

## Call for proposals

### STDF Targeted calls

#### “TC/2/Health/2009/hep” call

##### **1. Preamble:**

According to the Presidential decree number 218/2007, under which the Science and Technology Development Fund (STDF) is founded, its mandate is to promote science and technology (S&T) through funding scientific research and technological development in a way that supports the complete cycle of innovation. The STDF vision is to act as a leverage mechanism or a tool of change for the improvement of the life of Egyptians. Its mission is to generate a critical mass of human, logistic and infrastructure resources that are needed for a complete cycle of innovation. Consequently, the STDF specific objectives are to fund S&T activities, develop innovation capacity, enhance and monitor S&T systems and develop appropriate and flexible funding mechanisms for S&T. A major component of the STDF general plan is to implement its objectives within the context of the national S&T development strategy which is the direct product of the Higher Council of Science & Technology and the individual strategies of the Egyptian Ministries.

**2. Call reference no.:** TC/2/Health/2009/hep

**3. Call name:** HCV control research program-1

#### **4. Call description:**

This targeted call (TC) was based on the working document of the Egyptian national control strategy for viral hepatitis 2008-2012 that was developed by the Ministry of Health.

Liver disease is a leading cause of morbidity and mortality among Egyptians. More than 900,000 patients are suffering from chronic liver disease. The major cause is infection with hepatitis C virus (HCV), with 70-140 thousand newly reported cases, annually. Furthermore, it is also prospected that the rate will reach its peak between 2010-2012. This imposes a tremendous burden on the patient, his family and the society as a whole. The impact of the HCV infection extends far beyond the medical consequences where it has a major toll in the terms of the quality of life of citizens and their employment chances inland and abroad as well as of the resulting major socioeconomic constraints on the national development plans.

The situation of HCV infection in Egypt has some distinctive features; the prevalence of the relatively less therapeutically responsive genotype 4 and the presence of accentuating comorbid diseases like hepatitis B infection and Schistosomiasis. On the other hand and unlike the situation in other countries, the comorbid conditions of the rampant human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) infection and alcoholic liver disease are trivial in Egypt.

#### **5. Call objectives and desired outcomes:**

The current call of HCV control research program-1 represents an integrative approach towards the control of HCV infection in Egypt, capitalizing on the general plan of the STDF and its objectives regarding the promotion of innovation in the Egyptian scientific community. This would entail reaching, through the proposed research projects, innovative approaches towards HCV control, new diagnostic modalities and novel HCV therapies, with high scientific value as well as potential economic revenues.

**6. Call subjects/topics [the topics having an asterisk mark (\*) are high-priority research areas]:**

A] Epidemiology of HCV infection and comorbid conditions in Egypt:

- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.1: cohort studies for studying natural history of HCV-related infection.
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.2: national prevalence surveys for HCV infection.
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.3\*: modes of transmission of HCV infection (priority: intrafamilial spread, genetic susceptibility).
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.4\*: HBV-vaccination program efficacy.

B] HCV diagnostic modalities and related pathologies:

- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.5: serum markers for hepatic fibrosis.
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.6: diagnostic imaging for accurate diagnosis and staging of the disease.
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.7\*: HCV-related hepatocellular carcinoma.
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.8: HCV-related complications.

C] HCV therapy:

- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.9: stem cell therapy.
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.10: antifibrotic therapy
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.11\*: predictors of response/failure of interferon therapy and/or viral clearance.
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.12\*: phases II-IV trials on potential/existing pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical antiviral preparations.
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.13: local development of interferon and its pegylated form.

D] HCV prevention:

- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.14: social studies on the impact of HCV infection and its stigmatization (e.g. Employment, marriage, military,...etc).
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.15\*: behavioral aspects leading to disease endemicity.
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.16: economic burden of the disease.
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.17\*: cost effectiveness of the prevention and management strategies.
- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.18: educational and multimedia tools for HCV disease prevention, and raising of the relevant societal awareness.

E] Others:

- TC/2/Health/2009/hep-1.19: other HCV-related issues.

**7. Eligible applicants:**

Any Egyptian citizen who is affiliated to an Egyptian institution may apply as a principal investigator (PI). For a non-Egyptian resident who is affiliated to an Egyptian institution, he/she may apply as a PI but the deputy-PI or co-PI must be an Egyptian citizen. Overall, at least 65% of the research team members must have Egyptian nationality.

**8. General terms and conditions: (for detailed information about the application procedures, see annexes A-C)**

- All research projects shall be evaluated on a competitive basis.
- All proposals must include in addition to the scope, the benefits and costing of the proposed work.
- The cost structure should be suitable to the proposed scope. No preset limit is defined in this type of national targeted projects.
- General guidelines for preparing the proposals are available at the STDF website: [www.stdf.org.eg](http://www.stdf.org.eg)

- Teams of researchers, of academia and industry or of industrial partners are encouraged. The benefit of partnerships should be highlighted in the proposal.

