Call for Applications 2019-2020

Joint TDR and WHO regional offices for Africa, the Americas, Europe, and South-East Asia
Small Grants Scheme for Operational / Implementation Research to tackle the threat of Antimicrobial Resistance

Deadline for submission: 15 July 2019

The World Health Organization regional offices for Africa, the Americas, Europe and South-East Asia and TDR, the UNICEF / UNDP / World Bank / WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, are pleased to announce the 2019-2020 call for applications for the Joint Small Grants Scheme for implementation research in Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR).

BACKGROUND

The Small Grants Scheme is a joint initiative of TDR and WHO regional offices under the current TDR Strategy. TDR is sponsored by the United Nations Children’s Fund, the United Nations Development Programme, the World Bank and the World Health Organization, and is hosted at WHO. It supports implementation research on infectious diseases of poverty that leads to health improvement and strengthening research capacity of individuals and institutions in low- and middle-income countries. TDR also supports translating research results into policy and improved health practices and promotes the engagement of individuals and communities in using research evidence to reduce the disease burden in their respective countries. TDR is also using **Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative (SORT IT)** to build operational research capacity that will generate and promote use of evidence on the emergence, spread and health impact of AMR for tackling this global problem.

Antimicrobial resistance is a global public health challenge. AMR makes standard treatments ineffective and allows infections to persist and spread. Because the drivers of antimicrobial resistance lie in humans, animals, plants, food and the environment, there is a need for robust evidence to guide One Health interventions that can contain AMR.

OBJECTIVES OF THE JOINT SMALL GRANTS SCHEME

1. Strengthen the research capacity of relevant individuals and institutions in countries.
2. Generate new knowledge, solutions and implementation strategies that can be applied by countries for the control and elimination of infectious diseases.
3. Encourage intersectoral dialogue and one health approach.

SCOPE OF THIS CALL

The scope of the call is to cover a spectrum of studies that utilize operational or implementation research methodology, focusing on a One Health approach including human, animal and/or environmental health as one of the core principles of an effective response against the AMR problem.
THE AIM OF THIS CALL

1) To support operational or implementation research that:
   i) Improves surveillance and monitoring of the AMR magnitude and burden and antibiotic use in eligible countries.
   ii) Identifies local drivers of antimicrobial drug resistance in human and animal populations.
   iii) Improves effective interventions to minimize the impact of AMR, including infection prevention and control, antimicrobial stewardship and other procedural interventions.

2) To build adequate and sustainable structures and processes for evidence-informed decision-making in national policies and programmes.

3) To foster mechanisms for knowledge sharing and translation to maximize the potential for broader research impact.

ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES AND APPLICATION LANGUAGES

Applicants submitting proposals must be researchers or health professionals working in ministries of health, national public universities or research institutions, and who are citizens of one of the following countries:

- **WHO European Region**: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, Moldova, North Macedonia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan
- **WHO South-East Asian Region**: Myanmar, Nepal
- **WHO African Region**: Ghana, Sierra Leone, Uganda
- **WHO Americas Region**: Colombia, Ecuador

Proposals may be submitted in either English, Spanish or Russian.

CRITERIA FOR RELEVANCE

- The proposal must be developed in collaboration with relevant programmes and/or departments within the ministries of health. Proposals from all areas of One Health will be considered. Staff involved in implementation of the National AMR Action Plans or staff whose responsibilities include AMR issues should be part of the research team to maximize research update.
- The proposal must clearly illustrate how the knowledge gap addressed by the research is relevant or important in the context of the local health system or AMR programmes. The linkage between the proposed research and National Action Plans within the country should be clearly demonstrated.
- Proposals should include a fully developed policy and practice strategy – i.e. stakeholder mapping and engagement, inclusion as co-authors, a communication/dissemination strategy, etc. Proposals that have the endorsement of the ministry of health or appropriate authority (e.g. animal or environmental health) would be at an advantage.
- The proposal needs to fill a knowledge gap related to an operational/programmatic issue that has a direct policy and programmatic relevance within the country, e.g. addresses a priority in the country’s national health plan or infectious disease control programmes workplan.
- The proposal must strengthen research capacity and foster collaboration between research institutions and disease control programmes in the country.
- The results dissemination plan should be designed to reach the broadest spectrum of stakeholders from the respective field.
- TDR promotes gender equity and balance in research teams at all levels and therefore encourages applications from women researchers as principal investigators and as part of the project team.
CRITERIA FOR SCIENTIFIC MERIT AND QUALITY

- Novelty of the concept, innovation (i.e. does not replicate previous research)
- Encourages multidisciplinary, multisectoral approach
- Hypothesis and objectives are clear and well defined
- Deliverables and milestones are clear and realistic
- Methods are described in sufficient detail, including quality assurance and control
- Literature review is comprehensive
- There is a sound plan for uptake of research results into policy and practice, including a description of follow-up on the application of outputs
- Research ethics and environmental aspects are addressed appropriately

CRITERIA FOR FEASIBILITY

- Investigator / team has a good track record in conducting research
- Project team has strong expertise in the respective field
- Support from institutions involved in the project
- Appropriate and well justified budget covering all essential elements the project requires
- Feasible timeline, taking into consideration the planning, implementation and reporting phases
- Sufficient time allocated by the principal investigator to manage the project
- Be able to seek ethics approvals for their research in the country
- Leveraging resources (in-kind, infrastructure, technical support, etc.) from other projects and/or institutions interested in the proposed project
- Risk assessment addresses the most significant risks with appropriate mitigation actions

APPLICANTS (PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATORS) SHOULD:

1. Have a minimum of one publication in a peer-reviewed journal.
2. Demonstrate experience in operational and/or implementation research. This might include but not be limited to evidence of having been trained in operational /implementation research and being able to conduct research independently. Such training could include SORT IT, the TDR Implementation Research Toolkit, the MOOC (massive open online course) on implementation research or other formal research training experience.
3. Experience working in one of the areas related to the Global Action Plan on AMR would also be an advantage.

EVALUATION CRITERIA AND STEPS

Each application will be screened for compliance with the eligibility criteria. Following this, each eligible application will be assessed independently by at least two reviewers, and scores will be assigned based on the sets of criteria. The highest scoring applications will be recommended for funding.

We encourage applicants to review their own application against the criteria above before submitting.

Applications not fulfilling the eligibility criteria will be excluded, and the applicants will be advised by 30 July 2019. The final decision will be announced to applicants by 30 August 2019.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT

Up to US$ 15 000 per project, including an estimate of open access publication costs.

Timeframe: Projects should be able to be completed within a period of 12-18 months.

MOOC requirement:

Successful applicants will be required to take the MOOC prior to commencing the work on the project. The course is offered in English, Spanish and Russian.
HOW TO APPLY

Deadline for submission: 15 July 2019

Download the application form

Application forms must be completed and signed appropriately. Incomplete applications will not be accepted.

Please include:

1. Letter of endorsement from the related disease control programme(s) of the ministry of health (or other ministry)
2. Current curriculum vitae of all investigators

Application form and related documents should be emailed to: eurotdrcall@gmail.com