

Call for Concept Notes

The Economics of Tobacco Control in Low- and Middle-Income Countries

Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and Cancer Research UK (CRUK) are pleased to announce the competitive Call for Concept Notes on The Economics of Tobacco Control in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) as part of their *Economics of Tobacco Control Research Initiative*. The Initiative is a five-year partnership between IDRC and CRUK that aims to address the development challenges posed by tobacco use in LMICs.

By supporting research on the economics of tobacco control in LMICs, the Initiative will allow the generation and application of the local evidence that is acutely needed to implement fiscal and policy solutions for effective tobacco control. Local evidence provides the context-specific information and tools needed to design policies that improve public health and generate government revenue to support health promoting activities, services, and interventions.

This Call for Concept Notes targets applied research that provides the economic rationale for tobacco control in LMICs, especially in order to implement effective fiscal and other policy measures aimed at preventing tobacco-related diseases and promoting public health.

About the funders

IDRC is a Canadian Crown corporation that invests in knowledge, innovation, and solutions to improve lives and livelihoods in the developing world. IDRC has over 45 years of experience investing in science and innovation through funding LMIC led research teams across the global South through a strong field presence in Sub-Saharan Africa (Nairobi), the Middle East and North Africa (Cairo), South Asia (Delhi) and Latin America and the Caribbean (Montevideo). Learn more at www.idrc.ca

CRUK is the world's leading independent cancer charity dedicated to saving lives through research. They fund scientific research to help prevent, diagnose and treat cancer, and work with Government to ensure policies tackle the major preventable risk factors for cancer. CRUK's international tobacco control programme seeks to accelerate the implementation of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control, with a focus on increasing tobacco taxes and reducing affordability. Learn more at www.cancerresearchuk.org.

Call Eligibility

Country eligibility

The Call targets research in Sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, Middle East and North Africa, and Latin America and the Caribbean. Applications must be submitted by a lead applicant organization from a low- or middle-income country (LMIC) in these regions.¹

A number of countries considered high risk may not be eligible (see FAQ for details).

Institution eligibility

Eligible Applicant Organizations will:

- Be registered as a legal entity in an eligible country.
- Have a key corporate objective to carry out independent research.
- Have a corporate policy to allow researchers to publish freely in the international academic literature.

Applicant Organizations can be private (e.g. non-governmental organizations, cooperatives, unions, civil society organizations, non-profit foundations or divisions of for-profit organizations) or public research organizations (e.g. from governmental departments, agencies, or ministries).

Applicant organisations will need to declare any conflicts of interest and should not have any past or current affiliations with the tobacco industry.

Applications may include experts from third-party organizations in the role of advisers or consultants to the project, but not as principal or collaborating investigators. Note that third-party organizations are not required to be located in eligible countries.

Please consult the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) document for complete details about the eligibility criteria and roles for each type of participant organization as well as additional information on this Call.

How to Apply

All applications must be submitted through the online application system by 15 December 2017 (12:00 noon Eastern Daylight Time). **Concept notes received after the submission deadline WILL NOT be considered.**

Applications can be submitted in either English or French.

Please visit <https://tobacco-call.fluidreview.com/> to access the online application system and the documents related to this Call (including the FAQ document).

Key Dates:

¹ Eligible LMIC are as defined by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) list of Official Development Assistance (ODA) recipients: <http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm>

Launch of call:	18 October 2017
Deadline to submit Online Application Form, including Concept Note:	15 December 2017
Public Information session for applicants:	01 November 2017
Successful applicants will be invited to develop full proposals:	20 February 2018
Deadline for submitting full proposals:	09 April 2018

Background

Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) are the leading causes of death and disability worldwide and are expected to cause over three quarters of all deaths in 2030. More than 80% of deaths from NCDs currently occur in LMICs, with important consequences for individuals, families, and national economies. While all risk factors need to be addressed as part of a comprehensive strategy to tackle the NCD epidemic, there is global recognition that one of the most urgent and immediate priority remains tobacco control. Tobacco use is the leading cause of preventable death worldwide, causing more than 7 million deaths per year. The widespread endorsement of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC) (181 over 192 WHO member states are parties to the Convention), the prioritization of tobacco control as one of the most critical areas for action during the 2011 United Nations High-Level Meeting on NCDs and the inclusion of FCTC implementation in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are indicators of this recognition.

