



# 6th CALL FOR PROPOSALS: GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

## JUNE 2018

### 1. INTRODUCTION

- i. This document provides guidelines for applicants to the R2HC Sixth Call for Proposals, which opens for Expressions of Interest on Tuesday 5 June 2018 and closes on 17 July 2018 23.59 hrs BST.
- ii. 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.
- iii. This document covers the scope of funding; our approach to partnerships, ethics, eligibility criteria, and funding availability; and how to apply.

### 2. SCOPE OF FUNDING

- i. The scope of this call covers any research<sup>1</sup> that will strengthen the evidence base around public health interventions, and thereby lead to more effective public health interventions in humanitarian crises.<sup>2</sup>
- ii. “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.
- iii. Within the 6<sup>th</sup> Call, applicants may seek funding from one of two different streams:
  - **Core Funding:** Research concerned with health outcomes in the acute phase<sup>3</sup> 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.
  - **Rapid Trigger 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.

<sup>2</sup> 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.

<sup>3</sup> 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 trigger 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.)

- iv. 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.
- v. 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.
- vi. While **the thematic scope of the Call is open**, under the R2HC 6<sup>th</sup> Call, proposals which address the following would be particularly welcome:

#### **Evaluation of interventions focused on health system strengthening in fragile states and protracted crises**

- vii. 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.
- viii. Proposals that focus on addressing public health issues specifically affecting vulnerable and marginalised populations, such as people with disabilities, the elderly, women and girls, and hard-to-reach groups, will be welcomed. Proposals should consider how vulnerable and marginalised groups access health services and are integrated into the planning of service provision.
- ix. 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.
- x. 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.
- xi. Research proposals may focus on any of the various humanitarian crisis settings, whether urban or rural, camp or general population.



### 3. PARTNERSHIPS

- i. 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.
- ii. 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.
- iii. Resources on forming and developing effective research partnerships are available on the [R2HC website](#). Further advice and guidance is available if required from R2HC's Partnerships Manager: please email [r2hc@elrha.org](mailto:r2hc@elrha.org) for any enquiries.

### 4. RESEARCH UPTAKE

- i. Applicants must outline in their full proposals how they plan to influence humanitarian policy and practice using their research findings. An identified focal point for research uptake activities should be identified within the research team. This individual(s) must have relevant skills/experience to support the pathway of research findings into practice, and their CV should be provided alongside those of other research team members.
- ii. The study timeline allows for an additional 12 months after research activities have finished in which dissemination and research uptake activities can continue. Please refer to the [R2HC Research Uptake Guidance Note](#) for further information.

### 5. ETHICS

- i. The ethical challenges of conducting public health research in crisis settings and alongside operational humanitarian programmes will be a major consideration for applicants.
- ii. To help applicants ensure the ethical viability of their proposals, and to support the ethical review of proposals by IRB and other review boards, the R2HC commissioned an Ethical Framework and Tool for health research in humanitarian crises. The Framework is available [here](#) and the Tool can be accessed [here](#).
- iii. The Framework emphasises the importance of consultation and engagement with crisis-affected communities at all stages of the research. Local communities' interest in engaging with the research, the perceived benefits and risks of the research, and how these will be shared or mitigated are all important considerations when research proposals are being designed. All applicants are encouraged to use the Tool.
- iv. Successful 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.
- v. Further details on ethical considerations will be required for shortlisted applicants invited to submit a Full Proposal.

## 6. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- i. 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.
- ii. 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 their organisation's legal registration and (if relevant) proof of accreditation.

For those proposals that progress beyond the Expression of Interest stage, further documentation and information will be needed in order to conduct due diligence checks if you are to be successful at Full Proposal stage. Please review the Due Diligence and Contracting FAQ's for this information.

## 7. FUNDING AVAILABLE

- i. Up to £3.5m of research funding is available in the 6<sup>th</sup> 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.
- ii. 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.
- iii. For those applicants selected to go forward to the Full Proposal stage, seed funding of up to £10,000 per application will be available 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.
- iv. Those applying for seed funding at the Expression of Interest stage can also request a one-day partnership workshop, facilitated by the R2HC Partnerships Manager. This facilitated workshop focuses on building and strengthening relationships within the research team, providing facilitated discussion on roles and responsibilities, and ensuring common understandings and expectations of the proposed research by all team members.

## 8. HOW TO APPLY

- i. There will be a two-stage selection process for the R2HC 6<sup>th</sup> 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 17 July 2018. 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 10 September 2018.
- v. The deadline for the submission of Full Proposals will be 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2018 23:59 hrs GMT. Full Proposals will be reviewed by technical experts and the R2HC Funding Committee in December 2018 to February 2019.
- vi. A rebuttal phase will take place 7 – 18 January 2019 after the technical reviews. This will provide applicants with an opportunity to respond briefly to comments made by the technical reviewers before the Funding Committee reviews are conducted.
- vii. We aim to communicate Funding Committee decisions to those who have submitted Full Proposals by the end of March 2019.

## 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](#)
- [6<sup>th</sup> Call Frequently Asked Questions](#)
- [Due Diligence and Contracting FAQ's](#)