

ADDENDUM 2

Date: 3 November 2017

Subject: Addendum to the Stronger Systems for Health Security call for research

Pages: Four

CONFIRMATION OF SUBMISSION DEADLINES

DFAT confirms that the Minimum Data date is 5pm AEDT on Wednesday 8 November 2017.
The final closing date for applications is 5pm AEDT on Wednesday 6 December 2017.

Applicants are advised that the Minimum Data date was incorrectly published on page 5 of the Scheme Specific Advice and Instructions for Applicants. In all other locations the reference to the Minimum Data date is correct. An updated version of the Scheme Specific Advice and Instructions of Applicants document has been published with this Addendum.

Applicants are also advised that the closing date for applications was incorrectly published in one location in the Grant Guidelines, on page 10. In all other locations the reference to the closing date was correct. An updated version of the Grant Guidelines has been published with this Addendum.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Applicants are advised of the following Questions and Answers about the Stronger Systems for Health Security competitive call for research:

Q1. I note the requirement for an organisation to be a NHMRC approved Administering Institutions. Currently we do not have this status. Is it possible for an organisation not based in Australia to qualify for this status? If so could you please advise us on the process and timelines involved in applying to be an Approved Institution?

A1. It would be best to enquire directly to NHMRC's Research Help Centre (help@nhmrc.gov.au) about the requirements and process for becoming an NHMRC approved Administering Institution.

Please also note that the Stronger Systems for Health Security Competitive Grant Guidelines explain this call for research aims to include partnerships between Australian institutions and institutions in Southeast Asia and the Pacific.

Q2. Page 2 of the Guidelines (point 5) states that "Within the Initiative, health security is defined as reduced vulnerability to acute public health events, mainly existing and emerging infectious diseases with epidemic potential, and drug resistant strains of these diseases." Could you please advise if HIV is defined as acute public health events within the framework of this Initiative?

A2. The Stronger Systems for Health Security call for research does not have a focus on any specific disease or diseases. However, proposals will need to clearly demonstrate their relevance to health security as outlined in the definition provided on p. 2 of the Competitive

Grant Guidelines. Health systems and policy research relating to any infectious disease that may be considered to be emerging or re-emerging, and that has the potential to cause large-scale social and economic harms, falls within the scope of the call for proposals.

Q3. We wish to seek clarification in relation to item 21 of the 'Stronger Systems for Health Security, Competitive Aid Grant Guidelines', which lists research topics that the scheme will not support.

Under item 21, dot point 3 states 'Clinical and biomedical research, including randomised control trials or cohort studies for clinical or biomedical research'.

Does this rule out topics such as surveillance for specific diseases using well established tests, or strengthening laboratory capacity and infrastructure for better outbreak response?

A3. Surveillance and outbreak response research that requires elements of clinical laboratory testing, including surveillance for specific diseases using well established tests, is not excluded from the Stronger Systems for Health Security call for research proposals. However, research activities requiring significant expenditure on laboratory or other infrastructure will not be supported, consistent with the Stronger Systems for Health Security Competitive Grant Guidelines.

Q4. In section 1.0 of the Stronger Systems for Health Security research call, the funding is designated as Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding. We recognize the importance of the research being directly relevant to issues of our partners in country. In preparing other ODA applications—particularly for bilateral assistance projects--there have been indicative levels of expenditure in country for the partner (usually around 30%). Does this apply in these circumstances? Is there a requirement to differentiate where the budget is expended, apart from the usual NHMRC budget justification?

A4. DFAT does not require a specified percentage of budgets for individual proposals under the Stronger Systems for Health Security competitive call for research to be spent overseas.

The Grant Guidelines explain that the funding available for research under this call is Official Development Assistance (ODA) funding. Proposed research under this call must therefore meet requirements for being considered ODA i.e. the proposed projects must be directly and primarily relevant to the problems of low- and / or middle-income countries. Further information about ODA eligibility is available in a factsheet prepared by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), at <https://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/34086975>

The Grant Guidelines also specify, under this Stronger Systems for Health Security competitive call for research, the countries eligible to be beneficiaries and subjects of the research are DFAT's priority ODA eligible countries in Southeast Asia and the Pacific. A list of these countries can be found in Annex 1 of the Grant Guidelines document (updated 12 October 2017), on the Business Notifications page of DFAT's website.

Q5. We have had a query regarding the eligibility of a CIA (Chief Associate Assessor). Can a researcher be a CIA if they are an Australian Permanent Resident?

A5. I am able to confirm that a researcher can be CIA if they are an Australian Permanent Resident and attached to an Australian Administering Institution.

Q6. The document states that the scheme will not support "Clinical or biomedical research, including randomised control trials or cohort studies for clinical or biomedical research". I am considering a cluster randomised controlled trial of a multi-component (public health) intervention. Would this be excluded under this scheme?

A6. Kindly refer to the Grant Guidelines which explain the Stronger Systems for Health Security research program will not support clinical or biomedical research, including randomised control trials or cohort studies for clinical or biomedical research. A randomised controlled trial of a public health intervention would not be excluded.

Q7. Is there an indicative upper limit for the budget?

A7. The upper funding limit for individual proposals is \$3 million.

Q8. The enquirer emailed summary information about a potential research proposal under the scheme. The enquirer then asked: "I am enquiring about the call for applications to "Stronger Systems for Health Security" and wonder whether the following proposal would be considered by DFAT and worthy of an application."

A8. Eligibility checks of proposals will be undertaken following submission of proposals on the closing date of 6 December 2017.

Q9. The enquirer emailed summary information about a potential research proposal under the scheme. The enquirer then asked: "The guidance for this call says: "Clinical or biomedical research, including randomised control trials or cohort studies for clinical or biomedical research" (page 4, Scheme specific guidance). Would the study and interventions described above be eligible for this scheme?"

A9. We are unable to advise on eligibility of potential proposals at this time. Eligibility checks will be undertaken following submission of proposals on the closing date of 6 December 2017.

As you have noted, the Grant Guidelines explain the Stronger Systems for Health Security research program will not support clinical or biomedical research, including randomised control trials or cohort studies for clinical or biomedical research. Experimental trials of public health interventions would not be excluded.

Q10. Can more than one eligible country be involved in a project proposal for this call?

A10. You may have more than one eligible country involved in a project proposal for the Stronger Systems for Health Security competitive call for research.

Q11. Clause 5.2 Minimum data, point #58 states that “team members may be added or deleted after the minimum data deadline until the close of application at 5pm AEDT on Wednesday 8th November. Can team members be added or deleted up until the 6th of December?”

A.11 Minimum data must be addressed by 5pm AEDT on Wednesday 8th November to allow NHMRC and DFAT to identify appropriate assessors for the grant review panel. After 5pm AEDT on Wednesday 8th November no new applications can be started in RGMS. Applicants can change the research team listed at A-RT if required until 5pm AEDT on Wednesday 6th December. Applicants are advised that any change made to the fields listed for minimum data after 8 November 2017 may impact the review of the application. Please refer to section 2 of the DFAT Stronger Systems for Health Security scheme-specific Advice and Instructions to Applicants.

Attachments to this Addendum

1. REVISED Stronger Systems for Health Security Competitive Grant Guidelines 2 November 2017
2. REVISED Scheme Specific Advice and Instructions for Applicants 2 November 2017
All other information and documentation in relation to the Stronger Systems for Health Security call for research remains unchanged as published on 12 October.