

Call for applications

TDR Clinical Research Leadership fellowship programme

Deadline for applications: 19 February 2024 at 17:00 (CET)

Summary

TDR, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, is a global programme of scientific collaboration that helps facilitate, support and influence efforts to combat diseases of poverty. It is co-sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The Clinical Research Leadership (CRL) fellowship programme, launched by TDR in 2023, is based on four pillars:

- Pillar 1: Improved clinical research skills obtained through flexible placement of fellows at Training Partner Organizations (TPOs).
- Pillar 2: Strong clinical research leadership skills acquired through customized learning, coaching and leadership experience at the home institution, geared to each fellow's needs and interests.
- Pillar 3: Enhanced gender equity promoted through active measures to ensure fair participation of women and men and people who do not fit into these binary gender identities.
- Pillar 4: Strengthened institutional capacity by maximizing the fellow's contribution on re-entry.

This new fellowship programme will maximize the value of the clinical research skills obtained through the placement at a TPO by focusing on research leadership, with fellows using their clinical research skills, in conjunction with competencies and capabilities to effectively communicate with, and support, members of a multidisciplinary team. Every effort will be made to support the participation of women, notably in building on learnings from former fellows and institutional development plan will enable the fellows to maximize their contribution to strengthening their institution on re-entry and develop and manage a research team to undertake a research study. Fellowships are anticipated to greatly contribute to the advancement of top and promising researchers, enhancing their impact on the improvement of research institutions in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), including the facilitation of peer training.

In the first selection round which took place in 2023, 20 fellows (6 men, 14 women) were selected for placement at thirteen TPOs.

We invite applicants interested in a CRL fellowship programme to carefully read the eligibility criteria for TDR's call for applications and apply to the second round of applications.

TDR will fund fellows employed by academic and research institutions in any low- and middle-income country across the globe (**not limited to those in sub-Saharan Africa**) to be placed in pharmaceutical companies, product development partnerships (PDPs) and academic-affiliated research organizations, in Africa, America, Asia, Europe and Latin America, to train and develop new research skills on infectious diseases.

Successful applicants are placed from 6 to 12 months in TPOs and receive a reintegration plan for 12 months at their home institutions. Fellowship duration will be based on the proposed targeted training offered by each TPO.

Background

Researchers and clinical trial staff from low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), who are involved in clinical research projects, have limited opportunities to acquire experience and develop skills for conducting clinical trials outside of an academic or public-sector setting. As a result, few researchers and clinical trial staff from LMICs assume leadership roles in clinical research on infectious diseases of poverty.

The TDR CRL fellowship programme is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IFPMA). It offers targeted training in research and development in TPOs (pharmaceutical companies, PDPs, and research organizations) to develop highly skilled personnel from disease endemic LMICs, to enhance competencies in clinical research and clinical trials for drugs, vaccines, and diagnostics on a broad range of poverty-related infectious diseases, emerging infectious diseases, pandemic preparedness, antimicrobial resistance and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)¹.

Scope

The purpose of the CRL fellowship programme is to provide funding support to researchers and clinical trial staff from LMICs to acquire essential leadership skills in clinical research through placements in TPOs. The scheme targets mid-career clinical researchers or clinical trial staff who are employed by a legal entity in an LMIC where they are currently conducting clinical research activities in the scope of TDR and in a broad range of poverty-related infectious diseases, emerging infectious diseases, pandemic preparedness, antimicrobial resistance and Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)².

TDR will fund selected fellows to be placed in TPOs to train and develop new research skills linked to target infectious diseases.

Fellows can only be funded once under this grant scheme. Grants awarded are not transferrable from one individual to another. The fellowship duration is 6-12 months based on the proposed targeted training offered by each TPO, followed by a reintegration period of up to twelve months in their home institution. Fellows must be committed to returning to their home institution for a **minimum of two years** after completion of the fellowship. Fellows should be able to demonstrate how the experience gained during the training programme will be applied upon return to their home organization.

Expected impact

The CRL fellowship programme aims to develop additional human resources that will increase the amount of high-quality research and development of required interventions against poverty-related infectious diseases, emerging infectious diseases, pandemic preparedness, antimicrobial resistance, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria, and NTDs in LMICs. Fellowships are expected to add significantly to the development of the best and most promising researchers and maximize their contribution to improving the function of research institutions in LMICs, including the training of their peers. The programme will strengthen collaboration between research institutions, clinical researchers and staff, pharmaceutical companies, and PDPs. The programme will also contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 3: "Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages".

¹ For the purpose of this call, neglected tropical diseases include dengue/severe dengue; rabies; Chagas disease; Human African trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness); leishmaniasis; cysticercosis/taeniasis; dracunculiasis (guinea-worm disease); echinococcosis; foodborne trematodiasis; lymphatic filariasis; onchocerciasis (river blindness); schistosomiasis; soil-transmitted helminthiasis; Buruli ulcer; leprosy (Hansen disease); trachoma; yaws

Placements

TPOs may offer placements in the following areas: design and conduct of clinical trials, including operational planning, management and evaluation; clinical development of vaccines, including associated epidemiological studies; assessment of drug development programmes; diagnostics; biostatistics; data management and pharmacovigilance.

