Research Funding Available

Call For Outcome Study Proposals

IFCC's Task Force on Outcome Studies in Laboratory Medicine (TF-OSLM) is seeking research proposals for studies evaluating the **impact of laboratory testing on health outcomes.**

Strategic Objectives

1. To promote directed research evaluating the role of laboratory medicine on clinical outcomes
2. To build awareness and understanding with regards to the critical role laboratory medicine plays in healthcare outcomes

Timeline

Release date: June 7, 2023

Application deadline: September 1, 2023 @ 11:59 PM EST

Award notification: November 1, 2023

Application process

- Applications and supporting documents (in PDF format) must be submitted via the Application form link.
- For any questions, please email the IFCC Office (Smeralda Skenderaj, email: smeralda.skenderaj@ifcc.org).

- Applications must be submitted in English. All supporting documents that are not in English must be accompanied by an English translation
- Please follow the guidelines carefully when developing and drafting a proposal

Eligibility criteria and conditions

General requirements:

The grant eligibility requirements concern the submitting organisation/ individual ("who"), project content ("what") and project approach ("how"). Applicants should consider carefully if they fulfil the requirements and have the capacity to offer and implement projects as expected by the funding grant.

Who is eligible to apply?

The grant funding seeks to reach out beyond traditional role-players in laboratory medicine and encourage applications from interdisciplinary teams, including, but not limited to clinical teams collaborating with the clinical laboratory. At least one of the research participants must belong to one of the IFCC member organizations.

Categories of eligible recipients are individuals or teams from the following:

- Clinical laboratory organizations
- Universities and other academic institutions
- Private or public health care facilities
- Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)
- Research institutes and think tanks
- Private sector companies

Eligible recipients must have sufficient research, operational and administrative capacity to allow for professional and timely implementation of proposed projects. At the time the grant is awarded, the organization must have a capacity for competent fund administration and Institutional Research Board (IRB) review when applicable. The TF-OSLM members and corresponding members are not eligible as the principal investigator but can be part of the research team.

What will be funded?

It is crucial that the study links the laboratory testing to patient management, and improvements/changes in clinical outcomes.

- Retrospective and/or prospective study proposals seeking to evaluate, quantify and demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of any new and/or commonly available clinical laboratory tests and/or laboratory information on patient outcomes in clinical practice (see below for details).
- Study designs include but not limited to before-after studies using a historical control group, cohort studies, model-based approaches, observational and real-world evidence/experience, and randomized controlled trials (RCTs).
- The range of outcomes are defined as, but not limited to:
    1) Clinical management effects due to testing (e.g., clinical decision making which is at some degree dependent on lab results, change in confidence should be defined by appropriate stakeholders such as clinical staff, not the laboratory)

2) Direct health effects from information provided by Laboratory testing (e.g., morbidity and mortality)
3) Effectiveness of disease specific outcomes
4) Patient-centeredness (e.g., Emotional, social, cognitive, or behavioural effects, patient experience, and patient satisfaction)
5) Safety
6) Laboratory testing and/or laboratory information leading to best clinical practice and patient management
7) Efficiency (e.g., readmission rates, length of stay, discharge rate, procedure rate)
8) Timeliness (e.g., time to intervention)
9) Burden of disease (e.g., quality of life)
10) Benefits to stakeholders including patients, clinical staff, laboratories, finance departments, government agencies, funding agencies, insurance companies, industry partners, hospital leadership and management teams, etc.
11) Health policy
12) Reduced healthcare expenditures and costs

- The expected outcomes should be based on specific analytes, diseases and clinical scenario and consider to 1) identify the clinical pathway and how it changes with a new or different type of test; 2) identify different "stakeholders" contributing to the pathway and 3) measure the expected benefits and disbenefits to the stakeholders
- Multi-center studies and multidisciplinary research team including collaborators outside of the laboratory is not required but highly recommended
- Studies supporting or that are relevant to the implementation of the test to show value/benefits of test in routine practice are highly recommended

What will not be funded?

