



CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST AND APPLICATION FOR EXPERT REVIEW ON: INVESTIGATING THE IMPACT OF TRACHOMA PROGRAMS IN NIGERIA AND IMPLICATIONS FOR CHILDHOOD MORTALITY

The Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) with the support of Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation through Sightsavers is calling for Experts for desk review on “**Investigating the Impact of Trachoma Programs in Nigeria and Implications for Childhood Mortality**” NIMR is a Federal Government parastatal under Federal Ministry of Health with the mandate of conducting research on communicable diseases of public health importance, prevalent non-communicable diseases, basic, applied and operational research for the prevention and control of endemic diseases in co-operation with the Federal and State Ministries of Health as well as Non-Governmental Development Organizations (NGDOs). In addition, the institution is to develop human and infrastructural capacities for clinical and biomedical research in collaboration with Nigerian Universities and their medical schools and health-related institutions within and outside Nigeria.

1. Background and context

Trachoma is a disease of global public health importance, with an estimated 171 million people at risk of the disease in Africa, and 60 million people at risk in Nigeria across 122 endemic Local Government Areas (LGAs) (5). In an effort to reduce transmission and burden of the disease, trachoma elimination programs have been active across the country since 2010, a key feature of which is the mass drug administration (MDA) of azithromycin, a broad spectrum antibiotic commonly used to treat a variety of bacterial infections, to all affected populations that meet criteria for MDA. Whilst azithromycin has been shown to be effective against trachoma, the possible benefits of the drug to prevent onset of other infectious diseases, such as malaria, infectious diarrhea and pneumonia (common diseases for infants and children across trachoma endemic areas) has also been observed. A general trend in reduction of childhood mortality has also been noted in areas where trachoma programmes are active (2,3). Continuing to build the evidence base for potential impact of azithromycin on childhood mortality, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and partners are currently planning the REACH Study (Resiliency through Azithromycin for Children in Nigeria), focused in parts of northern Nigeria where trachoma is endemic. Part of the formative research for the new REACH study there is to investigate the impact of the twice-yearly treatment with Azithromycin on the reduction in childhood mortality across the country. In order to achieve this, there is need for focused desk-based review to examine the suggested impact of trachoma related activities on childhood mortality in areas where the Trachoma program has been implemented. With support from BMGF and Sightsavers, NIMR is calling for applications from experts on health research for a following expert review: Investigating the Impact of Trachoma Programs in Nigeria and Implications for Childhood Mortality.



2. Rationale, objectives and methodology of the desk review

An expert review titled ‘Investigating the Impact of Trachoma Programs in Nigeria and Implications for Childhood Mortality will be undertaken by a collaborative partnership between the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) and Sightsavers, with each partner organisation responsible for a set of activities and deliverables. The purpose of the review is to provide a desk review and data analysis of the published and unpublished data to consider the impact of trachoma programs on childhood mortality in Nigeria. This includes:

- To determine the childhood mortality rate in LGAs with high mortality (IMR >60 and/or U5 >80), including both trachoma endemic LGAs where treatment with MDA with azithromycin has taken place in the last ten years and LGAs, which did not have trachoma MDA
- Obtain data on immunization coverage in same LGAs
- Assess the relationship between the trachoma treatment data and the childhood mortality data in the selected LGAs in the last ten years, taking into account potential confounding factors, including immunization coverage, seasonal malaria chemoprevention, pneumonia associated morbidity and Azithromycin coverage.
- Collate evidence on the use of Azithromycin in Nigeria, including safety and regulatory framework within the last ten years

The Expert Review will be undertaken in four stages:

