



**COR
NTD**



CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Operational Research on Access to Morbidity Management
& Disability Prevention Services

A call for proposed studies to be funded with UK aid from the British people through a grant to the Coalition for Operational Research on Neglected Tropical Diseases (COR-NTD)

- [Formative](#)
- [Intervention](#)
- [Review Criteria](#)
- [Reviewers](#)
- [Submission](#)
- [Attachments](#)
- [Notes](#)
- [Appendix](#)

(DECATUR, GA, May 30, 2018) —The Neglected Tropical Diseases Support Center (NTD-SC) at The Task Force for Global Health is currently soliciting proposals for operational research aimed at improving access to morbidity management and disability prevention (MMDP). The NTD-SC and its partners are committed to promoting collaborations between country programmes and local and international researchers, which will lead to endemic-country capacity building and provide value for money through efficient use of resources.

With this call, the NTD-SC seeks proposals for operational research nested in national programmes targeting lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, trachoma, and leprosy. Projects will be funded with UK aid from the British government via its support for the Coalition for Operational Research on NTDs (COR-NTD), for which the NTD-SC serves as Secretariat.

The principal focus for this call for proposals is on **access to morbidity management and disability prevention (MMDP) services**, with selected projects conducted by or in close coordination with national neglected tropical disease (NTD) programmes. This work

enhances UK aid's existing efforts to promote health equity and global goals to achieve Universal Health Coverage.

All projects supported with UK aid should improve health outcomes in developing countries, delivering gains that countries can sustain and build upon. As poor health is both a cause and consequence of poverty – and women often suffer more than men from illness in developing countries – projects should promote equitable positive health outcomes.

Projects should be aligned with the targets of the World Health Organization (WHO) and address key barriers to the elimination of lymphatic filariasis and trachoma by 2020, zero leprosy by 2020, the elimination of onchocerciasis by 2025, or the sustained control of schistosomiasis by 2020, as well as on alleviating the suffering of affected populations. Projects should also align with WHO guidelines and strategic plan for MMDP. (For example, guidelines for MMDP for lymphatic filariasis are available [here](#).)

Applications will be judged on their potential impact. There is no formal ceiling on the value of each award; however, submitted proposals must represent value for money. Furthermore, preference will be given to country-led projects.

Applications will be accepted until August 30, 2018, or until the COR-NTD Secretariat receives an adequate number of proposals that meet selection criteria. The Secretariat anticipates funding up to 10 proposals. Proposals will be reviewed in the order in which they are received.

Research proposals should address both formative and interventional research questions outlined below and focus on countries that have existing national MMDP strategic and implementation plans or that have conducted a situation analysis.

Formative

- To what extent do endemic communities have access to MMDP services?
- What are the barriers and facilitators of access to these services and quality of care?
- What is the capacity of the health system and NTD programme to provide these services?

Intervention

- What strategies can be adapted or developed to create demand and provide access to quality healthcare for persons with disability?
- What is the effect of integrating these services into other disease control programmes or using other health service delivery platforms?

Accepted proposals must have formative and interventional components and include the following:

1. Collaborative Engagement: Discuss the level of engagement between research and implementing partners and the national NTD programme to conceptualize and develop the proposal.

2. Background & Significance

- a. State clear primary and secondary research questions for both the formative and intervention components of the proposal.
- b. Describe the problem, disease burden, and existing availability, readiness, and quality of MMDP services in health facilities, citing any evidence from previous research and programme disaggregated data through a gender, equity, and human rights lens – justifying the research questions, approach, and methodology.
- c. Identify and address gaps in knowledge or programmatic activities that must be filled to improve access to services; and why the research is needed.

3. Conceptual Framework & Theory of Change

- a. *Conceptual Framework* – a conceptual framework lays out the key factors, constructs, or variables, and presumed relationships among them.
- b. *Theory of Change* – a theory of change illustrates how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context.

Provide a diagram and description for your conceptual framework and theory of change.

4. Methods & Materials:

- a. For each research question (**in each component**), outline the following:
 - i. Hypotheses
 - ii. Methodology
 - iii. Proposed dependent and independent variables
 - iv. Data collection tools
 - v. Data analysis plan
 - vi. Output(s) or expected outcomes
- b. Justification for study site selection and sample size
- c. Brief documentation of how the community will be engaged in the research process (approach described in the appendix below) and how the study team will promote knowledge translation among various stakeholders.

Review Criteria

- **Writing (10%):** Applications should be clear and succinct and written in English or French. Applicants should ensure that applications are free from grammar, syntax, spelling errors, and that any formulas are correct.

