



INTERNATIONAL
CENTRE FOR
**ANTIMICROBIAL
RESISTANCE**
SOLUTIONS

Request for Proposals

Sustainable Impact

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1 ICARS Overview

ICARS partners with low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) in their efforts to mitigate Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), informed by countries' National Action Plans, providing both funding as well as technical expertise to support intervention and implementation research projects across the One Health spectrum. Projects, in partnership with LMIC ministries and research institutions, are co-created and co-developed to support solutions and interventions that are context-specific and cost-effective for sustainable scale-up. So far ICARS has supported over 40 projects in 21 LMICs, across the human, animal, and environment sectors. For more details visit: <https://icars-global.org/>.

2 Sustainable Impact and AMR

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is among the most urgent global and One Health challenges of our time, with an estimated 39.1 million deaths attributable to antimicrobial resistance and 169 million deaths associated with antimicrobial resistance by 2050 (1). Since the launch of the global action plan on AMR in 2015, the urgent need to mitigate the threat of AMR has rightfully gained traction and recognition. However, despite the increased political awareness at global, regional, and national levels, alarming rates of AMR continue to increase, across many regions of the world, but with the most severe consequences and burden witnessed by LMICs.

AMR is a One Health challenge, spanning human and animal health as well as the environment. It is a global development issue that poses a serious threat to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Without urgent action, AMR could push an additional 24 million people into extreme poverty by 2030 and lead to an 11% decline in livestock production in LMICs by 2050 (2,3).

Given the severity of the issue, ensuring the sustainability and long-term impact of supported AMR interventions is essential to reducing its widespread consequences. However, defining 'sustainable impact' can be challenging as it can vary significantly depending on the context, sector, and stakeholder priorities within which the intervention takes place. Different sectors often interpret sustainability based on their specific goals, leading to diverse and sometimes conflicting understandings of the term (4). Leach, Scoones, and Stirling (2010) discuss how sustainability is not a fixed or universally agreed-upon term, but rather shaped by different narratives and priorities, particularly in complex fields like health and environment (5).

At ICARS, rather than depending upon a single definition of sustainable impact, we have identified several elements of sustainable impact, which resonate with the different projects we are supporting and the varying contexts within which we implement them. These include:

- *Continuation*, we aim to see the intervention and/or the benefits of that intervention continue to benefit the specific system, community or environment after the project or intervention has ended
- *Maintenance*, we aim to ensure that the benefits of the intervention do not diminish over time
- *Improvement*, we aim to ensure that the positive effects of the intervention will evolve and get better over time
- *Post-project financial stability and independence*, we aim to see a target system or community that can independently sustain the benefits whether through building local capacities, continued resources and/or knowledge
- *Policy integration and scale up*, we aim to ensure that the practices or innovations become translated into actionable change (knowledge translation), embedded within policies and practice, and expanding to other communities and stakeholder groups nationally and regionally (6, 7)

Ultimately, we believe that to achieve sustainable impact, AMR solutions must be integrated into broader development decision-making systems, with multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder engagement, capacity strengthening, and continuous funding, monitoring, learning and adaptation (2, 3, 8, 9, 10).

Currently, ICARS' project portfolio includes over 40 active projects across more than 20 LMICs, with ongoing dialogue to co-develop additional interventions. Supported projects span several intervention areas that are both AMR-specific and AMR-sensitive, including biosecurity, vaccination, Antimicrobial Stewardship (AMS) and Infection Prevention and Control (IPC).

For more details on all our projects and activities visit: <https://icars-global.org/>.

3 Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this Request for Proposals (RFP) is to support a single project to develop a comprehensive resource guide on how to ensure sustainable impact of AMR solutions. This resource will provide projects with a variety of approaches and strategies to maximise their impact, ensuring ongoing benefits and guiding through the project cycle and beyond. This resource should consider all stages related to the identification of interventions, their prioritisation and contextualisation to the local setting, proof of implementation in the relevant context, including their sustained/ongoing effectiveness, barriers, enablers and cost, and sustained implementation.