TPOs that have agreed to participate in this programme are listed below:

Host training partner organizations	City, country	Number of places
BioNTech SE	Mainz, Germany	2
Drugs for Neglected Diseases <i>initiative</i> (DNDi)	Geneva, Switzerland	2
European Vaccine Institute (EVI)	Heidelberg, Germany	2
FIOCRUZ – Fundação Oswaldo Cruz & Drugs for Neglected Diseases <i>initiative</i> (DNDi), Latin America	Rio de Janeiro, Brazil	2
Gadjah Mada University (Indonesia) & Murdoch Children’s Research Institute & the University of Melbourne (Australia)	Yogyakarta, Indonesia Melbourne, Australia	2
GSK Biologicals	Wavre, Belgium	4
Infectious Diseases Data Observatory (IDDO)	Oxford, UK	2
The International Severe Acute Respiratory and emerging Infection Consortium (ISARIC)	Oxford, UK	1
International Vaccine Institute (IVI)	Seoul, South Korea	2
ISGlobal, Barcelona Institute for Global Health and University of Barcelona	Barcelona, Spain	2
Luxembourg Institute of Health Competence Center for Methodology and Statistics, & Clinical and Epidemiological Investigation Center	Luxembourg, Luxembourg	2
Medicines for Malaria Venture	Geneva, Switzerland	2
Novartis	Basel, Switzerland, New Jersey, USA	2
Otsuka Novel Products GmbH (ONPG)	Munich, Germany	1
Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH)	Basel, Switzerland	1
University of Cape Town	Cape Town, South Africa	2
Ugandan Virus Research Institute (UVRI)-International & AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), HIV Vaccine Program	Entebbe, Uganda	2

Eligibility

In order to be considered eligible for the call, the applicant should:

- be a national of, and resident in, an LMIC.
- be a postgraduate (MSc or PhD) or MD; MSc pharma graduate, with proof of experience of clinical research activities in the scope of TDR.
- have obtained their first degree within 15 years of submission of the application.
- have been a researcher or clinical staff member employed for the last 24 months in an institution with a registered legal entity in an LMIC conducting clinical research activities in poverty-related infectious diseases, emerging infection diseases, pandemic preparedness, antimicrobial resistance and NTDs.

Application procedure

Please complete the registration process at the WHO survey site provided below. This registration will grant you access to the online application form with your email address.

<https://extranet.who.int/dataformv3/index.php/219662?lang=en>

Upon registration, you will receive an individual link for both completing and partially saving the application form. Detailed instructions on how to fill out the application form can be found [HERE](#).

If you encounter any issues during the registration process, please feel free to contact Mr. Daniel Hollies (holliesd@who.int).

Deadline for submission of applications

Applications must be submitted by **19 February 2024, 17:00 (CET)**.

Selection process

The process includes the following steps:

- Applications submitted before the deadline undergo an initial screening by the TDR secretariat, based on the eligibility criteria .
- Eligible applications will be forwarded to participating TPOs.
- TPOs select up to five shortlisted candidates for interview.
- Interviews are held between the home institution, the candidate and the TPO, in the presence of TDR.
- TPOs rank candidates based on the interview.
- The final matching process of candidates and TPOs is conducted by TDR.
- Once the matching process is complete, home institutions, fellows and TPOs are informed of the final match, following which contractual arrangements begin.

Financial provisions

Each grant covers one economy class return ticket (home – TPO – home); a monthly stipend based on the location of the placement; health insurance and support to present at the relevant international conference during the fellowship, and access to an alumni network.

A break at six months can be offered to allow the fellows to go back to their home institution to present to their peers the acquired training and the scientific progress made so far.

The grant also includes provisional funds for reintegration, conditional upon the approval of a progress report and reintegration plan.

Gender

TDR is committed to Equality, Diversity and Inclusivity in science. Researchers are encouraged to apply irrespective of gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, religious, cultural and social backgrounds, or (dis)ability status.

We encourage women to apply to this CRL fellowship programme. Currently Dr Brenda Okech who is TDR former fellow is accepting fellows for this call at the Ugandan Virus Research Institute (UVRI)-International & AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI), HIV Vaccine Program. A flexible placement can be arranged for candidates with young families, including a mix of remote and on-site training at the home institution with intensive and well-structured mentoring. The duration of remote and on-site placement will depend on the needs of the home institution, the TPO, and the fellow.

Stories from previous women CRDF fellows are available at the following links:

[Improving women's lives in Nigeria, Dr Atinuke Olaleye](#)

[Increasing access to needed treatments in Kenya, Dr Clara Agutu](#)

[Breaking a glass ceiling in South Africa, Dr Phumla Sinxadi](#)

[Reducing the toll of neglected tropical diseases like malaria and dengue, Dr Lyda Osorio](#)

[United Republic of Tanzania, Dr Brenda Okech](#)

Additional information

For questions related to this funding scheme, please contact Dr Mahnaz Vahedi (vahedim@who.int).