Call for applications
EDCTP-TDR Clinical Research and Development Fellowships

Deadline for applications: 28 February 2020 17:00 (GMT)

Summary

The Clinical Research and Development Fellowship (CRDF) scheme is jointly implemented by EDCTP (European-Developing Countries Clinical Trial Partnership) and TDR (the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases). The 2019 Call for Applications put out by EDCTP can be found here.

We invite applicants interested in a CRDF fellowship to carefully read the eligibility criteria for both EDCTP and TDR’s Calls for Applications.

EDCTP will fund fellows employed by a sub-Saharan African legal entity (the fellow’s home organization) to be placed in European-based host organizations - pharmaceutical companies, Contract Research Organizations (CROs) and Product Development Partnerships (PDPs) - to train and develop specific clinical research skills of relevance to Infectious Diseases of Poverty (IDPs).

TDR will fund fellows employed by academic and research institutions in any low- and middle-income country (LMIC), not limited to those in the sub-Saharan Africa region, to be placed in pharmaceutical companies, PDPs and academic affiliated research organizations, either in or outside Europe, to train and develop new research skills on infectious diseases.

Successful applicants are placed for 12 months in host training organizations and then receive a reintegration plan for 12 months at their home institutions.

TDR is hosted at the World Health Organization (WHO) and is sponsored by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and WHO.

Background

Researchers and clinical trial staff from LMICs who are involved in clinical research projects have limited opportunities to acquire experience and develop skills for conducting clinical trials outside of an academic or public-sector setting. As a result, few researchers and clinical trial staff from LMICs assume leadership roles in clinical research on poverty related and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)³.

³ For the purpose of this call, Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) include: dengue/severe dengue; rabies; Chagas disease; Human African trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness); leishmaniasis; cysticercosis/taeniasis; dracunculiasis (guinea-worm disease); echinococcosis; foodborne trematodiases; lymphatic filariasis; onchocerciasis (river blindness); schistosomiasis; soil-transmitted helminthiases; buruli ulcer; leprosy (Hansen disease); trachoma; yaws.
The TDR CRDF programme is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IFPMA). It offers targeted training in research and development in host training organizations (pharmaceutical companies, product development partnerships (PDPs) and research organizations) to develop highly skilled local personnel from disease-endemic LMICs, to enhance competencies in clinical trials for drugs, vaccines and diagnostics on a broad range of poverty related infectious diseases and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs).

**Scope**

The purpose of the TDR CRDF is to provide funding support to researchers and clinical trial staff from LMICs to acquire essential skills in clinical research and development through placements in host training organizations. The scheme targets early to mid-career researchers or clinical trial staff who are employed by a legal entity in LMICs where they are currently conducting clinical research activities in the scope of TDR.

TDR will fund fellows employed by academic and/or research institutions in any LMIC to be placed in host training organizations, either in or outside Europe, to train and develop new research skills on poverty related infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, Ebola and NTDs.

Fellows can only be funded once under this grant scheme. Grants awarded are not transferrable from one individual to another. Placements at host training organizations are for a period of 12 months followed by a reintegration period of 12 months in their home institution. Fellows must be committed to return to their home institution for a minimum of two years after completion of the two-year fellowship. Fellows should be able to demonstrate how the experience gained during the training programme will be applied upon return to their home organization.

**Expected impact**

The aim of the CRDF programme is to develop additional human resources that will increase high quality research and development of required interventions against poverty related infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDS, TB, malaria, Ebola and NTDs in LMICs. Fellowships are expected to add significantly to the development of the best and most promising researchers from LMICs and maximise their contribution to improve function of research institutions in LMICs, including training of peers of the successful fellows. The programme will strengthen collaboration between research institutions, clinical researchers and staff in LMICs, pharmaceutical companies and PDPs. The programme will contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 3 “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages”.

**Placements**

Host training organizations may offer placements in the following areas: design and conduct of clinical trials, including operational planning, management and evaluation; clinical development of vaccines, including associated epidemiological studies; assessment of drug development programmes; diagnostics; biostatistics/epidemiology; data management and pharmacovigilance.
Host training organizations that have agreed to participate in this scheme are listed below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Host training organizations</th>
<th>City, country</th>
<th>Number of places</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi)</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Vaccine Initiative (EVI)</td>
<td>Heidelberg, Germany</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FIOCRUZ-Fundaçao Oswaldo Cruz</td>
<td>Rio de Janeiro, Brazil</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND)</td>
<td>Geneva, Switzerland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSK Biologicals</td>
<td>Wavre, Belgium</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GSK</td>
<td>Hertfordshire, UK</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infectious Diseases Data Observatory (IDDO)</td>
<td>Oxford, UK</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institut Pasteur du Cambodge (IPC)</td>
<td>Phnom Penh, Cambodia</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISGlobal Barcelona institute for Global Health</td>
<td>Barcelona, Spain</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI)</td>
<td>London, UK</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Vaccine Institute (IVI)</td>
<td>Seoul, South Korea</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg Institute of Health Competence Center for Methodology and Statistics (CCMS)</td>
<td>Luxembourg, Luxembourg</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luxembourg Institute of Health Clinical and Epidemiologial Investigation Center (CEIC)</td>
<td>Luxembourg, Luxembourg</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novartis Institute for BioMedical Research (NIBR)</td>
<td>Basel, Switzerland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novartis Pharma AG</td>
<td>Basel, Switzerland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH)</td>
<td>Basel, Switzerland</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Details about the placements are provided at the following link: https://www.who.int/tdr/grants/calls/CRDF_List_of_partner_organizations.pdf
Eligibility

