

## **Announcement for Minigrants Opportunity**

**Application Open Dates: April 1–31, 2019**

### **OVERVIEW**

GHD/EMPHNET is pleased to announce the “EMR Operational Research Studies” minigrants opportunity aimed at Improving polio and other vaccine preventable diseases (VPDs) immunization in the Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR). Applications will be accepted via the online application system during April 1–31, 2019. Review results will be announced before end of May 2019. Projects should be implemented during June–September 2019. The purpose of this minigrants opportunity is to implement proposals related to gaps in polio and other VPDs. Researchers, PHEP and FETP graduates and other public health professionals in priority EMR countries are welcome to apply by completing the application form [here](#) by 5:00PM Amman Time, April 31, 2019.

### **BACKGROUND**

The global efforts to eradicate Polio since the launch of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) have come a long way, as demonstrated by a 99% decrease in the number of reported wild poliovirus cases. Countries in the EMR are at different levels of risk of poliovirus spread. Two countries within this region remain polio endemic (Afghanistan and Pakistan), and other EMR countries are either ranked as very high risk (Syria, Yemen, Somalia) or high risk (Iraq, Sudan, Libya) and the remaining countries are classified as low risk.

Furthermore, several EMR countries experience immense challenges due to political unrest, complex emergencies, humanitarian crises, and socio-economic hardships affecting this region. Thus, many EMR countries witness significant population movements; mainly because of forced displacement, flow of large numbers of asylum seekers and refugees and migration of workers. Furthermore, countries are constrained by limited institutional and workforce resources and capacities, a deteriorated or weakened health systems and difficulties in sustaining effective and well-functioning surveillance and immunization systems. These challenges and adversities put EMR countries at risk of poliovirus introduction and spread and affect their ability to meet progress targets in eliminating VPDs.

With the overall goal of eradicating poliovirus and controlling/eliminating or eradicating other VPD's, GHD/EMPHNET will support operational studies aimed at improving routine immunization (RI) in the EMR. Operational research projects are expected to generate evidence needed to guide practice and policies in support of improvements in routine immunization coverage.

## OBJECTIVES

To achieve high and equitable coverage rates of routine immunization, immunity gaps need to be identified and addressed through participatory efforts of stakeholders and local communities. The minigrants funding opportunity announcement aims to engage researchers, PHEP and FETP graduates and other public health professionals in priority EMR countries to achieve the following objectives:

- Support countries in identifying the main barriers affecting polio and other VPDs immunization and proposing potential evidence-based solutions
- Use local-level knowledge and experience to guide policy, strategy and decision-making with the goal of improving polio and immunization program performance and impact

## ELIGIBILITY

### *Proposal*

Public health officers, PHEP and FETP residents and graduates will have the opportunity to propose operational research studies for potential funding and implementation in targeted countries. Proposals need to address priority issues related to VPDs including polio and measles preventive measures and should be approved by the Ministry of Health of the respective country—if applicable.

The call for proposals is not limited to any specific group and any eligible researcher can apply for funding. Only one completed application per priority area will be funded.

Although countries should avoid submitting multiple proposals for the same priority, multiple proposals for different priorities will be accepted from the same country. The selection committee will fund only one project per country.

Submitted proposals need to be classified under one of the following scopes of work:

- Polio preventive measures and maintaining polio functions in public health systems
- Human and environmental polio surveillance in high risk countries
- VPDs and cVDPVs surveillance, prevention and control
- cVPDV2 and cVPDV3 reporting in outbreak response countries
- Data reporting for surveillance performance indicators
- Vaccine supply chain and delivery in complex settings and emergencies
- Public health system functions affecting immunization services
- Polio transition and using polio assets to strengthen immunization programs, VPDs control and elimination, or to improve public health emergency preparedness, surveillance and response
- Utilizing polio emergency operations centers (EOCs) for other VPDs

- Provision of support from National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAGs), non-priority countries, and the Eradication and Outbreak Management Group (EOMG) of the GPEI
- Immunization programs financing
- RI workforce development interventions
- Training requirements in vaccine management, health communications and monitoring and evaluation
- Private sector and Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) engagement
- Equitable access to immunization services in hard to reach areas
- Maintaining high RI after reaching cessation of transmission
- Measles elimination interventions as part of a wider VPDs framework
- Coordinating between polio and EPI management teams
- Data management and data use for action

Regardless of project focus area, the projects shall generate data for evidence-based decisions related to immunization strategies including new vaccine introductions.

#### *Eligible Countries*

Countries in EMR as follows

- Afghanistan
- Egypt
- Iraq
- Jordan
- Morocco
- Pakistan
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Syria
- Yemen

#### *Budget*

The duration of the grant period is a maximum of six months from date of release of funds. The proposal must clearly indicate that the budget requested is essential, and the itemized expenditures in the budget must be matched with items presented in the proposal narrative.

## DEADLINES

1. Applications must be submitted [here](#) no later than 5:00PM Amman Time, **April 31, 2019**
2. The Technical Committee will complete review of protocols and make funding decisions before end of May 2019
3. Notifications of awards and release of initial funds will be made by end of May 2019
4. Awarded projects must be completed by September 2019 and final reports must be submitted by September 23, 2019

## IMPORTANT NOTES

- If the proposal was selected for funding, the project lead must ensure the country's ministry of health or relevant institution will provide assistance as needed for the duration of the project
- Projects that involve cost-sharing and/or collaborative undertakings are strongly encouraged and should be indicated in the application
- Minigrants may not be used to fund salaries or honorariums. All funds must be used to support implementation of project activities as detailed in the submitted budgets

## PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

- During the implementation of the projects, each team lead must provide a monthly progress report to GHD/EMPHNET until implementation of the project is completed
- The final report should be submitted by September 23, 2019, the final report should include:
  - A maximum of 300 words summary of the project
  - Detailed description of the project implementation process
  - Evaluations or feedback from involved parties
  - Any audio and/or visual materials
- Findings of the project must be shared with the relevant authorities at the national and regional level to serve as a reference for decision-making and policy revisions