Call for expressions of interest

Team of researchers to develop background material in support of a research agenda for action on the social determinants of health

Deadline: 9 August 2021, 23:59 CEST
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Overview
The Alliance is seeking a team of researchers to help prepare background material in support of a research agenda for action on the social determinants of health. At the recent World Health Assembly, the WHO was requested to prepare a World Report on the Social Determinants of Health to update work from the previous nearly fifteen years ago. The team of researchers will review the status of research on social determinants of health, identifying key gaps, and will produce a discussion paper to inform an expert consultation later this year. Based on the consultation, the team will develop a final synthesis report and a draft research agenda.
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Background

The world is in the midst of the greatest global health crisis since the Second World War. At least 4 million people have died from the COVID-19 pandemic, and billions of people have had their lives disrupted - and the pandemic is far from over. These impacts have fallen so unequally that the 2008 WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health’s claim that “social injustice is killing on a grand scale” has never been so easily understood. In this context, the Member States of WHO, in resolution 74.16 of the 2021 World Health Assembly, requested the Director-General:

“to prepare, building on the report of the WHO Commission on Social Determinants of Health (2008) and subsequent work, an updated report based on scientific evidence, knowledge and best practices on social determinants of health, their impact on health and health equity, progress made so far in addressing them, and recommendations on future actions, and to submit it for consideration by the Seventy-sixth World Health Assembly in 2023, through the Executive Board at its 152nd session.”

The report requested by the 2021 World Health Assembly on social determinants of health (henceforth referred to as the “World Report”) provides an opportunity to set the agenda for the next ten years for action on social determinants – and to present alternative ideas and policies to reverse our current systems’ tendency towards inequality and health inequity. COVID-19 demands nothing less.

The World Report will need to consider how research can better inform understanding of the social determinants of health, policy and interventions on the social determinants to reduce health inequities, and implementation of these policies and interventions. There is a large body of research of social determinants of health, but there also gaps, particularly in the areas of policy and implementation research, and research on how to overcome political challenges to progress.

WHO, together with the Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, are therefore seeking qualified parties to undertake a review of the current state of research on social determinants of health. The review should consider major gaps and focus on policy and implementation research to inform a research agenda to be included in the World Report. The agenda will guide further initiatives by WHO on research for action on the social determinants of health.
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Objectives:

1. To inform the development of a draft research agenda for social determinants of health, with a focus on policy and implementation research.
2. To review the current status of research on social determinants of health, identifying key gaps.
3. To inform a section of the upcoming World Report.

Deliverables:

1. A desk review of key documents from WHO and other partners on research on social determinants of health, including related fields such as multisectoral governance, health in all policies and health inequality monitoring.
2. A literature review of research in the last ten years on social determinants of health, with a focus on political economy, policy and implementation.
3. A discussion paper with a first draft of the findings to inform an expert meeting to be held in October/November 2021.
4. Support to the expert meeting, including writing a meeting report.
5. A final report synthesizing the findings of both reviews and the discussions of the expert meeting, identification of key gaps, and first draft of WHO research agenda for social determinants of health, with a focus on policy and implementation.

Work duration and cost

One team of two to three researchers working under a senior researcher will be funded up to a total budget of US$ 50,000. No further funding will be provided within or beyond the project period. The activities should be undertaken between September and December 2021 (four months).

Application process

Deadline: Monday, 9 August 2021, 23:59 CEST

Bids submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

To apply, please submit an expression of interest of no more than 1,000 words, or four pages, explaining the researchers’ interest and experience on this topic, a budget and CVs by Monday, 9 August. Please also provide a summary budget of the total costs broken down by the following categories (not all may be applicable): personnel, supplies, facilities, equipment, communications, travel and per diem, and other. These documents should be submitted as one PDF file.
Expressions of interest submitted after this deadline will not be considered. Successful applicants can expect to be notified within three weeks of the deadline. WHO may, at its own discretion, extend this closing date for the submission of expressions of interest by notifying all applicants thereof in writing.

Submissions of Expressions of Interest should be made via email at alliancehpsr@who.int. Please use the subject line: WHO Bid Ref. Expressions of Interest: SDH Research Agenda.

Notes for applicants

1. WHO may, at any time before the closing date, for any reason, whether on its own initiative or in response to a clarification requested by a (prospective) applicant, modify the bid by written amendment. Amendments could, inter alia, include modification of the project scope or requirements, the project timeline expectations and/or extension of the closing date for submission.

2. All prospective applicants that have submitted a bid will be notified in writing of all amendments to the bid and will, where applicable, be invited to amend their submission accordingly.

3. Applicants should note that WHO reserves the right to:
   a. Award the contract to an applicant of its choice, even if its bid is not the lowest;
   b. Accept or reject any bid, and to annul the solicitation process and reject all bids at any time prior to award of contract, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected applicants and without any obligation to inform the affected applicants of the grounds for WHO’s action;
   c. Award the contract on the basis of the Organization’s particular objectives to an applicant whose bid is considered to be the most responsive to the needs of the Organization and the activity concerned;
   d. Not award any contract at all;
   e. WHO has the right to eliminate bids for technical or other reasons throughout the evaluation/selection process. WHO shall not in any way be obligated to reveal, or discuss with any applicant, how a bid was assessed, or to provide any other information relative to the evaluation/selection process or to state the reasons for elimination to any applicant.

4. WHO is acting in good faith by issuing this request for bids. However, this document does not obligate WHO to contract for the performance of any work, nor for the supply of any products or services.

5. WHO reserves the right to enter into negotiations with one or more applicants of its choice, including but not limited to negotiation of the terms of the bid(s), the price quoted in such bid(s) and/or the
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deletion of certain parts of the work, components or items called for under this bid.

6. Within 30 days of receipt of the contract, the successful applicant shall sign and date the contract and return it to WHO according to the instructions provided at that time. If the applicant does not accept the contract terms without changes, then WHO has the right not to proceed with the selected applicant and instead contract with another applicant of its choice.