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## Capacity development for disease outbreak and epidemic response in sub-Saharan Africa, in collaboration with Africa CDC

Type of action	Coordination and Support (CSA)
Call budget	€5 million
Funding level	100% of eligible costs
Open Date	10 April 2020
Close date	30 July 2020 at 17:00 CEST
Expected number of grants	7-10 grants
Call Identifier	CSA2020E
Project Officer	Shingai Machingaidze, <a href="mailto:machingaidze@edctp.org">machingaidze@edctp.org</a>

### Description

#### Background

Reliable epidemiological data is often unavailable or severely limited in resource-limited settings in sub-Saharan Africa, and this knowledge gap is further aggravated by a shortage of skilled personnel in epidemiology and biostatistics to efficiently monitor, analyse and interpret these data to inform policy and decision making. Training programmes are needed to develop a cohort of epidemiologists across sub-Saharan Africa and beyond, which can work in collaboration with their national departments of health, national public health agencies, as well as with international organisations such as the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO) and Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC), to collectively conduct routine surveillance, conduct public health research and respond timely to disease outbreaks.

As a specialised technical agency of the Africa Union, Africa CDC operates through a framework focused on harnessing regional resources (all five African regions); the Regional Integrated Surveillance and Laboratory Network (RISLNET) in order to carry out its mandate and achieve the strategic pillars (public health emergency preparedness and response, surveillance and disease intelligence, information systems, laboratory systems and networks, and public health research and institutes) through the National Public Health Institutes (NPHIs). Effective implementation of these strategic pillars depends on the efficiency of the NPHIs and/or affiliated agencies, such as academic institutions in Member States. The Africa CDC has also developed a framework for public health workforce development. Building on numerous investments already made by EDCTP and its partners in sub-Saharan Africa for disease outbreak preparedness and response, this partnership between EDCTP and Africa CDC will further enhance the public health workforce capacity in NPHIs and National Ministries of Health to better enable them to respond timeously to disease outbreaks.

#### Scope

The purpose of this Call for Proposals is to establish an African cohort of epidemiologists by supporting institutions in sub-Saharan Africa and Europe that provide master's training in epidemiology and biostatistics, as part of the Africa CDC's framework for public health workforce development. Master's courses with practical field research experience is the preferable level of



training as it is relatively short and likely to deliver the required numbers and high-quality fit-for-purpose calibre of personnel that are urgently needed in epidemic zones of sub-Saharan Africa. Proposals can be submitted by a single institution or consortium of institutions which must provide master's training in epidemiology for 10 to 15 excellent, early- to mid-career researchers ("EPI Fellows") based in sub-Saharan Africa and working in a relevant field. The EPI fellows must commit to remain in Africa for a minimum of two years after completing their studies and provide evidence to demonstrate this through a letter of support from their host institution. Proposals should include institutions with a proven track record in the provision of high-quality master's training with clear local and regional collaborations with NPHIs (or similar agencies), Ministries of Health and other academic institutions. Proposals must demonstrate the following:

- A high-quality master's programme in epidemiology and biostatistics relevant to infectious diseases of importance in sub-Saharan Africa
- An open, fair and transparent procedure for selecting EPI Fellows based in different geographical regions of Africa, and with appropriate gender balance, for entry into the master's programme
- Robust mentorship and supervision mechanisms to support EPI Fellows through to timely successful course completion
- The master's programme must include a research component, which must be conducted in a country in sub-Saharan Africa, in collaboration with local or regional NPHIs (and/or affiliated agencies) or Ministries of Health.

Proposals should also include support for meetings and conferences for the trainees to participate in an annual networking meeting organised by Africa CDC, as well as the biennial EDCTP Forum. Tuition fees, enrolment fees or other types of university charges are not eligible for reimbursement by EDCTP.

Due to the extraordinary global crisis of COVID-19 that is also affecting African countries, this topic should also be considered by applicants.

The proposed action should start no later than 1 October 2021 and must be completed before the end of 2024.

### **Expected impact**

Projects funded under this Call for Proposals should:

- Increase the number of skilled infectious disease epidemiologists working in Africa
- Enhance research capacity in epidemiology across Africa
- Encourage trans-national cooperation between epidemiologists in Africa and with Africa CDC
- Strengthen the ability of African countries to prepare for and to manage epidemic disease outbreaks
- Promote the career development and retention of postdoctoral and postgraduate researchers in Africa

- Contribute towards the achievement of SDG3 'Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages'
- Enhance research capacity in poverty-related diseases and in clinical trials across Africa.

Ultimately these grants will contribute to the generation of a critical mass of epidemiologists and biostatisticians and institutional research capacity in sub-Saharan Africa.

## **Eligibility**

A proposal/application will only be considered **eligible** if:

1. its content corresponds, wholly or in part, to the topic/contest description for which it is submitted
2. it complies with the eligibility conditions for participation set out below, depending on the type of action:
  - The application must have at least one legal entity established in a Participating State\* or a sub-Saharan African country.
  - The maximum duration of the grant is 36 months
  - The maximum duration of the master's programme is 30 months (including research component).
  - The requested EDCTP contribution per action should not exceed EUR 50,000 per student, with a maximum total budget of EUR 750,000.\*\*\*

## **Notes**

\*The Participating States (European Partner States) are Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom.

