Call for innovative health technologies and eHealth solutions for low-resource settings

Medical devices and eHealth solutions have the potential to improve lives. However, too many worldwide suffer because they don’t have access to the appropriate health technologies. This call highlights the importance of these innovative technologies towards improved health outcomes and the quality of life.

WHO aims to raise awareness of the pressing need for appropriate design solutions. The Compendium series was initiated to encourage a dialogue between stakeholders and stimulate further development and technology dissemination. The annual publication serves as a neutral platform to introduce health technologies and eHealth solutions that have the potential to improve health outcomes or to offer a solution to an unmet medical need. The Compendium series specifically focuses on showcasing innovative technologies that are not yet widely available in under-resourced regions. It is designed to help developing countries becoming aware of appropriate health technologies and eHealth solutions in support of their environment.

The Compendium 2011 can be viewed at:

1 Background and Aim of the Call

Medical devices are indispensable in health care delivery as tools for prevention, diagnosis, treatment and rehabilitation. Further, eHealth solutions - from simple SMS appointment reminders on a mobile phone, to more complex electronic medical record systems - are promising approaches in the use of information and communication technologies to support health systems and services. However, despite the exponential growth of scientific and technological development, availability of and access to appropriate and affordable health technologies and eHealth solutions in low- and middle-income countries are still insufficient. The Medical Devices and eHealth units of WHO aim to help make available the benefits of core health technologies with the purpose to address global health concerns by developing a framework for their assessment, management and regulation and by challenging the scientific and business communities to identify and develop innovative technologies. This call aims to identify innovative health technologies and eHealth solutions which address global health concerns (section 4) and which are likely to be appropriate and affordable for use in low-resource settings. Selected technologies will be featured in the "Compendium of innovative health technologies and eHealth solutions for low-resource settings 2012" and on the Medical Devices and eHealth websites of WHO.

2 Characterization of Innovative Health Technologies and eHealth solutions

For the purpose of this call, ‘health technologies’ refers to medical devices (such as medical equipment and instruments, in vitro diagnostics and imaging devices), assistive devices, and related health technologies excluding clinical procedures, medicinal products, vaccines, biological therapeutic products, or tissue-engineered medical products. ‘eHealth solutions’ refers to the use of information and communication technologies including electronic and communication devices and applications (such as telemedicine; mobile applications for surveillance, diagnostics, appointment reminders; etc.) in support of health systems and services. All eHealth applications should conform to the existing standards.
• New products or applications;
• Products or applications which have been commercialized for less than 5 years in high-resource settings but have not yet been widely used in low- and middle-resource settings;
• Non-health products or applications that have recently been adapted for a health purpose;
• Products available in low resource settings for less than 3 years but not yet widely used.

Contributors to the Compendium 2011 whose technology advanced from ‘under development’ status to launched product are encouraged to submit their updated entry.

3 Eligibility

The ‘Call for innovative health technologies and eHealth solutions for low-resource settings’ is open to all. This includes manufacturers, institutions, academia, individuals and non-profit organizations which design, manufacture and/or supply any type of innovative health technologies or eHealth solutions that are suitable for use in low-resource settings and address the global health concerns as outlined in section 5 below.

4 Health problems to be addressed

The health problems addressed by the innovative technologies should be related to the following key global health concerns:
• Prematurity and low birth weight
• Birth asphyxia and birth trauma
• Neonatal infections
• Infant and child (under 5) mortality
• Deficient maternal health
• Diarrheal diseases
• HIV/AIDS
• Tuberculosis
• Malaria
• Cancer
• Cerebrovascular disease
• Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease
• Diabetes mellitus
• Ischemic heart disease
• Lower respiratory infections
• Refractive errors
• Cataracts
• Hearing loss
• Road traffic accidents
• Unipolar depressive disorders
• Conditions related to aging
• Health workforce training
• Management of patient information
• Management of hospital information
• Management of emergencies
5 Selection of technologies

All submissions undergo an evaluation process; technologies will be assessed by an expert panel based on the material and evidence provided by the applicant as well as publicly available information.

