

5th CALL FOR PROPOSALS: GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

JULY 2017

INTRODUCTION

This document provides guidelines for applicants to the R2HC Fifth Call for Proposals, which opens for Expressions of Interest on Wednesday 5 July 2017 and closes on 16 August 2017 23.59 hrs BST.

It should be read in conjunction with other documents related to the call that are listed at the end of the document. Please consult these documents before reverting to the programme team with any questions.

This document covers the scope of funding; our approach to partnerships, ethics, eligibility criteria, and funding availability; and how to apply.

SCOPE OF FUNDING

The scope of this call covers any research¹ that will strengthen the evidence base around public health interventions, and thereby lead to more effective public health interventions in humanitarian crises.²

“Humanitarian crises” for the purpose of the programme includes natural disasters, conflicts, or complex emergencies, either at the regional, national or sub-national levels, within lower or middle income countries.

Within the 5th Call, applicants may seek funding from one of two different streams:

- i. **Core Funding:** Research concerned with health outcomes in the acute phase³ of an existing humanitarian crisis is prioritised. Proposals focusing on resilience/disaster risk reduction or early recovery will be considered where a clear link is made with health outcomes in an acute phase.
- ii. **Rapid Response Funding:** Research in the context of a rapid-onset crisis which is yet to occur. A mechanism has been established to be able to fund research in the acute phase of a rapid-onset crisis, for which the timeline of ‘standard’ funding programmes would be too slow.

¹ By research Elrha refers to a methodical study that will prove a hypothesis or answer a specific question. The research must be systematic and follow a series of steps and a rigid standard protocol.

² In 2013 Elrha commissioned a Humanitarian Health Evidence Review to undertake a systematic review of the existing evidence on public health interventions in humanitarian crises. The final report is available on the [R2HC website](#). Applicants will need to position their applications in the context of the existing evidence, are encouraged to undertake their own literature review, and to use the review findings for this purpose.

³ An acute or emergency phase can exist within a chronic, slow onset or sudden onset situation. It may be defined by a) a Declaration of Disaster, which is an official in-country issuance of a state of emergency upon the occurrence of a large-scale calamity; b) a declaration of a L2 or L3 emergency by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee or an individual humanitarian agency; or c) the well-supported, evidence-based argument of the institution that applies for R2HC funding.

Under this rapid response mechanism, successful applications would be ‘pre-approved’ for funding. The full research grant would be triggered if and when a crisis occurs that meets the relevant criteria, upon the request of the applicant. (Please [see our website](#) for more information.)

Proposals under the Call could fund research that addresses:

- public health priorities specific to the context of a humanitarian crisis that lacks a solid existing evidence base;
- how public health interventions not specific to a humanitarian context can be adapted and delivered, and their effectiveness maximised, in a humanitarian context;
- health systems, including coordination of the public health response in humanitarian contexts;
- specific interventions designed to improve health outcomes, such as cash transfers.

Proposals may focus on specific, or multiple public health issues, gathering data or evidence with the potential to contribute to improved public health outcomes in humanitarian contexts.

While the thematic scope of the Call is open, under the R2HC 5th Call, proposals which address the following would be particularly welcome:

Prioritisation of public health humanitarian interventions and maximising value for money.

The potential scale of impact of funded research is an important criteria and we therefore strongly encourage applications that focus on:

- comparative (multi-country) research
- research that is replicable in multiple contexts
- multi-sector integrated responses.

Research located in priority crisis areas including ongoing and sudden crises categorised as ‘Level 3’ is encouraged (see [UNOCHA’s website](#)). Research proposals may focus on any of the various humanitarian crisis settings, whether urban or rural, camp or general population.

Research proposals are required to demonstrate how gender equality and social inclusion will be addressed through the research process and, also, how the research outcomes will contribute to increased gender equality and social inclusion during humanitarian crises.

Research proposals may focus on addressing public health issues specifically affecting vulnerable and marginalised groups, such as women and girls, the elderly, disabled persons and others, so as to close the evidence gaps in relation to humanitarian crises and marginalised/vulnerable groups.

Proposed research methodologies should be of a standard such that final papers will be publishable in peer-reviewed academic journals. Robust innovative methodologies that advance research in humanitarian settings are encouraged. Primary and/or secondary data collection approaches will be considered.

PARTNERSHIPS

Applicants must have a research team including both a research institution and an operational humanitarian organisation. This requirement fulfils the R2HC objectives of supporting partnerships between academics and practitioners, and ensuring that funded research is based both on rigorous research methodology and operational experience.

Collaboration between northern and southern research institutions and researchers is strongly encouraged. The R2HC programme may be able to assist with identifying additional partners with specific skills or expertise, if requested.