\*\*The following sub-Saharan African countries: Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chad, Comoros, Congo (Democratic People's Republic), Congo (Republic), Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Mauritius, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Senegal, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Eswatini, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

\*\*\*The requested EDCTP contribution per action should not exceed EUR 50,000 per student, with a maximum total budget of EUR 750,000. The cost per student should include student scholarships/fellowships, research costs (if applicable), conference/travel, and administrative costs.

## **Procedure and application process**

## **Submission and evaluation procedure**

This is a single-stage application procedure. Proposals must be submitted by 30 July 2020, 17:00 CEST via [EDCTPgrants](#). Evaluation results are expected to be made available by 30 November 2020.

## **Evaluation, scoring and thresholds**

Following an admissibility and eligibility check, full proposals are evaluated by external, independent experts. Proposals are evaluated according to the criteria Excellence, Impact and Implementation (see Article 15 of the Horizon 2020 Rules for Participation Regulation No 1290/2013). Each criterion will be scored out of 5. The threshold for individual criteria will be 3. The overall threshold, applying to the sum of the three individual scores, will be 10.

For all proposals involving human participants, and/or human tissues, cells or personal data, the evaluation process will include an assessment of ethical issues.

The following aspects are considered under the evaluation criteria:

### 1. Excellence

- Fit with the scope and objectives of the EDCTP2 programme, the EDCTP Association strategic research agenda and the call topic description.
- Importance, relevance/pertinence, and clarity of the objectives.
- The soundness of the concept and credibility of the proposed approach/methodology.
- Clarity, pertinence and importance of the strategic vision
- Soundness of the concept
- Quality of the proposed coordination and/or support measures.

### 2. Impact

- Call-specific aspects as listed under 'expected impact' in each individual call.
- The extent to which the outputs of the proposed work would contribute, at the European, African and/or International level, to each of the expected impacts listed in the work plan under the relevant topic.
- Likelihood to result in major advances in the field with potential benefit of the research to the affected populations. Effectiveness of the proposed measures to exploit and disseminate the project results to communicate the project activities to different target audiences, and to manage research data, where relevant.
- Plans to establish (or demonstrate if already existing) a long-term partnership between academic institutions and national public health institutes (or similar agencies) for continued training of Epidemiologists beyond the end of the grant
- Contribution to networking, where relevant, including alignment with national, regional and/or pan-African development plans, and with other actors intervening in the same field.

### 3. Quality and efficiency of the implementation

- Quality and effectiveness of the work plan, including the extent to which the resources assigned to work packages, are in line with their objectives and deliverables.

- Appropriateness of the management structures and procedures, including risk and innovation management, and how responsibilities for research data quality and sharing, and security will be met.
- Complementarity of the participants within the consortium or project team, and the extent to which the consortium or project team as a whole brings together the necessary expertise.
- Appropriateness of the allocation of tasks and resources, ensuring that all participants have a valid role and adequate resources in the project to fulfil that role.
- Feasibility and appropriateness of the methods and project management to achieve the objectives within the timeframe of the grant.
- Compliance with national and international standards of research, Good Clinical Practice, ethics, and safety-related issues.
- Participants have the operational capacity, to carry out the proposed work, based on the competence and experience of the individual participant(s).
- Competence of the participants and their investigators in conducting trials according to international standards of Good Clinical Practice (ICH-GCP) (if applicable).
- Quality of the leadership and a clear and effective governance structure.

### **Financial provisions**

The call budget is EUR 5 million.

The requested EDCTP contribution per action should not exceed 50,000 EUR per student, with a maximum total budget of 750,000 EUR.\*\*\*

The funding level is 100% of eligible costs.

### **Grant agreement**

Participants in actions resulting from this call for proposals will be required to sign a General EDCTP2 grant agreement [multi-beneficiary](#) or [mono-beneficiary](#), and to conclude a consortium agreement prior to the conclusion of the EDCTP2 grant agreement (where applicable).

### **Application process**

- The application must be submitted online via [EDCTPgrants](#)
- Only registered users of [EDCTPgrants](#) system can apply for grants and therefore you are advised to register on the system as soon as possible

### **More information**

- [EDCTP2 Frequently Asked Questions about calls for proposals](#)
- For specific questions related to this call for proposals, please contact: Shingai Machingaidze at [machingaidze@edctp.org](mailto:machingaidze@edctp.org)
- For questions and issues about [EDCTPgrants](#) and the online application submission please contact EDCTP via [edctpgrants@edctp.org](mailto:edctpgrants@edctp.org).
- For guidance on applying to EDCTP, please refer to the [Templates, guides and policies](#) section of the EDCTP website.

- The EDCTP2 programme runs until the end of December 2024. Applicants should take into consideration the programme end date when planning their proposals.