



DFID-Wellcome Joint Initiative on Epidemic Preparedness Call for Proposal

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) and Wellcome are pleased to announce the launch of the first call for proposals under the Joint Initiative on Epidemic Preparedness.

Primary contact: [João Rangel de Almeida](#)

Background

Focus of the Joint Initiative on Epidemic Preparedness

The £25M Joint Initiative will combine Wellcome's funding interests across science, humanities and social science, product development and global policy, together with DFID's global expertise and in-country links. DFID and Wellcome Trust have a strong history of supporting research that aims to improve global health.

Outcomes and remit

The objective of this call is to support the most suitable proposal(s) to generate new innovative and systematic ways to conduct social science research in contexts of epidemic preparedness and response.

The call will give priority to proposals that are practical, useable and implementable by those wanting to carry out social science research during an outbreak response and are designed to address key priority pathogens, including those listed in the [WHO R&D Blueprint](#). Award-holders are expected to closely work with stakeholders such as [WHO](#) and [UNICEF](#) at all three levels (national, regional, and headquarters)

to ensure that results are implementable, scalable and aligned with organisational needs. These agencies are expected to implement the social science research protocols when coordinating future epidemic response actions.

The development of standardised social science research protocols would aim to:

- Accelerate research to be carried out in the intra-epidemic period and during an outbreak response
- Create clear pathways for knowledge uptake by epidemic response teams
- Underpin the development of future training for social science researchers in affected countries and support efforts to review epidemic-response standard operating procedures for better integration of social science research
- Gain ethical pre-approval in affected countries

The expected outcomes are:

- Co-developed standardised social science research protocols for diseases such as those listed in the WHO R&D Blueprint. The final number of protocols to be developed should be determined by the applicant
- Integration of standardised social science research protocols in future epidemic control activities
- A research framework that can be incorporated in current and future training programmes designed for social scientists engaged in epidemic response research

Rationale

Established in 2016, the [WHO Health Emergencies Programme](#) includes two major components:

1. The [R&D Blueprint](#) team is responsible for the development of a global strategy and preparedness plan that allows the rapid activation of R&D activities during epidemics. The R&D Blueprint aims to fast-track the availability of effective tests, vaccines and medicines that can be used to save lives and avert large-scale crises. It identifies a list of priority diseases that pose a public health risk because of their epidemic potential and for which there are either insufficient countermeasures or none at all.

2. The Infectious Hazard Management team is responsible for the control of influenza, high threat pathogens, and the coordination of epidemic response through the development of networks, evidence-based guidance, and life-saving interventions due to infectious hazards. Within this team, [social science interventions](#) are included to bring the necessary expertise to coordinate research, engage with communities, and communicate risk more efficiently.

Established in 2015, the UNICEF Health Emergencies Preparedness Initiative (HEPI) has an operational presence in over 190 countries. The programme is a cross-sectoral initiative that coordinates operations to control endemic and epidemic diseases with significant public health impact on children, families and societies. The Initiative seeks to build complementarity and strengthen alignment across agencies and sectors engaged in disease outbreak preparedness and response.

The UNICEF [Communication for Development](#) Team is responsible for coordinating social and behavioural research and interventions to understand and shape social determinates of health, risk perception, and community engagement. The Team works closely with the following partners:

- US [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) (CDC)
- [IASC WASH Cluster](#)
- [IASC Health Cluster](#)
- WHO Infectious Hazard Management team

Although social scientists have been engaged in epidemic control activities, such initiatives have not been systematic. Both research and response teams have expressed the need for standardised research practices, common communication channels, and clear mechanisms to integrate social science evidence.

The development and implementation of standardised social science research protocols will contribute to better understand the social context where infectious disease outbreaks occur and control responses are implemented. For this reason, it is expected that the development of such research protocols will take in

consideration the needs of response teams coordinated by UN agencies, NGOs, and governments. The development and implementation of research protocols is part of an effort to establish a social science discipline to better engage researchers with epidemic preparedness and response operations.