Fiscal policies for tobacco control are widely recognized to be the most effective measures to curb tobacco consumption and prevent tobacco-related diseases, while reducing household poverty and increasing national revenues. Yet most LMICs have not effectively implemented such policies to date. Common barriers include competing health and development priorities as well as a lack of knowledge about country- or region-specific health and economic burdens related to tobacco and potential benefits of adopting tobacco-control policies. Tobacco industry opposition and common misinformed beliefs about the economic benefits of the tobacco industry (including arguments around reducing illicit trade in tobacco products, contributions to farmer livelihoods and other industry-related employment) also present significant barriers to making effective tobacco-control policies in many LMICs.

Vision

Through the Economics of Tobacco Control Research Initiative, IDRC and CRUK aim to address the health and development challenges posed by tobacco use in LMICs. The applied nature of the research supported by this Initiative is intended to help inform and influence tobacco-control policy measures in the near and medium-term, and help countries leap forward and contribute to SDG targets with respect to health and economic empowerment. By supporting collaborative research that provides the economic rationale for tobacco control in LMICs, the Initiative will facilitate the generation and use of robust local evidence that is acutely needed in order to inform and implement fiscal and policy solutions for effective tobacco control. Local evidence also provides the context-specific information and tools that are needed to design policies and shape practice that improve public health equitably and may generate government revenue to support health-promoting activities, services and interventions.

Beyond the generation of evidence, this Call aims to support collaborations between multiple institutions within countries or regions that enable research teams to actively engage in policy dialogue and policy-making processes. On the premise that collaborations between various kinds of organisations bring different expertise to the research-to-policy objectives supported by this Call and enable greater policy influence, applications should clearly demonstrate how the evidence needs relate to current policy needs. The project's theory of change should be clearly presented, in terms of research uptake and policy change. For example, how will the research respond to policy needs by providing the tools, model scenarios, and evidence that are needed by policy makers to implement stronger tobacco control measures? This theory of change will explain the nature of the research collaboration, the strengths that each institution

contributes to research-to-policy objectives and outcomes, the group of stakeholders that will be engaged with, and the strategies that will be used to effect change.

Investigating social and gender dimensions is part of building a more complete picture of the problem and therefore appropriately responding to existing inequities associated with the burden of tobacco-related NCDs. The experiences of women, men, boys, and girls of different socio-economic status have important implications in finding effective solutions for targeted beneficiaries. To this end, applications will be evaluated on their consideration of these issues and on the methodologies that they will use to respond to them.

Objectives

The general objective of the Call is to generate evidence that provides the economic rationale for the prevention of tobacco-related diseases and the research uptake by policy actors that allows for the adoption of tobacco-control policies across LMICs in four regions: Asia, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, and Sub-Saharan Africa. This includes building LMIC capacity to demonstrate institutional leadership and conducting economic and policy research on tobacco control.

The specific objectives of the call are to:

- 1) Support collaborations between multi-disciplinary teams of researchers, knowledge brokers and policy makers in generating trusted economic rationale for policy action.
- 2) Attract economists, policy research institutions, and non-governmental organisations in LMICs with the local knowledge and expertise required to forge relations and dialogue with Ministries of Finance and other key government actors.

