

Call for proposals

The Ethics of Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response

Published: 9 October 2020

Deadline: 26 October 2020

Overview and objectives

The WHO Health Ethics and Governance Unit¹ invites proposals which address the ethics of COVID-19 public health preparedness and response. (Please note that we will also accept proposals that look beyond COVID-19 to focus on preparedness and response and research in public health emergencies more generally.) This call for proposals has been issued to support both the work of the Unit and PHEPREN (the Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Ethics Network)², which is currently focuses on the COVID-19 pandemic.

Research proposals may address any significant ethical aspects of public health preparedness and response to COVID-19. Themes of interest to WHO and PHEPREN include:

- **Vulnerabilities & inequalities** – stigma & discrimination, social determinants of health, structural inequalities, vulnerable populations, global health justice
- **Resource allocation** – approaches to allocating scarce health-related resources within pandemic contexts (including vaccines & therapeutics, personal protective equipment, and clinical care for a range of health needs)
- **Political responsibilities** – preparedness & public health responses, solidarity & collective interests, individual interests & rights, policy-making, corruption
- **Containment approaches** – including population-wide & targeted requirements for physical distancing, isolation & quarantine, proposals for immunity certifications
- **Surveillance & monitoring** – including the use of digital technologies i.e. apps and algorithms to monitor and model population movements and COVID transmission patterns
- **Engagement & communication** – participatory approaches & access to reliable information, information needs, miscommunication & misinformation, competing discourses, social media & infodemics

¹ https://www.who.int/health-topics/ethics-and-health#tab=tab_1

² <https://epidemicethics.tghn.org/>

- **Health systems** – clinical ethics, public health ethics, MEURI & emergency use of unproven clinical interventions outside research, health-worker interests & responsibilities
- **Data & sample sharing** – sharing pathogen samples, genomic, pathogen, research, clinical, epidemiological & surveillance data, and research methods & outputs
- **Research prioritisation & oversight** – accelerated research pathways, approaches to ethical and regulatory review, including strengthening local ethics review, community & participant interests, dissemination & publication

Proposal development

The proposal and all correspondence and documents relating thereto shall be prepared and submitted in the English language.

Information which the bidder considers confidential, if any, should be clearly marked as such.

In response to the aims of the proposal, a range of activities may be planned including:

- Systematic reviews of relevant literature
- Empirical research incorporating novel data collection and analysis
- Participatory approaches to the development of policy and guidance
- The development of capacity building and training resources
- Theoretical and conceptual analyses

Proposals should clearly identify intended outputs and outline how these can support communities, policy makers, researchers, and responders responding to ethical issues arising out of global health emergencies.

Bidders are encouraged to propose activities which:

- advance policy development, governance and oversight, and / or
- respond to vulnerabilities and inequalities engendered by the COVID-19 pandemic and public health emergencies more generally.

Eligibility and selection criteria

Proposals will be chosen based on the following criteria:

1. Lead researcher / project team expertise and experience [25%]
2. Design and proposed outputs of the study proposal [50%]

3. Cost-effectiveness and value for money [25%].

Please note that we would particularly welcome collaborative proposals:

- Between High income and Low and middle- income (LMICs) countries and
- Between LMICs

Funding and period

The maximum amount of funding available will be up to US\$ 25,000.

The activities will be implemented across four to five months and the end date should not exceed 31 March 2021.

Application process

Deadline: 26 October 2020, 17:00 CEST

Bids submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

WHO is a public international organization, consisting of 194 Member States, and a Specialized Agency of the United Nations with the mandate to act as the directing and coordinating authority on international health work. As such, WHO is dependent on the budgetary and extra-budgetary contributions it receives for the implementation of its activities. Bidders are, therefore, requested to propose the best and most cost-effective solution to meet WHO requirements, while ensuring a high level of service.

A prospective bidder requiring any clarification on technical, contractual or commercial matters may notify WHO via email at the following address no later than 5 working days prior to the closing date for the submission of offers:

Email for submissions of all queries: littlelk@who.int

(use Bid reference in subject line)

WHO may, at its own discretion, extend the closing date for the submission of proposals by notifying all bidders thereof in writing before the above closing date and time.

Successful applicants can expect to be notified within [two weeks] of the deadline. WHO may, at its own discretion, extend this closing date for the submission of bids by notifying all applicants thereof in writing.

Submissions of bids should be made via email to littlelk@who.int. Please use the subject: WHO Bid Ref. Call on Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Response Ethics

Submissions must be not more than six pages (excluding annexes). Format should be standard font size 11, 1.15 linespacing, normal margins.

The following information should be included:

- Contact details: Name of the bidding institution, contact details for the project lead, contact details for institutional administrative key contact.
- Motivation for applying: A two-page description of how this work fits in with the project team's expertise and aligns with current areas of work.
- Composition of the proposed team: names, expertise, function in institution, and role in team and experience relevant to the call. The CVs of lead researcher(s) must be included as an annex to the submission.
- Project plan: Description of a maximum four/five-month plan that outlines the timeline, proposed activities to respond to the overall aims and objectives of the proposal, and proposed outputs.
- Itemized budget for four/five months. Please also provide a summary budget of the total costs according to the following categories (not all may be applicable): personnel, supplies/facilities, equipment, communications, travel and per diem, and other (meetings, publications, etc.). Institutional overheads should not exceed 13%.

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. All project involving research with human subjects will have to undergo research ethics review in line with national regulations and WHO rules.
4. Applicants should note that WHO reserves the right to:
 - a. Award contracts to the applicants of its choice;
 - 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. Not award any contract at all;
 - d. 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.
5. 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.
6. WHO reserves the right to enter into negotiations with 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 deletion of certain parts of the work, components or items called for under this bid.

7. Within 14 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.
8. Any and all of the contractor's (general and/or special) conditions of contract are hereby explicitly excluded from the Contract, i.e., regardless of whether such conditions are included in the Contractor's offer, or printed or referred to on the Contractor's letterhead, invoices and/or other material, documentation or communications.

Annexes

1. Vendor Information Form
2. Contractual provisions