



---

## APH Global Health Program

### Innovation Fund 2020 -- Covid-19

The Covid-19 pandemic is having tremendous impact on health and health systems worldwide. In Europe and North America rapidly increasing numbers of hospital admissions and deaths are putting large pressure on the health system. In most low- and middle-income countries (LMIC) numbers of reported cases tend to be lower but may be underestimated due to weaker surveillance systems. Epidemic preparedness is often weak, with already overburdened health facilities and options for prevention limited by poverty. Moreover, many LMIC have responded early with travel restrictions and lockdowns of which the implications for health, access to care and health care utilization are yet unknown. At the same time, little is known about the expected course of the Covid-19 epidemic in these settings, which may be affected by different age distributions, comorbidity patterns and background immunity. This makes it difficult to predict which interventions will likely be effective.

In view of this major global health crisis, the Global Health program within the Amsterdam Public Health research institute (APH) reserves the voucher of € 50,000 that it can claim once every four years for a **call for grant proposals for research related to Covid-19**. There already are, and will be, various funding sources for research on Covid-19 focusing on The Netherlands and Europe. Therefore, this call will **focus on research in low- and middle-income countries**.

The grant has **to be spent before 31 March 2021 on a single collaborative project executed by APH-GH researchers** from 'both sides of the Amstel', with reasonable balance between AMC/AIGHD and VUmc/VU. The project should be innovative, but can take any form and may include besides **research** (using any type of research methods), organization of (international) meetings, write shops, stakeholder consultations, etc. as long as it initiates a new area of joint research and lays the basis for a joint application for large research funding. Because of the urgent nature of the problem we will prioritize applications for projects that can start and yield results quickly.

Proposals will be reviewed externally.

Amount available: 50,000 Euro. We expect to fund one single collaborative proposal or a maximum of two smaller collaborative proposals.

#### A proposal should include the following:

- The aim of the research (problem statement)
- Fit with the APH-GH program and one or more of its four themes of am (see Annex 1)
- The potential to combine and feature expertise from 'both sides of the Amstel River'
- A pathway for a large research grant application
- Research approach (methodology) and other approaches used (e.g. workshops, write shops)
- Activity plan, starting by 1 July 2020, ending not beyond 31 March 2021
- Budget and budget justification. Costs that can be covered are specified below.

- Responsible team and roles: clear description of consortium, including complementary skills and knowledge
- Max 10 pages A4 (appendices included)

#### What can budget cover

- Personnel costs for research, organization and other preparatory work
- Material research costs
- Venue plus catering
- Travel costs
- The requested budget should not exceed € 50,000 in total
- Only AMC (incl. AIGHD), VUmc and VU groups that are member of APH are eligible to receive funds from this budget. Subcontracting is not allowed.

#### Criteria for making a choice between proposals

- MUST be cross-institutional (AMC/AIGHD with VU/VUmc)
- Quality of the proposal (see Annex 2 for details on quality criteria)
- Realistic plan and budget breakdown

#### Timeline

Submit proposal: Deadline 17 May 2020, 24:00 hrs (CEST), to [globalhealth.aph@gmail.com](mailto:globalhealth.aph@gmail.com)

Decision by GH program council: 1<sup>st</sup> June 2020

Start of activity: Any time after decision, no later than 1 July 2020.

## Annex 1 – APH-GH themes

The GH program aims to contribute to health for all in a global context through **research collaboration** that fosters **interaction between theory, policy and practice**. Main research themes are given below:

### 1. *Urbanization, Migration & Environmental health*

For the first time in human history more than 50% of the world's population lives in urban centres. The number is projected to increase to 70% by 2050. This comes with many health challenges including environment degradation, violence and injury, NCDs driven mainly by unhealthy diets and physical inactivity, harmful use of alcohol as well as the risks associated with disease outbreaks. Increasingly health problems that are attributed to urbanization affect rural areas as well. Urbanization is intrinsically linked to human migration. It is estimated that there are 1 billion migrants in the world today of whom 214 million international migrants and 740 million internal migrants. The collective health needs and implications of this sizeable population are huge. Migration flows comprise a wide range of populations e.g. migrant workers, refugees, and undocumented migrants, each with different health determinants, needs and levels of vulnerability. This research theme focusses on the role of urbanization on health in low-resourced settings, and the vulnerable migrant populations globally, including high-income countries.