Priority thematic foci

Generating evidence to implement effective fiscal and policy measures for tobacco control is at the heart of this initiative. Projects should aim to enable the strengthening of implementation of effective tobacco control measures, with a particular emphasis on supporting Ministries of Finance in their efforts to increase tobacco taxes. Applications are encouraged to address at least one of the following research themes:

- Best practices in tobacco taxation (e.g. elasticities of demand, industry pricing, fiscal revenue systems, optimal taxation scenarios, etc.);
- Economic impacts of tobacco use (e.g. direct costs of disease and productivity loss burdens);
- Economic impact of tobacco control policies and programmes (e.g. on revenues, employment, farmer livelihoods, local businesses, health service costs, family welfare, realistic estimations of illicit trade effects);
- Policy barriers to fiscal measures imposed by international or regional economic agreements;
- Health equity and differential economic impact of policies on low-income groups, women, indigenous people;
- Financing mechanisms for tobacco control and NCD prevention.

Please note that, regardless of the theme selected, concept notes will be evaluated based on the clear integration of relevant social and gender considerations in the objectives and methods of proposed research. More detail is provided under the selection criteria section.

Out of scope research

The following types of research are considered to lie outside the scope of this Call and will not be funded:

- Purely descriptive research on tobacco use and tobacco-related problems;
- Limited-scope projects that only provide demand-elasticity estimates without providing the broader economic rationale for taking action with tobacco control measures;
- Projects solely focused on researching alternative livelihoods to tobacco farming;
- Purely epidemiological or observational studies;
- Project that generate evidence but with no clear approach to position research for use.

Funding Streams, Scope, and Duration

Two concurrent funding streams are envisaged in this Call. Interested teams of applicants can submit a maximum of two applications, as long as they are for different funding streams.

It is anticipated that **approximately three grants in each of the funding streams** will be awarded through this Call. However the exact distribution between each funding stream will depend on the range, merit, regional distribution and quality of proposals received.

A. Consortium-building projects

These projects are intended to strengthen multi-disciplinary and multi-institutional leadership by engaging institutions with the capacity to strengthen the economic case for tobacco control. We encourage applicant teams to include economists, civil society representatives, and officials from Ministries of Finance and Health who can work together in the generation and use of evidence in moving forward fiscal policies for tobacco control.

This funding stream also aims to increase the involvement of strong policy-research institutions, where they exist, that can bring new credentials to the tobacco control field in research and the use of evidence for policy change and implementation with emphasis on fiscal policies. Prior work on tobacco control by these institutions is not a requirement.

The Consortium-building stream is targeted at well-established institutions which can undertake large research projects involving collaborators from multiple institutions and/or multiple countries. A consortium should consist of at least two collaborating organizations that integrate complementary knowledge and expertise and who can play enabling roles in research uptake and action. Where feasible, we encourage projects to establish and support sustainable multi-country partnerships, within or across regions.

As part of efforts to build LMIC capacity and demonstrate institutional leadership, Consortium-building teams should indicate how the project will contribute to building capacity for tobacco control research and use of evidence over the period of the project.

Total project budgets under this funding stream must be no more than **CAD \$1,000,000**. Project duration **must not exceed 48 months**, including all research activities and final reporting. Co-funding by national or international donors is highly encouraged but not compulsory.

B. Momentum-building projects

This stream is best suited for projects of smaller scope, shorter duration and/or limited collection of primary data, where the proposed research has clear policy relevance. These projects should aim to initiate or build momentum toward policy influence by filling evidence gaps and enable policy makers to prioritise tobacco control and make informed decisions on a range of policy solutions. The breadth of team membership may be less than is suggested in the criteria for Consortium-building projects, however applicants should still aim to strengthen the tobacco control field through engaging new and emerging researchers and institutions who may have less-developed networks and capacities to initiate large, multi-institution, and multi-country projects.

Project budgets under this stream must be no more than **CAD \$300,000**. Project duration must **not exceed 36 months**, including all research activities and final reporting.

Selection Process

This Call is designed as a two-stage selection process. The first stage is a **competitive process** comprised by the submission of a **Concept Note** that will be pre-screened for eligibility and fit with Call objectives and then reviewed according to the selection criteria described below. The review process will draw on the expertise and recommendations of an external, international, and multi-disciplinary Scientific Review Committee set up for the merit assessment and ranking of the eligible Concept Notes.