- **Stage 1:** Desk review of all published and unpublished work
- **Stage 2:** Identifying relevant data sets
Trachoma data sets at LGA levels are currently available to Sightsavers. All data sets have been verified and approved by Federal and State level authorities. The availability of data sets on childhood (infant and U5) mortality and potential confounding factors (e.g. immunization rates) at LGA level is unclear. The first phase of the review will focus on investigating whether such data sets exist internationally and/or in Nigeria and the sources of these data.
- **Stage 3:** Data review and analysis
If the relevant data sets are identified, the review will proceed to the second phase, data review (specifically focused on data quality), cleaning, analysis, interpretation and report writing.
- **Stage 4:** Data /Report Validation: Data/Report collected would be validated at state level

3. Scope of work

The call for expert review is aimed at awarding a contract to two top-grade experts with track-records of project delivery in the field of child health research to jointly produce a comprehensive review and summary information, observations, gaps, challenges to implementation of interventions, service delivery and the impact of trachoma programs on childhood mortality in



Nigeria. The expected outcome is a 30-page review report, which must be comprehensive to provide information on relevant data sets on childhood mortality and possible confounding factors on the level of implementation and the impact of Trachoma program on childhood mortality in Nigeria.

4. Deliverables

- Final Report of the review
- Power point presentation of summary of report
- Two draft manuscripts

5. Eligibility and Criteria for Applicants

- The successful applicants will hold at least Ph.D, MD, FWACS or equivalent degree.
- Expert in the field of child health or related area of interest#
- Knowledge of Neglected Tropical Diseases especially trachoma is an advantage
- They must have excellent skills in statistical analysis with understanding of data at LGA level
- Evidence of scholarly publications, ten (10) years post qualification experience in research and experience doing similar work.
- Applications must be clearly justified in a concept paper on how the proposed approach and the team will deliver the review.
- Each application must provide clear institutional affiliation.

Note: The two successful reviewers would be mandated to work together to produce a joint review and report.

6. Review of proposal and selection criteria

Each application in response to the call will be evaluated by a panel which will consist of experts in the field of Neglected Tropical Diseases and other related areas of specialisation. Application should therefore cover the following:

- Relevance of the application to the objectives of the call
- Detailed approach of the applicant including search methodologies and scope to make the review comprehensive and covering required areas of interest and approach
- Scientific and technological merit of the proposed layout of the 30-page report of the review
- Potential to address the rationale for the call
- General Qualifications and Experience



- Implementation Plan
- A clear indication of the feasibility that the reviewers will work together to produce joint review within the contract time

Successful applicants will be invited to sign an agreement on the funding, timeline, production of the review report and potential participation in publications emanating from the review.

7. Review Project Period and Process

Selected reviewers will have duration of six weeks to do the desk review after which the review will be submitted to NIMR for an assessment of the work done. The layout and review scheme should be submitted two weeks after selection and agreement. The first draft of the report should be submitted four weeks after the release of funds to the reviewers. Final draft with updates reflecting suggestions and corrections should be submitted 6 weeks from the day of selection and agreement.

8. Expected Contract fee

Contract fee negotiable

9. Application Procedure

Each individual should submit an electronic copy of the detailed concept paper which should include the following:

- Name of the Organisation/Expert Reviewer
- Expert's Research background, including expertise and experience
- Title of the Proposed Project
- Context (not more than 300 words)
- Rationale for the proposed review
- Project Goals and Objectives
- Project Strategy/Listing of Project Activities
- Expected Results
- Complete Contact Information of the Expert reviewer

Other documents include: A 4 page NIH bio sketch of the applicant. All documents must be in word format size 12 Times New Roman.

10. Application Due Date:

All applications must be received by close of business on 1st June, 2020 in order to be eligible for review.



Address and contact for applications submission and clarifications:

An electronic copy of the application must be submitted to:

Grants Management Unit

NIMR, Yaba, Lagos.

E-mail: nimrgrantsunit@gmail.com

Important Dates

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| 1. Deadline for submission of review application | 1 st June, 2020 |
| 2. Proposed Contract award date | 8 June, 2020 |
| 3. Submission of first draft of Review | 10 July, 2020 |
| 4. Submission of Final draft | 27 July, 2020 |

Note: Applicants may be asked for additional clarifications or to make a summary presentation during the review process.