Note that inclusion in the Compendium does not constitute a warranty for fitness of the technology for a particular purpose.

Entries must demonstrate the technology’s suitability for use in low-resource settings. Technologies are then selected for inclusion in the Compendium if they fulfill at least one of the criteria below:

- The technology or the practice is suited to address a health problem or to improve current health systems and services than existing solutions available. Examples of improvements over existing technologies may include superior effectiveness; enhanced ease of use and maintenance; reduced training requirements; labor saving; improved safety level for user, patient, and/or environment; increased social and cultural acceptability; technical superiority; improved accessibility, better cost-effectiveness and affordability; reduced energy requirements.
- The technology provides an appropriate solution to a health problem not yet addressed by any other technology.

6 Submission of Application and Deadline

Interested applicants can download the submission form from: www.who.int/medical_devices or www.who.int/goe. The applications should be completed in English and e-mailed to: for medical devices medicaldevices@who.int for ehealth solutions ehealth@who.int Please provide an MS word version and a scanned pdf version containing your signatures. Please send images files and attach all documentation supporting your entry in the same email. Please make sure that the file size does not exceed 5MB.

Please note the following deadlines,

- Innovative health technologies - 29 February 2012
- eHealth solutions – 30 April 2012.

Receipt of applications will be confirmed by e-mail.

For questions related to the Call and Compendium please contact us at medicaldevices@who.int or ehealth@who.int.

7 Terms, Conditions, and Disclaimers

WHO reserves the right not to select any application or to annul the solicitation process at any time, without thereby incurring any liability or any obligation to inform the applicants of the grounds for the WHO’s action. WHO reserves the right, at any time during the solicitation process, to modify the scope of the Call. At any step in the evaluation process, WHO reserves the right to issue an amendment to the Call detailing the change to only those applicants who have not been officially eliminated at that point in time. Applications will be evaluated by WHO, in collaboration with partner experts and institutions, in its sole discretion, taking into account the criteria outlined above. There is no obligation by WHO to reveal, or discuss with any applicant, how a submission was assessed, or to provide any other information relative to the selection process.

Incomplete applications and applications submitted after the deadline will, in principle, be disregarded unless WHO, in its sole discretion, decides otherwise in respect of such incomplete or late application. WHO may request applicants to submit complementary or additional information as a condition for consideration. Any possible requests to submit complementary information and/or to submit a more detailed application, as well as any discussions ensuing therefrom, will be exploratory only, and do not mean that the applicant concerned will be selected.

WHO will not be held to offer applicants any explanation or justification as to why their proposal has been rejected and/or why they have not been selected. The list of selected applications will not necessarily be made public as such. The submission of applications, the subsequent selection process and outcome of the selection process will not be subject to any claim of any kind
whatever, or appeal. Each applicant will be notified in writing by WHO (by e-mail) whether or not the submission has been selected.

Any and all costs and expenses incurred in relation to, or ensuing from, the submission of an application (including the possible complementary information and/or a more detailed proposal, if so requested by WHO) will not be subject to claims for financial compensation of any kind whatsoever.

WHO does not warrant that any medical devices, innovations, concepts or products that may be used, identified or otherwise developed from selected proposals will be successfully commercialized in target countries, or that WHO will finance or otherwise support the development or commercialization of any product. By selecting applications, WHO will not be held to endorse any product but will solely aim at drawing stakeholders' attention to innovative technologies with a view to furthering development and availability of, and access to such innovative health technologies.

The mention of specific companies or of certain manufacturers' products at any stage of the selection process or subsequently will not imply that they are endorsed or recommended by WHO in preference to others of a similar nature that are not mentioned, nor that they have been found to be safe and efficacious.

Without WHO's prior written approval, selected applicants shall not, in any statement of an advertising or promotional nature, refer to their selection under this Call for innovative health technologies. In no case shall selected applicants use the name or the emblem of the World Health Organization, or any abbreviation thereof, in relation to their business or otherwise. The same applies to all applicants during the selection process and thereafter.