### **9. Submission process:**

All applications must be uploaded on the STDF website ([www.stdf.org.eg](http://www.stdf.org.eg)) to which registration is required. The submission will be a two stage process, as follows:

The first stage: A preproposal is submitted (as detailed afterwards in annex A).

The second stage: The applicant principal investigators, whose preproposals were selected in the first stage, will be asked to present their full proposals (as detailed afterwards in annex B). A refresh course on the proposal application process [tips on the smart design, the LFM form and the GANTT chart] will optionally be given to those who passed the first stage shortly after announcement of the preproposal results.

### **10. Evaluation process:**

The evaluation process will be executed by independent experts and the STDF will assure that the process is transparent, impartial and researcher-supportive. Also, after full proposal submission, the STDF officers may make field visits to assess the facility preparedness for the proposed research.

**11. Bioethical considerations:** please see annex C.

### **12. Negotiation and contract signing:**

Negotiation and grant contract agreement will come into force shortly after the announcement of the second stage results. The intellectual property rights (IPR) will be a core part of the process and will be followed according to the STDF IPR rules (as detailed in the STDF website).

### **13. Important dates:**

- Deadline date for preproposal submission: 15/10/2009
- Date of announcement of the accepted preproposals: 30/11/2009
- Date of the refresh course on the full proposal application process: 15/12/2009
- Deadline date for full proposal submission: 15/2/2010
- Date of announcement of the accepted full proposals: 25/3/2010
- Date for grant contract agreement: 31/3/2010

## Annex A

### Components of the preproposal (First stage submission)

The preproposal must include:

a] A cover page containing the following items:

- Title of the project
- The name, title, affiliation and contact information of the PI applicant
- Call subject category
- Grant duration
- Total budget

b] The preproposal text comprising:

- Statement of the proposed research [half page maximum]
- Objective(s), research approach and expected outputs [two pages maximum]
- Description of the project management and the available facilities [1 page maximum]
- Budget breakdown and justification [one page maximum]
- Five references of most significant literature

The preproposal should be written in a 12-point Arial font format, one and half-line spacing and 1-inch page margins from the 4 sides. The preproposal must be submitted as a pdf file.

## Annex B

### Full proposal application form (second stage)

The full proposal must include:

a] A cover page containing the following items:

- Title of the project [English and Arabic]
- The name, title, affiliation and contact information of the PI applicant
- Call subject category
- Grant duration
- Total budget

b] Table of contents

c] The proposal text comprising:

- Abstracts (English and Arabic, 250 words maximum, each)
- Introduction
- Background
- Wider Objectives
- Statement of proposed research
- Methods and procedures
- Preliminary data or pilot research done by the applicant research team (2 pages maximum)
- Description of the project management [both institutional and for the research team] and the available facilities (2 pages maximum)
- Expected outputs (one page maximum)

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- A short list of five internationally recognized scientists in the field of research
  - References (50 maximum)
  - Annexes:
    - Annex 1: budget format
    - Annex 2: curriculum vitae of PI, deputy PI and research team members (maximally 4 additional CVs only); each CV form should not exceed 4 pages.
    - Annex 3: Logical framework matrix (LFM)
    - Annex 4: GANNT chart
    - Annex 5: Filled annex C for bioethical considerations
    - Annex 6: Ethical clearance form, if needed
    - Appendices (any other documents)

The proposal should be written in a 12-point Arial font format, one and half-line spacing and 1-inch page margins from the 4 sides. The proposal must be submitted as a pdf file.

## **Annex C**

### ***The form for bioethical considerations***

**Please respond to the following questions:**

- a) Does your project have any bioethical considerations? (Yes/No)
- b) If yes; has an ethical clearance been obtained for the conduct of study and what is the date of obtaining such clearance? (Please attach a copy of the ethical clearance)
- c) If no ethical clearance has been obtained yet, state reasons:
- d) In this research proposal, please indicate if an Informed consent is needed, (if applicable, please attach a blank consent form as an annex)
- e) In this research proposal, please indicate if the subject confidentiality will be guarded?
- f) Please provide the following information about the Ethical Review Committee that reviewed and cleared this research proposal:
  - Type of the Ethical Review Committee (Institutional/national)
  - Number of members of the Ethical Review committee
  - Structure of the Ethical Review committee (membership comprising institutional specialists only or other non-institutional society representatives)
  - How many years has the Ethical Review Committee been functional?
  - How many proposals has the Ethical Review Committee examined in the last two years and how many of them were rejected/accepted?
  - If applicable, number of members of the Ethical Review subcommittee that reviewed the proposal