Resources on forming and developing effective research partnerships are available on the [R2HC website](#). Further advice and guidance is available if required from [Sarah Palmer-Felgate](#), R2HC Partnerships Manager.

ETHICS

The ethical challenges of conducting public health research in crisis settings and alongside operational humanitarian programmes will be a major consideration for applicants.

To help applicants ensure the ethical viability of their proposals, and to support the ethical review of proposals by ethical review bodies and others, the R2HC programme commissioned an Ethical Framework for health research in humanitarian crises. This has recently been reviewed and updated, and is available on the R2HC website [here](#) and the introduction [here](#).

All applicants will be expected to acquire ethical approval for their research from their organisation or institution. They will also be expected to receive approval from ethical review boards in each country that they will be conducting research.

Further details on ethical considerations will be required for shortlisted applicants invited to submit a Full Proposal.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

It is expected that applications will be developed and submitted by an institution/organisation representing a research partnership appropriate to the proposed field of study. Research teams could include a variety of organisations (such as research institutions, operational organisations, governmental organisations, individual experts, and local non-governmental or community based organisations). Please note that R2HC research teams must include both a research institution and an operational humanitarian organisation.

The lead applicant may not be a profit-seeking enterprise or an individual (although these may form part of the research team). At the Expression of Interest stage, applicants will be asked to submit evidence of legal registration.

For those proposals that progress beyond the Expression of Interest stage, further documents will be requested in order to conduct due diligence checks.⁴

⁴ As part of the Full Proposal stage lead applicants will be asked to present three years of audited accounts, a list of board members or trustees, an organization chart if relevant, and details of ethical policies and processes. All institutions forming part of the consortium will be asked for proof of legal status. Further due diligence information will be required before grant signing as part of the contracting process. Please email r2hc@elrha.org if you have questions in this regard.

FUNDING AVAILABLE

Up to £3m of research funding is available in the 5th Call. The R2HC is able to fund a wide range of grant sizes, including grants for large comparative studies that have the potential to generate significant impact. There is no ceiling on the amount that can be requested. The number of grants and the total amount of funding approved will depend on the quality of proposals received.

Grants will be for a maximum duration of 36 months – 24 months for the research to be conducted, followed by 12 months for uptake and dissemination activities.

For those applicants selected to go forward to the Full Proposal stage, seed funding of up to £10,000 per application will be available specifically to support the development of strong research partnerships and to finalise proposal development. In exceptional cases seed funding can be used to undertake preliminary data collection as part of the proposal development process. Applicants will be invited at the Expression of Interest stage of the application to indicate whether they want to apply for seed funding and, if so, to submit an outline seed funding proposal and budget.

Those applying for seed funding at the Expression of Interest stage are also invited to indicate whether they wish to receive support from the R2HC through facilitation of partnership development meetings. For this, priority will be given to research teams where either the lead applicant or a key partner is a southern academic institution.

HOW TO APPLY

- i. There will be a two-stage selection process for the R2HC 5th Call for Proposals: an initial Expression of Interest stage, and a subsequent Full Proposal stage for shortlisted applicants.
- ii. Expressions of Interest should be submitted through the online Common Grant Application system. Requested information includes a summary of the research proposal, preliminary details of the research consortium, and an outline budget. Applicants will need to register for the system before proceeding with applications. A link to the application, where full instructions are provided, is available on the [R2HC website](#).
- iii. The application process is the same whether applying for a core grant or a rapid response grant. The on-line system allows for the applicant to choose which type of grant is being applied for.
- iv. Expressions of Interest must be submitted online by 23:59 hrs BST on 16 August 2017. Expressions of Interest will be screened for eligibility by the Elrha Secretariat and reviewed by the R2HC's independent, expert Funding Committee. A shortlist of applicants will be invited to progress to the Full Proposals stage by 2 October 2017.
- v. The deadline for the submission of Full Proposals will be 31 December 2017 17.00 hrs GMT. Full Proposals will be reviewed by technical experts and the R2HC Funding Committee in January and February 2018.
- vi. A rebuttal phase is being introduced for the R2HC 5th Call. This will take place 22 – 29 January after the technical reviews and will provide applicants with an opportunity to respond briefly to comments made by the technical reviewers before the Funding Committee reviews are conducted.
- vii. Funding Committee decisions will be communicated to those who have submitted Full Proposals in April 2018.



REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

- [Application Instructions](#)
- [Humanitarian Evidence Review](#) (updated 2015)
- [Updated Research Ethics Framework](#) (updated 2017) and [introduction](#) to the tool.
- [R2HC Research Uptake Guidance Note](#)
- [5th Call Frequently Asked Questions](#)