- 'Lab-centric" outcomes such as turn-around time, diagnostic and prognostic accuracy, cost savings only related to reduction in testing volume, etc.
- ***Important: Health outcome studies must be distinguished from technical/analytical/clinical performance validation and predictive/prognostic association evaluation.***

    - ❖ While those non-outcome studies are necessary components of test evaluation, they are rarely sufficient to demonstrate the clinical utility of laboratory tests or capture the test impact on patient's health.
    - ❖ High test accuracy or quality alone is insufficient to demonstrate clinical effectiveness of the test and does not always guarantee downstream treatment and management effectiveness leading to healthcare benefit. Studies that focus on evaluating analytical and clinical performance (e.g. sensitivity, specificity, accuracy, predictive and prognosis value) and examining correlations between markers and patient outcomes (e.g., correlation between marker levels and mortality), can only be considered as outcome studies if the test results are shown to impact clinical

decisions for patient management, related clinical or economic outcomes and other downstream health outcomes.

Duration and value of grant

The projects financed by the IFCC TF-OSLM will be fulfilled for a period of one (1) year, unless indicated differently in the grant agreement. Funding grants issued will be once off funding ranging from CHF 5000 to 10000 (over a period of 1 year duration). Note: indirect cost and any non-study related charges are not eligible for funding. For projects where proposed timeline exceeds the maximum time duration of 1 year, consideration will only be given if there is evidence of other funding resources that will allow for successful completion of the project (to be submitted with grant proposal). Co-financing from the applicant/applicant's institution would demonstrate an institutional investment in the project.

Expected deliverables

Peered reviewed publications in high quality journals within 2 years.

Format for proposal submission

The following need to be incorporated into a single PDF file of the proposal submission (as per application form, 6 page limit; Key references and Research team sections are not included in the page limit).

- **Title:** The title should be concise
- **Scope of project**
- **Justification of the project as an outcome study** (It is crucial that the study links the laboratory testing to patient management, and improvements/changes in clinical outcomes.)
- **Statement of research problem**
- **Brief Background to the clinical problem:** Explain the area of concern, or what needs justify the research (this could be a sub-heading). Any information that helps the evaluator to understand the clinical problem you are aiming to solve should be included. Indicate why you believe that it is, in fact, a researchable problem. This section could be combined with the literature review, or form a sub-section of it.
- **Significance of the research**
- **Objectives of the research:** Clarify the aims and objectives of the research. Where feasible, objectives should be divided into main and secondary objectives.
- **Research strategy, design and methodology**
- **Project duration and timeline:** details should be included with regard to timelines for completion and deliverables. For projects where the proposed timeline exceeds the maximum time duration of 1 year, consideration will only be given if there is evidence of other funding resources that will allow for successful completion of the project (to be submitted with grant proposal).

- **Expected outcomes, results and contributions of the research**
- **Previous research activities related to the proposed study:** applicant's involvement with management of projects before; previous publications relevant to the proposed project; previous publications/activities relative to outcome studies
- **Ethical considerations: Ethics Committee approval should be obtained either at the time of grant request, or before the funding is provided.**
- **Budget (**CHF 5000 to 10000 over a period of 1 year duration and any non-study related cost are not eligible)**:** Provide an itemized budget describing both use of the IFCC grant and if applicable funds from other sources
- **Conflict of interest (COI):** any COI related to the proposed study

- **Key References (5-10 key references to be stated)**
- **Research team**: Principal Investigator and any other project team member's strengths along with their roles and responsibilities should be clearly described. CV (maximum 5 pages) of the principle investigator and supporting letters from co-investigators

Contractual requirements

- The successful applicant/s will be required to enter into a grant funding agreement with the IFCC for the specified period (not exceeding 12 months)
- The call and grant terms of reference and the grant funding agreement to be signed by both parties, will constitute a legally binding contract.
- Indirect costs and any non-study related costs are not eligible.
- The contract funding will be dispersed in three installments, the first of which will constitute 50% of the total funding immediately after both parties have signed the contract. 25% of the total funding will be released upon the submission of the first performance progress report. The remaining 25% will be released after the submission of the final performance progress report and conclusion of the project.
- Intellectual Property Rights arising from funded projects will remain with the study investigators but IFCC's funding/support must be clearly acknowledged in any related presentation or publication.