Concept Notes recommended by the Scientific Review Committee will receive a second level of review by IDRC and CRUK, following the additional criteria described below. Selected applicants will enter the second stage of this process and will be invited to develop **Full Proposals** for funding consideration. The guidelines and evaluation criteria for the full proposals will be provided to selected applicants. **An invitation to submit a full proposal should not be considered a guarantee of funding.**

Please note that due to the large number of applications anticipated, only those applicants that are selected and invited to develop full proposals will be contacted by IDRC.

IDRC reserves the right to cancel the process at any time without prior notice and/or at its discretion to reject applications.

Selection Criteria

Concept notes will be evaluated for scientific and technical merit according to the evaluation criteria listed below.

1. Relevance of the proposed research	30 %
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fit with vision and objectives of the Call, and appropriateness for funding stream selected (consortium or momentum building) • Fit with the priority research themes and cross-cutting considerations outlined in the Call • Description of local and/or regional relevance of the proposed research • Extent to which the research is innovative or adds value to existing knowledge • Potential for application and uptake of research results in changing the fiscal and policy landscape for tobacco control 	
2. Research merit and effectiveness	30 %
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extent to which the Concept Note acknowledges and is informed by the scientific literature • Extent to which research questions are rooted in the interests and priorities of local communities and relevant stakeholders, and may contribute in meeting the needs of ultimate target beneficiaries • Clarity of research questions and objectives; conceptual soundness and robustness of overall research design and suitability of the methodology outlined. • Incorporation of cross-cutting considerations, particularly gender into framing of the research rationale, research questions and methodology • Clarity and soundness of ethical considerations to be addressed. • Plans for policy influence and research uptake, capacity to generate policy-relevant outputs 	
3. Team strength and collaboration	20 %
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of multidisciplinary composition of research team, including economic expertise, and its relevance to the research and application of results • Strengths and relevance of expertise and track-record of team members • Track record, roles, responsibilities, and contributions of partner organisation (applicant, co-applicant, and third-party organisations) including their value-added and complementarity (consortium-building projects only) • Brief description of the involvement of strategic research-users and government actors, including their role in disseminating the innovations resulting from the research; brief outline of partnerships envisaged to this end (consortium-building projects only) • Collaboration with researcher and policy partners and institutions in LMICs with local knowledge and expertise, not only to contribute to the research process but also facilitate the uptake of results (momentum-building projects only) 	
4. Project feasibility	20 %
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Likelihood of proposed work to generate results within the lifetime of the project, and potential for the scaling up of results (e.g. feasibility for use, transfer, and/or replication of research results) • Demonstration of sufficient project management capacity, including: adequacy of planning; quality control; monitoring; and risk identification and mitigation strategy 	

Concept Notes recommended by the Scientific Review Committee will receive a second level of review by IDRC and CRUK. The following will be considered in making the final selection of teams that will be invited to submit full proposals:

- Overall merit of applications as informed by the Scientific Review Committee
- Balance of priority research themes among applications deemed of high merit
- Geographic balance
- Availability of funds
- Internal approval requirements based on risks identified

Contact for Further Information

The complete details about the application process and selection criteria are available on the Online Application Platform at: <https://tobacco-call.fluidreview.com/>

If you have additional inquiries after consulting the online documents, please contact the Food, Environment, and Health program at fehcalls@idrc.ca. Any enquiries which affect all applicants will be posted in the updated FAQs.

An online public information session for all parties interested in responding to the Economics of Tobacco Control Call will be held on Wednesday November 01, 2017 from 08:30 to 10:00 am Ottawa time. The public information session will cover the themes of the call, processes, eligibility criteria as well as other useful information for participants.

Participation will be via webinar ([register here](#)). Questions can be submitted live or ahead of time via fehcalls@idrc.ca or twitter (@Prevention_IDRC).

A key part of Canada's aid program, IDRC supports research in developing countries to promote growth and development.

International Development Research Centre

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