To achieve this purpose, the supported project is expected to conduct a comprehensive analysis of existing frameworks and practices that guide and assess the sustainable impact of interventions (policies, programmes, and practices) within human, animal, or environmental health domains. Examples of these might include frameworks developed for tobacco control, livelihoods generation, access to finance/banking systems, climate resilient farming and air pollution among others. Where possible, the relevance of existing frameworks (and examples of their use) should be explored where they have potential relevance to AMR-sensitive and AMR-specific interventions. The resource should focus on frameworks that have proven effective in ensuring long-term sustainability post-implementation in LMIC settings. In addition, it is expected that broad principles of economics and behaviour change, as they apply to achieving sustainable impact, are incorporated into the analysis. Specifically, this could include strategies that investigate Cost-Benefit Analyses (CBA), economic sustainability and financial viability of interventions, and resource allocation. Regarding behaviour change, this could include looking at behaviour change models that guide changing behaviours and behavioural economics.

The total budget is **150,000.00 USD** for a duration of **12 months**.

4 Expected Outputs

The expected outputs from this RFP include:

- a) **Definition:** Establish a workable definition of 'sustainable impact' as it pertains to ICARS funded projects (intervention and implementation research projects). This should be done through a consultative process with ICARS.
- b) **Draft Sustainable Impact Resource Guide:** Develop a draft version of the sustainable impact resource guide that provides an array of comprehensive methodologies to achieve and measure sustainable impact of AMR solutions across the one health spectrum, which can be integrated into broader in-country systems and complete the ICARS project model.
 - This should be based on a thorough analysis of existing sustainable impact frameworks, including tools, barriers and enablers, indicators/ ways of measuring sustainable impact,

lessons learned and recommendations applicable to AMR interventions for LMIC. This analysis should be shared and finalised with input from ICARS during the project.

- c) **Consultation:** Engage in a consultation with ICARS and other key stakeholders (possibly through a workshop) to obtain feedback on the draft resource guide for inclusion in the final version. ICARS project teams should be included in this consultation.
- d) **Final Sustainable Impact Resource Guide:** Deliver the final version of the sustainable impact resource guide. The resource guide should include background information; a menu of sustainable impact methodologies that can be included in project designs, subsequent implementation and during further uptake; key stakeholders to engage and influence, when and how; guidance on how to measure sustainable impact and critical milestone progress from co-development and project formulation to implementation, evaluation, scaling up, and exit strategies. Relevant case studies should be included.
- e) **Workshops:** Conduct two half-day in-person workshops to pilot the resource in two existing ICARS projects based in Africa.

5 Methodology

Expected methodologies to be used:

- Desktop research to review existing literature, including peer-reviewed journal articles, working papers, grey literature, and relevant websites.
- Online consultative group discussions to capture diverse and common perspectives on how to contribute towards sustainable impact, how to capture it and measure it in ICARS projects.
- Based on these discussions, in-depth key-stakeholder interviews (4-8 in total) with opinion leaders, policymakers, recipients, and funders involved in or benefiting from similar research initiatives on sustainable impact (e.g., IDRC, GACD, Wellcome, and Danish funders such as Novo Nordisk Foundation etc).
- Online consultation (survey, questionnaire, and possibly online interviews) with ICARS project teams across different regions and sectors to gain insights from those directly involved in implementing and sustaining interventions.
- Two half-day workshops with two ICARS supported project teams on the African continent where the resource guide is piloted and used to review the existing activities that address the sustainable impact of the project and guide the teams for the remainder of the project.

Additional methods may be proposed, within the allocated budget.

Please note, specific activities as well as the budget in the awarded proposal are subject to discussion with ICARS and adjusted according to these conversations.

6 Eligibility and requirements

6.1 Eligibility

Applicants must demonstrate the following criteria to be considered for funding:

- The lead institution must be based in an LMIC on the African continent. As such the country must appear on the DAC List of ODA Recipients for 2024 and 2025 (DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2024-25-flows.pdf (oecd.org)). A consortium/partnership of organizations can apply if the lead (that will hold budgetary responsibility) is based in an LMIC on the African continent.