### 2. *Sexual, Reproductive & Child Health*

In spite of the progress achieved over the past 15 years, indicators for maternal and child health, specifically for adolescent mothers and newborns, still remain behind in many low and middle-income countries, particularly in sub-Saharan Africa. Morbidity and mortality of mothers as the result of complications during pregnancy, childbirth or soon afterwards are still common in poor communities. Children are at greater risk of dying before the age of five if they are born in poor households, rural areas or to a mother without basic education. More than half of under-five child deaths are due to diseases that are preventable and treatable through simple, affordable interventions. This research theme focusses on key issues that affect maternal health and the health of the early life including poverty, malnutrition, low education and poor access to healthcare services. Sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) is the concept of human rights applied to sexuality and reproduction and is the #1 priority within the Dutch Foreign Aid research agenda and also high on many international agendas.

### 3. *Communicable Diseases & NCDs*

In the past few decades the global pattern of chronic disease burden is shifting. While infectious diseases still remain a major problem in most low-and middle-income countries, chronic diseases, including non-communicable conditions such as cardiovascular diseases, cancer and diabetes are now major causes of death and disability in LMIC as well as high-income countries. In addition, there is a paradigm shift for many infectious diseases from control to elimination/eradication strategies. The nature and control of communicable diseases, including challenges of antimicrobial resistance, make that specific attention is warranted despite obvious relation with other topics in the global health theme. This research theme focuses on surveillance, disease program evaluations, transmission models, antimicrobial resistance, and preventive strategies of major as well as neglected communicable diseases. Research on NCD's and mental health within this theme will focus on burden and determinants of disease.

### 4. *Health Systems Strengthening & Governance*

Health systems strengthening, according to WHO, is the process of identifying and implementing the changes in policy and practice in a country's health system in such a way that the countries can respond better to its health and health system challenges; and any array of initiatives and strategies that improves one or more of the functions of the health system resulting to better health through improvements in access, coverage, quality, or efficiency. The health systems encompass many subsystems including human resources, information systems, health finance and health governance, all of which can be weakened by different types of constraints. This research theme focusses on health systems strengthening particularly in low resourced settings to improve universal health coverage. Research will focus on health information systems, evaluation of innovative prevention, care and treatment models, including use of technologies such as mHealth, access to affordable drugs, various financing models, human resource management and laboratory/research capacities. Research questions will also include assessing the efficacy and functioning of different governance and accountability structures, including consumer/community involvement.

## Annex 2. Framework for assessing research proposals submitted to APH (program) calls

### Scientific / methodological quality

- Rationale and background / embedding in existing theories
- Research question and objectives
  - *Has the research question been formulated clearly and concrete?*
  - *Does the research question fit the motivation/background of the proposal?*
- Research design
  - *Is the research design appropriate for the research question?*
  - *For quantitative studies: sample size, validated primary outcome measure*
  - *For qualitative studies: quality procedure described*
  - *Can the research question(s) be answered based on the proposed analysis?*
- Innovative character of the proposed research
  - *To what extent does the proposed research generate new knowledge, products or activities?*

### Suitability / relevance

- Relevance to the call
  - Does the application respond to the call text?
  - How quickly can the project start and yield results?
- Suitability for the APH-GH program
  - *To what extent does the proposed research contribute to the APH-GH program?*
  - *To what extent does the proposed research contribute to the crossovers and exchange of expertise between researchers and departments connected to APH-GH*
- Relevance to the APH mission
  - *To what extent is the proposed research relevant to science, practice and society?*

### Feasibility

- Planning, timeline, duration
  - *Is the research proposal feasible within the proposed research plan?*
- Scientific output
  - *Does the project lead to scientific articles, presentations, reports and/or larger funding opportunities?*
- Personnel
  - *Is the quantity and quality of the staffing sufficient to perform the proposed research? Has supervision of the primary researcher been provided?*
- Budget
  - *Is the budget sufficient to perform the proposed research? Is there additional funding available if the research project requires more funding than specified in the application*
  - *Has the budget been specified sufficiently (personnel costs, material costs etc.)?*