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MERA India
Malaria Elimination Research Alliance India
One Platform, One Goal



Malaria Elimination Research Alliance (MERA) India

Indian Council of Medical Research-Department of Health Research

Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Government of India

Call for Proposals

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has established and launched Malaria Elimination Research Alliance (MERA) India on the eve of World Malaria Day 2019. The vision of the scheme is to initiate a Trans-institutional research alliance for evidence-based support to accelerate malaria elimination in India. The overall goal is to bring together all stakeholders working on malaria including researchers, health-care professionals, government and non-government organizations, public health representatives, policy makers under one roof.

The key objectives of MERA India are i) to prioritize research to address gaps and challenges, ii) to orchestrate research with stakeholder engagement, iii) to promote and facilitate planning and conduct of prioritized research and iv) to translate and disseminate research into impact.

Research Challenges Associated with Malaria Elimination in India

The Thematic Working Groups (TWG) meetings on the following subjects

a) Epidemiology and Parasite Biology b) Vector Biology and Control, identified and recommended the following priority areas to be listed in the 1st call for proposals under MERA India.

Themes	Research Challenges
Epidemiology and Parasite Biology	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dynamics of <i>P. vivax</i>: clinical biology, epidemiology and transmission. 2. <i>P. vivax</i> relapse: pathobiology, diagnosis and anti-relapse therapy with special reference to implementing G6PD testing before therapy and compliance to anti-relapse therapy. 3. Severe malaria: Clinical picture, pathogenesis 4. Role of low-density Plasmodium infections in malaria transmission 5. Monitoring antimalarial drug resistance with special reference to artemisinin resistance. 6. Novel methods of surveillance and models of malaria elimination with special reference to strategies for surveillance in private sector. 7. Best practices for malaria control including vector management.
Vector Biology and Control	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Studies on the changing behaviour of mosquito vectors such as feeding and resting behaviour, and population dynamics in persistent transmission areas under different phases (categories) of malaria elimination. 2. Assessment and quantification of outdoor/residual transmission by vectors that feed outdoors or biting early in the evening or are resistant to insecticides. 3. Socio-cultural behavior of the human population residing permanently or temporarily in forest ecosystem in relation to malaria transmission and vector control interventions. 4. Pattern of human population movement in vulnerable areas and association with vector population dynamics in relation to space and time (receptivity) for assessment of transmission risk. 5. Studies on community behavior, accessibility and utilization of current vector control operations under the national programme, including study of logistic supply chain. 6. Frequency and level of vector resistance to the insecticides that are in use for malaria vector control in high risk and residual transmission areas.

Innovative tools/strategies/approaches for vector management

1. Development and testing of new insecticides and formulations to increase efficacy of IRS/LLIN/Larviciding. Assessment of feasibility and cost-effectiveness of new vector control strategies/products that are under development.
2. Development and demonstration of supplementary strategies/tools to reduce the disease transmission by vectors that feed outdoors or biting early in the evening or are resistant to insecticides.
3. Field testing of novel tools such as toxic sugar-baited traps, endectocides, and targeted larviciding for interrupting residual (outdoor) transmission or reducing the receptivity.
4. Innovative vector surveillance strategies (including application of geospatial tools) to assess receptivity of the areas vulnerable to human population movement and/or early detection of residual transmission.
5. Development and demonstration of new approaches/strategies to enhance community mobilization and engagement/participation to enhance utilization of vector control interventions (spray coverage of IRS and use rate of LLINs).

ELIGIBILITY

Individuals holding permanent positions in Medical colleges/ universities, educational and research institutes, NGOs, industries

HOW TO APPLY

Duration of the research proposals should be preferably up to two years. All projects involving research on human beings/animals must be cleared by the Human ethics committee/Animal ethics committee of the respective institute.

Interested applicants are required to email the **concept proposal** to meraindiaicmr@gmail.com. The format for preparing the concept proposal is given below. Our advisory panel will review the submitted proposals and shortlisted applicants will be contacted to submit the **detailed proposal**.

IMPORTANT TIMELINES

The last date for submission of concept proposals is 31st October 2019 till 5.00 pm. The result of the shortlisted applicants will be displayed on ICMR and MERA India website on 15th November 2019. The last date for submission of detailed proposals by shortlisted applicants is 15th December 2019 till 5.00 pm. Result of the selected projects for funding will be displayed on or before 15th January 2020.

CONTACT DETAILS

Email Id: meraindiaicmr@gmail.com

Phone No.: 9953625707

ADDRESS

MERA India Secretariat

Room No. 119, First Floor

ICMR- National Institute of Malaria Research

Dwarka Sector-8, New Delhi-110077

CONCEPT PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FORMAT

Applicants are required to email the concept proposal to meraindiaicmr@gmail.com in pdf format. The applicants should also mention the name of the thematic area in the subject of the email. Concept Proposal must to be prepared under the following sub-headings (mandatory) and exceeding the word limit will lead to disqualification.

S.No.	Description
1	Thematic Area: The applicants must mention the thematic area under which they wish to apply.
2	Title of the Proposed research project: Should be concise and informative.
3	Rationale (up to 250 words): Describe the current knowledge available on the subject, critical gaps in knowledge and the national relevance of the research question which this project aims to address. Also mention the preliminary work done by the applicant, if any.
4	Novelty/Innovation (up to 100 words): Describe how the proposal challenges and seeks to shift the current research/knowledge/clinical practice paradigms by utilizing novel theoretical concepts, methodologies, instrumentation or interventions.
5	Project description (up to 600 words): Describe the study setting, study design, sampling strategy, sample size, research methodology and outcomes measures. Also mention expected timelines, total budget, name and designation of co-investigators and intra and inter institutional collaborations, if any.
6	Strength of PI: Describe academic qualifications, employment details, previous experience of handling research projects (past and ongoing) and the scientific contributions made from these projects. Enumerate 10 relevant publications (in Vancouver style).
7	Institutional support (up to 200 words): Mention the institutional support in terms of basic infrastructure, departments and laboratories with equipment required for the proposed research work.