Proposals are expected to detail the number of protocols to be developed during the grant.

Suggested approaches

Research methods to be employed for the development of standardised social science research protocols may include (but are not limited to):

- Literature review
- Questionnaires, interviews, and consultations with researchers and decision-makers
- Consultations with relevant internal and external stakeholders
- Analysis of selected case studies
- Ethnographic work conducted in relevant UN agencies

Contacts at Wellcome will be available to consult as the project develops.

Eligibility & Evaluation process

Geographic focus of Principal Investigators, co-applicants and collaborators

This scheme is open to Principal Investigators who are working in higher education institutions and non-profit research institutions.

Studies funded through this call should include researchers and public health professionals based in institutions located in countries affected by pathogens under consideration. The call encourages Principal Investigators to apply from [Low and Middle Income Countries](#).

Applicants invited for full application will be required to attend an in-person workshop with key stakeholders on the 11th July 2018. Submission of a full application to this scheme is contingent on the workshop participation.

Duration

Expected duration of award is up to 24 months but should be tailored to the needs of the proposal.

Funding available

A total of up to £2 million is available. This is expected to fund the development of social science research protocols. Proposals will be evaluated on value for money and on whether the proposed scale of work is necessary and cost-effective for developing standardised research protocols.

You may request support for:

- All research costs that are attributable to the development of social science research protocols. For example, appropriate percentages of the investigators' time, scientific, technical and administrative staff, items of equipment, data /sample handling and archiving and travel
- The cost of holding meetings
- Costs for secondments to international organisations
- Costs to engage with the European Commission International Network of Social Sciences Research Centres and any other relevant networks such as [GOARN](#), [ALERRT](#), [ISARIC](#), and [Social Science in Humanitarian Action](#) platform.

Please note that we will not pay indirect costs or research management costs.

General advice on allowed and disallowed costs can be found here

<https://wellcome.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Costs-guidance-2017-Feb.xlsx>

Grant Conditions

DFID-Wellcome [grant conditions](#) will apply and additional financial controls may be required. If we have not previously funded your institute, then your institution will need to undertake an eligibility review.

Review of applications

Applications will be considered by an Expert Advisory Panel specifically formed to support the DFID-Wellcome Joint Initiative on Epidemic Preparedness. Additional scientific experts will be invited to provide written comments if the funders and/or panel chair deem this necessary. DFID and Wellcome's decision will be final and will not be open to appeal.

How to apply

Applications will be submitted to and processed by Wellcome on behalf of the Joint Initiative. Prior to submitting a preliminary application via the Wellcome Grant Tracker Portal, please indicate your interest in applying to this funding call by emailing [João Rangel de Almeida](#).

Preliminary application should be submitted via the Wellcome Grant Tracker Portal and must be received by 23.00 BST on 11th June 2018.

Upon review, and if successful, applicants will be invited to submit a full application via the Wellcome Grant Tracker Portal.

Dates

Activity	Date
Announcement of CfP on Wellcome website	4 th May 2018
Outline proposal deadline	11 th June 2018
Decision about outline proposals	29 th June 2018
Workshop with WHO and UNICEF	11 th July 2018

Invited full application deadline	September 2018
Final decision	October 2018
Expected grant start date	November 2018

Key References and resources

Managing epidemics. Key facts about major deadly diseases: [link](#)

Details on WHO's approach to social sciences and epidemic response:

<http://www.who.int/risk-communication/social-science-workshop-london/en/>

Integrating social science interventions in epidemic, pandemic and health emergency response. Report of an informal consultation:

<http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/259933/WHO-WHE-IHM-2018.1-eng.pdf;jsessionid=62559AAE2A3794912249AA5385C51B72?sequence=1>

Research protocol guidance:

<https://www.hra.nhs.uk/planning-and-improving-research/research-planning/protocol/>
<https://www.niehs.nih.gov/about/od/ethics/protocols/index.cfm>