

Call for expression of interest Regional Biomanufacturing Training Centres

Background

Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) face significant inequity in terms of access to vaccines and other biologics and are making efforts to establish biological manufacturing in their regions. Establishing such manufacturing capacity, be it through technology transfer or through local R&D efforts is frequently hampered by the lack of a workforce that is trained in biomanufacturing.

The World Health Assembly resolution (WHA74.6) on strengthening local production of medicines and other health technologies to improve access emphasizes the World Health Organization (WHO) mandate and requested both WHO and Member States to invest more on enhancing local production capacities. In this context, WHO established the Biomanufacturing Workforce Training Initiative aiming to expand the capacity of LMICs to produce biologicals and support technology transfer programmes. This initiative intends to leverage existing training and expertise in WHO, while working towards the establishment of a network of biomanufacturing training centres, offering a full range of accredited training programmes.

In February 2022, WHO nominated the Ministry of Health and Welfare in the Republic of Korea as the Global Biomanufacturing training hub (GTH-B), to develop and have a comprehensive curriculum of hands-on training, lecture-based training, and training for trainers with the objective of strengthening LMICs' biomanufacturing capacity.

The current call for expression of interest aims to select regional biomanufacturing training centres targeting African and Eastern Mediterranean audience needs.

Role of the regional training centres

Each training centre will be part of a global network of training centres expected to:

- **Deliver comprehensive** didactic and hands-on courses **on biomanufacturing** meeting WHO Academy quality standard. This include existing trainings or new trainings to be developed with the support of WHO;
- Use **innovative pedagogical approaches** to foster learning and establish **assessment** tools and quality criteria in line with standards established by the WHO Academy;
- Deliver **online training** to scale up delivery and expand global reach;
- **Collaborate with universities** to attract future talent and contribute to integrate new skills in biotechnology curricula;
- **Partner with local biotechnology industry** to provide support in upskilling access to on-the-job training and latest technologies;
- Act as a resource centre for WHO capacity building activities in biomanufacturing.

The training centres will be separate and independent entities from WHO and self-financed. A legal agreement with the necessary terms and conditions will be put in place between WHO and the selected applicants prior to the commencement of any activities.

Role of WHO

- WHO will work with the training centres and external experts to ensure the development of competency-based learning programmes and coherent training curricula across the network to address Members' States training needs
- WHO will promote and disseminate the activities of the training centres to key stakeholders, such as WHO Member States and other international organizations
- WHO will facilitate the networking activities between the centers.
- WHO will provide standards and guidance for curriculum development
- WHO will monitor progress on the overall initiative

Selection criteria

WHO is seeking expressions of interest from institutions supported by Individual Member States, with strong participation from manufacturer, research, academic institutions, able to provide the necessary know-how, process training, curricula, candidate selection, maintain an interactive ecosystem with target audiences and mobilize the necessary funding for the operation of the Centre.

Candidate centres are expected to:

- Be non-for-profit organization
- Be experienced in designing and delivering biomanufacturing training activities adapted to the local and regional context;
- Focus on activities targeting LMICs;
- Offer a full range of accredited courses on biomanufacturing topics
- Have explicit commitment from the head of the institution, as well as the relevant ministry of health and/or ministry of education and/or ministry of industry;
- Have a GMP-like environment to offer trainees a realistic simulated training environment in an industrial type setting;
- Have access to adequate infrastructural conference facilities that are conducive to learning, with technologies including access to high-speed internet, video conferencing, computers, and IT support.
- Have adequate and relevant human resources who can support the training activities and related initiatives such as the mentorship capacity to develop future trainers;
- Have management and technical lead staff proficient in English and technical staff proficient in at least one of the language of greatest needs for the targeted audience (to be justified)
- Be able to assess learning of trainees and to evaluate the effectiveness of the training programme;
- Have a sustainability strategy for promotion of continued education/training, including specific plans for institutionalization of the training programmes;
- Have a strong advocacy and communication strategy for promotion and wider dissemination of training activities;
- Have well-established and adequate governance, accounting and administrative systems for quality assurance of training management and delivery;

- Have a well-established business model ensuring its financial sustainability while ensuring affordability for trainees from LMICs
- Willing to offer a reasonable number of free seats to WHO selected trainees from LMICs
- Not be part of or have links, financial or otherwise, with the tobacco or arms industries.

Application procedure

Interested applicants are invited to submit to WHO a comprehensive proposal in electronic format (PDF), including all the required documentation **in one file**. The application should be sent by e-mail at localproduction@who.int mentioning in the subject “EoI- Regional Biomanufacturing Training Centre [institution name], **by 31 May 2024**.”

The proposal should include:

- (1) List of participating institutions including Member States, Manufacturers, Universities, or other relevant academic or training institutions, supported by institutional declarations of acceptability by relevant officers.
- (2) Coordinating Institution and coordination focal point: list of key staff with their anticipated role and CV.
- (3) A business plan aiming provisionally at the first 2 years of activities: including training areas pertaining to all or part of the biomanufacturing processes, targeted countries (LMICs), resource allocation, funding strategies, proposed overall budget with high-level break-out for the first 2 years and measures to establish long-term sustainability.
- (4) Number of free seats to selected courses to be offered to WHO selected trainees from LMICs
- (5) Background and previous training activities of the applicants at national/regional and international levels, including relevant staff involved.
- (6) Application should specify in which language the centre intends to operate and justification for the selected language, beyond English.
- (7) Tentative start date of the Centre’s activities and proposed activities before the start of the proposed training programs.
- (8) Any additional information considered relevant by the applicant.

Timelines

WHO will acknowledge receipt by email of the application within 2 weeks after the submission deadline. Applicants that do not receive an acknowledgement within the specified time should contact localproduction@who.int.

After submission of the proposals, an internal WHO selection committee supported as appropriate by an external expert panel will review and recommend proposals for selection.