- Profit-making organisations, which include private companies and associations, are not eligible as the lead organisation for this project. However, they can be collaborators bringing their own funding or in-kind contributions.
- International organisations established by treaty or other instrument governed by international law with their own legal status (including United Nations Organizations or any international academic/non-profit/for-profit institution) are not eligible as the lead organisation for this project. However, they can be collaborators bringing their own funding or in-kind contributions.
- As only a single institution will receive the fund disbursement from ICARS, we expect that the lead organisation will disburse funds to partner institutions. Additionally, we expect partnership contracts to be signed between the lead institutions and all partner institutions within the first 4 weeks of the project.

6.2 Additional Requirements

6.2.1 Submitting institution

Proposals must be submitted by a single institution or a consortium of institutions. In the case of a partnership/consortium, one proposal should be submitted on behalf of all partners.

The lead organisation must:

- a. be a registered legal entity and be willing and able to enter into a contractual agreement, as the Commissioned Organisation, with ICARS. The successful institutions will be required to comply with the grant conditions of ICARS.
- b. demonstrate equity, diversity, and inclusion in the project team.
- c. have submitted a completed application as per the guidance in this RFP. We will be unable to accept incomplete applications and those submitted after the end date.
- d. This RFP is part of the ICARS-Wellcome partnership on '*Interventions to improve antibiotic stewardship in Africa*' and is as such funded by Wellcome. The lead institution is thereby required to abide by the terms and conditions of Wellcome, which can be found here: <https://cms.wellcome.org/sites/default/files/wtd003584.pdf>

6.2.2 Project Team Requirements

The research team should demonstrate knowledge/ experience in:

- Qualitative research and desk reviews
- Design and/or implementation of sustainability or scale up plans for projects and/or programmes, ensuring that interventions have sustained impact
- Coordinating and chairing online roundtables/ consultative group discussions
- Facilitating workshops and/or trainings
- Knowledge about governance, policy and practice with relevance to AMR and development issues
- Collaborating and engaging with diverse stakeholder groups (government, NGOs, pharmaceutical companies, and communities) to ensure the continuation of efforts
- Experience or some understanding of the AMR and One Health sectors, recognising the interconnectedness of human, animal, and environmental health

It would be an advantage to have expertise in:

- Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) methods that track sustainability of projects/ interventions over time
- A demonstrated understanding of AMR research and policy

- Prior involvement in developing handbooks/guidelines/resource documents

6.2.3 Subject Matter Experts

The project team can sub-contract subject matter experts (SMEs) from any country, however preference should be given to SMEs based in LMICs preferably in Africa. Sub-contracted SMEs from high-income countries must be clearly justified and may not be allocated more than 10% of the budget.

6.2.4 Legal compliance and knowledge translation

The successful institutions will be required to comply with the grant conditions, including organisational policies, of the offering institution. ICARS policies including the code of ethics and professional conduct and the anti-bribery, fraud and corruption policy, are publicly available on the following website: <https://icars-global.org/icars-policies/>.

The ICARS grant agreement template can be requested by email: Sustainableimpact@icars-global.org

Proposals may not be based on any third-party sources, including artificial intelligence tools, in responding to this RFP without being properly referenced according to the International Committee for Medical Journal Editors (ICJME) guidelines: [CP-ACPJ220177 1..19 \(icmje.org\)](https://www.icmje.org/). We reserve the right to reject any proposal, if we determine that the proposal has misrepresented the applicants experience or knowledge or use of third-party sources in connection with this RPF.

7 How to apply

7.1 Contents of a proposal

Proposals should be no more than 10 pages, not counting annexes., Elaborate or unnecessary voluminous proposals are not recommended. Proposals must be submitted in English. Proposals should include:

A cover letter, including:

- The primary contact person with respect to this RFP: the individual's name, address, phone number and email address
- Contact persons at partner applicant institutions if relevant

The body of the proposal including (not exceeding 10 pages):

1. Proposal Summary (no more than half a page)
3. Background and literature review
4. Aim and Objectives
4. Methodology
5. Activities (Gantt chart)
6. Proposed outline of resource content
7. Stakeholder involvement
8. Project Management and Team Composition
9. References

Finally, there will be need for annexes to be added to the project proposal. As a minimum, these should include:

- Gantt chart
- Budget (see guidance and templates in section 7.2 and 7.3 below)

- CVs of core project team
- The latest Annual Audited Financial report
- Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for Accounting, these must include Accounting Instructions with the description of the internal controls processes and procedures, risk management and financial grant management.