- **Significance (30%)**
 - The need for the proposed research is clear.
 - The proposed research has the potential to improve delivery of and integration of MMDP services.
 - The proposal demonstrates significant potential to inform future programmatic activities and implementation research.
 - The proposed research has strong potential to inform programme policies at national or sub-national level.
 - A successful outcome of the proposed research is likely to impact a new policy.
- **Innovation (20%)**
 - The proposed study utilizes novel theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, proposed data collection tools, or interventions.
 - The proposal demonstrates refinement, improvement, or new application of theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies of interventions proposed.
 - There is potential for collaboration between NTD programmes and Ministry of Health staff focused on other health issues (e.g. HIV/AIDS, malaria, maternal and child health (MCH), and immunization) to build on lessons learned in their programmes.
 - There is evidence that the proposed study has potential for local capacity strengthening. For example:
 - Involvement of local junior and mid-level researchers
 - Selection of data collectors from the community
 - There is a clear demonstration of how the research findings can be scaled up.
 - The research questions are in line with national health strategies.
- **Approach (30%)**
 - The overall proposed strategy, methodology, and analyses for each research question are scientifically appropriate. Applicants document a plan for disaggregation of data from a gender, equity, and human rights perspective.
 - The proposed methods are strong and appropriate to answer the research questions.
 - The proposal fully addresses safeguarding issues – including the protection of human subjects from research risks, consent from human subjects, the inclusion (or exclusion) of individuals on the basis of sex/gender, race, and ethnicity, as well as the inclusion (exclusion) of children-justified in terms of the research questions and research strategy proposed.
- **Study Core Team (5%)**
 - Team members are appropriately qualified and experienced; and have the capacity to carry out the study.

- **Budget (5%)**

Project budget must demonstrate value for money through economy, efficiency, effectiveness, and equity. A clear justification of all costs must be provided including salary, travel, expenses, meetings, and workshops.

Reviewers

Each proposal will be assigned to 3 reviewers. Reviewers will include 1 representative of the NTD-SC; and 2 external consultants. These reviewers should have no conflict of interest; and will be expected to document quantitative and qualitative feedback for their assigned proposals. Each review criterion will be given a score between 0-4.9, where:

1. 0-0.9=Rejected
2. 1-1.9=Needs major revision
3. 2-2.9=Needs minor revision/Good
4. 3-3.9=Very good
5. 4-4.9=Excellent

The NTD-SC will take the average of scores and scale them to fit a weighted scale. Proposals which receive a final score between 0 and 1.9 will not be funded; and those with scores between 3-4.9 are eligible to be funded.

Submission

To submit a proposal, please fill out the webform linked here:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/361ec6614770402e8139e8a10bbfd0dd>

Applications will be accepted until **August 30, 2018**, or until the COR-NTD Secretariat receives an adequate number of proposals that meet selection criteria. The Secretariat anticipates funding up to 10 proposals. Proposals will be reviewed in the order in which they are received.

Attachments

Applicants are required to submit the following as attachments:

1. CVs for all members of the study team
2. Letter of support from the Ministry of Health
3. Conceptual framework and theory of change diagrams
4. NTD-SC Budget Template
5. Budget Justification (please use notes section of NTD-SC budget template to provide justification for various line items)
6. National government document outlining per diem rates
7. NTD-SC Project Timeline Template

Notes

Proposals can be submitted in French following the outline above.

Completed proposals should be three to four pages in length. Submissions will be declined if they do not meet the criteria set out in this call for proposals.

If neither English nor French is the team's primary language, please contact Caroline Kusi, Social Scientist at the NTD-SC at ckusi@taskforce.org directly for assistance with the development of your proposal.

Appendix

Community-Based Participatory Research involves the collaborative engagement of communities in the design, implementation, and dissemination of research findings. This process starts with the establishment of a relationship, trust, and partnership with the community, as well as the following:

- i. The community participates fully in identifying issues of greatest importance.
- ii. Instruments are developed with community input and tested in similar populations.
- iii. Data is collected by members of the community, if possible, with a focus on capacity building.
- iv. Findings are first shared and interpreted with community members.
- v. Community members assist with the identification of appropriate venues to disseminate results.
- vi. There is commitment to building on strengths and assets in communities.

Knowledge Translation

- vii. The study team develops immediate, medium, and long-term action plans for national and sub-national stakeholders that include:
 - a. Human and financial resources required to address key issues
 - b. Sectors within and without the Ministry of Health that are needed to address key issues
 - c. Timeline of implementation of action plans
 - d. Making use of and improving existing programmatic structures
 - e. Planning for sharing action plans with national Ministry of Health focal points after sub-national stakeholder meeting