

Indian Council of Medical Research

Call for Letters of Intent

Grants Programme for Implementation Research on Maternal and Child Health

Deadline: 31 May 2017

India has made significant progress in reducing under five, neonatal and infant mortality rates and maternal mortality ratio. However, the rates are still very high in many parts of the country. Under the National Health Mission (NHM) of Govt. of India, evidence based interventions that improve maternal and child survival are being promoted. Many challenges are being faced by programme managers while implementing these interventions / programmes. To achieve Sustainable Development Goal 3, efforts are needed to reach health care for all by ensuring implementation of known interventions, developing better means of delivery of the existing interventions to address health issues of mothers and children specifically in states with high mortality rates, identifying bottleneck in delivery of health care and finding solutions to remove the bottle necks.

“Implementation research is the scientific inquiry into questions concerning implementation—the act of carrying an intention into effect, which in health research can be policies, programmes, or individual practices (collectively called interventions).” IR can consider any aspect of implementation - including the factors affecting implementation, the processes of implementation, and the results of implementation, including how to introduce potential solutions into a health system or how to promote their large scale use and sustainability.

The intent is to understand what, why, and how interventions work in “real world” settings and to test approaches to improve them.

National Implementation Research platform:

Realising the need and relevance, a national platform for technical support for implementation research (IR) has been created to address maternal and child health issues including nutrition. This platform aims to provide opportunity to frame implementation research in the most useful and imaginative way to contribute to effective scale up of MNCH care.

Research priorities for letter of intent:

The ICMR- INCLIN had undertaken a nationwide exercise for priority setting for the country involving all stake holders including academia, public health, policy makers and programme managers. Top priority research questions under the domain of implementation science in the field of maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition based on scrutiny of the INCLIN list and feedback received from other stakeholders arranged in order of priority are selected for inviting LOIs.

Under this call, letter of intent is invited in the following key priority areas of maternal and newborn health) for conducting implementation research studies contextually relevant to address any of the priority research questions mentioned in the list. The following three types of research studies will be considered:

- New implementation research studies;
- Within ongoing studies, additional implementation research;
- Analyses of relevant existing datasets and policy analyses as part of routine reporting systems under M&E.

Maternal Health
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Find and implement effective strategies to improve quality of care during childbirth in the public health system to achieve safe and healthy childbirth and early postnatal care. 2. Develop effective strategies for early identification, referral and management of high risk pregnancies with clear links between the different levels of the health system. 3. Find and implement effective strategies for improving Emergency Obstetric Care (EmOC) services to successfully manage maternal and fetal complications 4. Learn how to effectively implement the new WHO ANC model, to reduce stillbirths and early neonatal deaths 5. Develop effective delivery of evidence-based care protocols/ algorithms for prevention and management of post partum haemorrhage at different levels of care
Newborn Health
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Develop and implement at scale strategies to provide high quality care for small and sick babies in hospitals (SNCUs) 7. Develop and implement strategies at scale for integrated and comprehensive maternal and newborn health care package across the continuum of care (improve link between care in labour room, postpartum ward and SNCU) 8. Strategies to scale up Home Based Newborn Care: Role assignment and rationalization for frontline workers, barrier identification and mitigation, cost-effectiveness 9. Implementation at scale of treatment of suspected neonatal sepsis at outpatient level (sub-centre, PHC, CHC or hospital) when inpatient treatment is not possible 10. Develop and implement strategies for effective maternal and perinatal and newborn healthcare in the urban areas; achieving high coverage and quality of home-based newborn care in diverse rural / tribal / urban settings; harnessing mobile technology 11. Establishing an innovative framework of monitoring and supervision with in-built mechanism of accountability to improve performance of frontline workers and health personnel involved in neonatal care (e.g., physical supervision; engaging PRIs and clients; use of ICT, telemedicine, mHealth)

Who can apply:

Research institutions and teams within the country who are involved / interested in implementation research

Prerequisites for application

- One of the lead investigator should be a stakeholder from health system / include at least one policy-maker who should be part of the core decision-making team of the research project;
- The composition of the research team must be multidisciplinary in two aspects:

- mix of expertise (e.g. social sciences, epidemiology, statistician, health system, health economics; etc.); and
- mix of roles and responsibilities within the health system (e.g. researchers, policy-makers, programme managers, members of NGOs/civil society)
- Each research study shall have an integral component on strengthening capacity of researchers, as well as research users;
- Each letter of intent shall describe the roles and responsibilities of each team member – in particular the policy-maker – in the planning, conduct and successful development of the study, as well as in the utilization of the study-findings.
- Each research study shall emphasize the potential to replicate the findings of the study in other settings within the country

How to apply?

The LOIs has to be submitted online following ICMR guidelines: www.icmr.nic.in . To submit a proposal online, please follow the following steps:

1. Go to ICMR website www.icmr.nic.in
2. Go to online submission of extramural research proposal
3. Click on new user for registering yourself as project investigator
4. Using the user ID and password begin submission of proposal by clicking on advertisement
5. Enter title of the call
6. Click on broad area as RCH
7. Call end date: 31st May 2017
8. Major discipline: Maternal and Child Health
9. Select programme officer : Dr. Reeta Rasaily

Broad outline of LOI

- i. Project Name;
- ii. Name, affiliation, and complete address (including e-mail, phone and fax numbers) of the principal investigator;
- iii. Team composition;
- iv. Justification of the study including a logic model, and a very brief summary of the related work from the literature, and an assessment of the feasibility of the proposed activity;
- v. Objectives;
- vi. Brief description of the proposed methodologies (study area, target population, study design, sample size and sampling, data collection, data analysis, etc.);
- vii. Ethical issues;
- viii. Expected results, challenges, and potential contribution of the project in scaling-up the health intervention;
- ix. Timetable;
- x. Budget;
- xi. Curriculum vitae of the key investigators and list of key partners (maximum 1 page for each investigator; these are not included in the 4-page limit of the letter of intent).

Review and selection process

Letters of intents will be reviewed on a competitive basis by a panel of independent experts identified by the Implementation Research Platform and will be evaluated based on following criteria:

- Responsiveness to priorities, based on objectives and justification provided
- Appropriateness of research methods to meet the proposed objectives
- Feasibility of implementing the study
- Capacity of the research teams: multidisciplinary expertise, research experience of working in health programme
- Potential for direct translation into programme / programme delivery / scale up of programme

The short listed research teams will be notified and invited to participate to a proposal development workshop, which will be organized in July/ August 2017 (tentatively). Finally, the developed proposals will be reviewed by an external panel of experts and, based on recommendations; research funding will be awarded by the end of October 2017 (tentatively).

The deadline for the submission of letters of intent is 31 May 2017.