Please note that additional documentation / information may be requested from the successful applicant depending on the nature of each partnership and the organizational structure of the downstream partner.

7.2 Budget Guidance

The project budget should include the following categories at minimum:

- Salaries and Fees (including estimated number of billable days to complete the work and rates for project team members)
- Travel and Subsistence
- Workshop costs for the two half-day in-person workshops with project teams and potential brainstorming session on the draft guideline if deemed necessary
- Project activities including SME cost (if considered)
- Dissemination costs, including all costs related to knowledge translation and dissemination
- Contingency costs – maximum of 5% of the total budget
- Indirect costs: (e.g. Audit, Overhead, etc) should be no more than 15% of the direct costs.

Please note that the specific activities in the awarded proposal are subject to discussion with ICARS and that the budget will be adjusted according to these conversations during the first month after the grant agreement is signed.

Ineligible budget items

Only costs directly related to the project should be charged to the project. The following costs will not be allowed:

- Cost of alcohol is not allowed at any time.
- Costs of non-project related activities, such as parties, socialising events, etc.
- Office and other costs not directly related to the project, such as purchase of shared printer, kitchen and other shared equipment.
- VAT in cases where the downstream partner is eligible for VAT refund.

Maximum overhead rates will be 15% if a co-applicant research institution, university, or partner stakeholder has an actual overhead/indirect cost rate that is lower, the lower rate will apply, and the institution/university/stakeholder should not increase the funding request to the maximum overhead rate allowed. Co-applicant research institutions or universities and partner stakeholders are required to provide documentation if they have a general overhead/indirect cost rate. The actual overhead awarded in a grant budget may vary up to the maximum overhead rate and is based on a case-by-case decision depending on factors including, but not limited to, the type of research project, the level of administrative effort required, the overall grant size and the extent of sub-awards.

Contingency: For flexibility purposes, a contingency of maximum of 5% of the direct costs can be included. It will be possible to use this amount for the cost of items directly related to the project that were encountered in the process of project implementation and that were unforeseen in the process of budget preparation. These costs should not include items that otherwise should be absorbed by the project overhead. Utilisation of the contingency must be communicated and agreed with ICARS during project implementation.

Audit: The annual and the final accounts must be externally audited, and the audit is to include the entire set of project accounts, including the accounts of every partner institutions/stakeholder. The maximum amount to be used for audits is 2000 USD for the project duration. The funds for audit are earmarked. Additional expenses will not be accepted but must be borne by the research institution responsible for the financial reporting. The audit expenses are not subject to overhead.

7.3 Project proposal, Gantt chart, Budget, CV templates

Please use the following templates for your application:

1. [Project Proposal template](#)
2. [Gantt Chart template](#)
3. [Budget template](#) *(please note not all budget lines will be applicable)*
4. [CV template](#)

7.4 Funding and Duration

The maximum budget allocated to the successful proposal will be **150,000USD** for a project duration of 12 months.

Please note, all costs associated with submitting this RFP must be carried by the applicant and that ICARS reserves the right at its discretion to withdraw the RFP at any time without issuing any awards.

7.5 Where to submit proposal

Please submit your proposal to the following email address: Sustainableimpact@icars-global.org

7.6 Proposal deadline

All proposals must be submitted by **15 November 2024** (midnight CET). Any proposals submitted after this deadline will not be considered.

ICARS reserves the right to change the conditions of the RFP in which case an amendment stipulating any changes will be published and the timeline will be revised.

8 Timeline for this RFP

The proposed timeline for the RFP process includes:

- **4 October 2024:** Publish RFP.
- **15 November 2024:** Deadline for submissions
- **15 December 2024:** Review applications and conduct interviews (if necessary)
- **January 2024:** Letter of commitment and grant agreement signed.
- **February 2025:** Commencement of work

Please note that the review and evaluation of applications deadline, the signing of the Letter of Commitment and Grant Agreement, and the commencement of work deadlines may be subject to change.

9 Questions

For any specific questions related to this RFP, please reach out to Lisa Haagensen through the email: Sustainableimpact@icars-global.org

10 References

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