region are spoken, i.e., English, Spanish and French.

This call, issued by the Vectors, Environment and Society (VES) unit of the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), in partnership with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO), is in support of a strategic effort to strengthen the control of vector-borne diseases in the Caribbean through surveillance and diagnosis, as well as vector control and research.

Under this call, only one multi-country, multi-institutional consortium proposal will be selected for funding of one year for a maximum total funding of US$ 250 000.

---

\(^1\) The following English, French, Spanish, and Dutch-speaking Caribbean countries and territories are eligible: Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Aruba, Bahamas, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, British Virgin Islands, Cayman Islands, Cuba, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Grenada, Guadeloupe, Jamaica, Haiti, Martinique, Montserrat, Netherland Antilles, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, Turks and Caicos.
Background and rationale

The Caribbean region is a hot spot for the emergence and re-emergence of vector-borne diseases on the American continent. For example, the first epidemic of dengue in the Americas occurred in 1981 in Cuba, which has now spread all over Central and South America, causing millions of clinical cases and thousands of deaths. At the end of 2013, Chikungunya virus was detected on the island of Saint Martin and is now expanding throughout the Caribbean as well as Central and South America. Preventing these emergences is challenging.

The Caribbean region is characterized by scattered territories showing a great diversity of environmental and social and economic conditions and it includes one very low-income country and several middle- and high-countries, with weak connections existing between the territories. The challenge is thus to facilitate the implementation of a network between territories to exchange surveillance information on the circulating VBDs, to share facilities for diagnosis and to collaborate on vector control and research topics such as insecticide resistance, including standardization of technologies and training.

Many contacts exist between TDR and Caribbean institutions, and TDR has a long working history with PAHO. All groups are aware of the necessity to develop the regional exchanges from a public health and also a research perspective.

Objectives and expected outputs and outcomes

The overall objective is better prevention and control of VBDs through a regional network. This network would conduct surveillance and diagnosis, share data and facilities, and carry on collaborative research on an integrated vector control approach, in particular for the management of insecticide resistance.

The following outputs are expected from the consortium of institutions applying for the call:

- Two workshops organized and held in two countries in the Caribbean region, one on surveillance and diagnosis of emerging vector-borne diseases and one on vector control and research. The two workshops should be in different countries in the Caribbean region.
- A report on the workshop proposals and results, with recommendations on how to implement a Caribbean network.
- A plan or proposal for future collaboration.

Expected outcomes

- Development of an effective collaboration between Caribbean institutions
- First steps in the network approach, and exchanges on the surveillance and diagnostic of VBD at the regional level
- Research and training proposals
- Eventual policy outputs
- Expert recommendations on how to better enhance the health network in the Caribbean

Eligibility criteria

Caribbean institutions are invited to submit collaborative proposals where two to three institutions are forming a consortium. The eligible Consortium will include academic institutions and health services that are based in the Caribbean countries and have all facilities to organize the workshops. The consortium can choose to focus on one or more emerging VBDs and institutions should also have a background in at least one of the following topics: surveillance, diagnosis, research, medical entomology. The consortium should have expertise in all the above topics.
How to apply
The applications for the consortium of institutions should include (maximum of 15 pages, Font 10 to 12):

**Part 1** - Administrative documentation (3 to 4 pages): with names and addresses of institutions, Principal Investigator (PI) with name and references for each institution, the name and address of the coordinator for the consortium, a short description of the facilities, the experience of the institutions in the organization of workshops/meeting (for the past 5 years) and a short description of the expertise and background of the institutions on the relevant topics. One institution must be designated as the lead institution and the partner institutions need to agree on which institution is taking the lead and will receive the funds that will be re-distributed to the partners. They don’t have to create a legal consortium; usually this can be done through a partnership contract.

**Part 2** – Workshops organization (3 to 4 pages): with the objectives and agenda of the proposed two workshops mentioning estimated dates/period and hosting institutions, the items included in the workshops with references as well as the provisional list of speakers/participants, to show how the Caribbean countries will be represented.

**Part 3** - The expected outputs of the workshops (3 to 4 pages), relevant to expected outputs indicated above and the risk assessments and management of the project.

**Part 4** – The detailed budget (2 to 3 pages).

**Part 5** – The support (as a letter or statement of agreement) of the Director or Legal Representative of each institution involved in the consortium.

Proposals can be submitted in English or French.

The posted applications (submitted no later than 20 April 2015, 17:00 hours CET) should be sent by mail or email to:
Dr Florence Fouque
fouquef@who.int and with a copy to: cabanelf@who.int
Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR)
Vectors, Environment and Society
World Health Organization
20 Avenue Appia
1211 Geneva 27 Switzerland

Evaluation criteria
An external scientific advisory group appointed by the Director of TDR will review the proposals based on criteria such as scientific merit, relevance and feasibility, taking into account gender and equity issues. Proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by an ad hoc committee which will attribute a rank from 1 to 5 for each of the criteria, with 1 the lowest score and 5 the highest.

Scientific merit
- Expertise in the related field
- Clear and well defined objectives for the proposed workshops
- Useful and feasible content during the workshops
- Appropriate literature review to invite pertinent speakers
- Detailed plan for the workshops agendas, questions, report, proceedings, following of outputs
Relevance

- Institutions within the consortium have demonstrated capability to organize such workshops
- Geographic representation of the invited participants
- Potential of workshops to influence policy through policy linkages with workshops results
- Dissemination and utilization of the workshops proceedings and recommendations

Feasibility

- Feasible implementation timeline (Gantt chart)
- Soundness and appropriateness of budget
- Quality/suitability of the institution(s)/team (composition, expertise) for the proposed tasks
- Ability of the principal investigator to manage the project based on track record
- Risk assessment and management approach to the project

Selection process

Only one multi-country proposal will be selected for funding for one year for a maximum total funding of US$ 250,000. The proposal will be selected following an open competitive call for applications from Caribbean institutions already involved in the surveillance, diagnosis and research of emerging vector-borne diseases. The selection of projects for funding under this call will be conducted independently by an ad-hoc committee established by TDR. The committee will review and evaluate the proposals submitted based on scientific background of institutions included in the consortium, relevance to the call and feasibility.

For further information on the call, please contact:

Dr Florence Fouque
E-mail: fouquef@who.int

OR

Mrs Flor Cabanel
E-mail: cabanelf@who.int