At the deadline for submission of applications, the fellow should:

- be a postgraduate (MSc or PhD) or medical/pharmacy graduate conducting clinical research activities in the scope of TDR.
- have obtained the first degree within 15 years of submission of the application.
- have been a researcher or clinical staff member employed for the last 12 months in an institution with a registered legal entity in LMIC conducting clinical research activities in the scope of TDR.
- must be a national or citizen of, and resident in, a LMIC.

Application procedure

The application should be sent in electronic format (Word or PDF only) to cdftdr@who.int on the TDR application form. Reference letters must be attached electronically. The following information should be provided:

1. Full name with the family name underlined.
2. Date of birth, gender and nationality (copy of information page of passport or other identification document may be requested later).
3. Name, address, telephone number and e-mail address of institution where the applicant is employed. All applicants must have permanent employment.
4. Telephone number and e-mail address for personnel contact and possible interview (if not the same as institutional telephone number above #3) must be included.
5. Educational qualifications, including place of study and graduation date (transcripts and copies of qualifications are not required but may be requested later).
6. A description (1-page maximum) of the applicant’s current post and of the post held immediately before.
7. A description (1-page maximum) of the applicant’s current work/research interests including disease(s) interest.
8. A description (1-page maximum) of competencies and skills the applicant would like to acquire during the fellowship.
9. A description (1-page maximum) of how the applicant, if selected, plans to apply the acquired skills and knowledge after returning to home country/institution.
10. An endorsement from the Director of the applicant’s home institution testifying the ability of the applicant to successfully undertake the training proposed and certifying that the applicant, if selected, will be financially supported as a leave of absence. The Director has also to indicate how the proposed training will strengthen the institution’s capability, to conduct clinical research upon return of the fellow.
11. A list of the applicant’s publications and other abstracts or presentations.
12. A letter of recommendation from two senior scientists/professors that includes their full name, address, telephone number and e-mail address. Please scan and include these with the application.
Deadline for submission of proposals

All applications must be received at cdftdr@who.int by 28 February 2020, 17:00 (GMT)

Selection process

The process includes the following steps:

- Applications submitted before the deadline undergo an initial screening by TDR secretariat, based on the eligibility criteria.
- Eligible applications will be forwarded to participating host training organizations.
- Host training organizations select up to five shortlisted candidates for interview.
- Interviews are held between the home institution, the candidate and the host training organization in the presence of TDR.
- Host training organizations rank candidates based on the interview.
- The final matching process of candidates and host training organizations is conducted by TDR.
- When the matching process is complete, home institutions, fellows and host training organizations are informed of the final match, following which contractual arrangements begin.

Financial provisions

The grant covers one economy class return ticket (home – host training organization – home); a monthly stipend of approximately US$ 4 000; a one-time allowance of US $ 1 500 for educational support materials; health insurance and support to attend relevant meetings during the course of the fellowship, up to a maximum amount of US$ 3 000, and access to an alumni website and to the Professional Membership Scheme for clinical trialists website.

A break at 6 months of fellowship can be offered to the fellow to go back to the home institution to present to the peers the acquired training and the scientific progress made so far.

The grant also includes provisional funds for reintegration conditional upon the approval of a progress report and reintegration plan.

Gender

TDR is encouraging women to apply to this CRD fellowship. Stories from previous women CRDF are available at the following links:

https://www.who.int/tdr/capacity/strengthening/career_development/atinuke-olaleye/en/
http://www.who.int/tdr/capacity/strengthening/career_development/phumla-sinxadi/en/
http://www.who.int/tdr/capacity/strengthening/career_development/brenda_okech/en/
In addition, to help women understand the professional and personal challenges linked to this fellowship and how to overcome them, TDR has developed mentoring activities. For further information, please feel free to contact the following mentors: Dr Maame Anima Attobrah Sarfo (animasarfo@gmail.com) or Dr Clara Agutu (claraagutu@gmail.com) or Dr Atinuke Olaleye (tinukeolaleye@gmail.com)

For further information

For questions related to this funding scheme, please contact Dr Pascal Launois

TDR will acknowledge receipt of applications within 2 weeks of the submission deadline by e-mail. Applicants who do not receive an acknowledgement within the specified time should contact Dr Pascal Launois. An acknowledgement of receipt does not imply that the application is eligible for review.