

## **Call for Research Proposals in Priority Areas of Vaccines, Immunization and Health Supply Chain Management (VIHSCM)**

*Kigali, Rwanda – May 2025.*

### **1. Introduction**

The East African Community (EAC) established the Regional Centre of Excellence for Vaccines, Immunization and Health Supply Chain Management (RCE-VIHSCM) in 2015, hosted at the University of Rwanda (UR) in Kigali, and was launched on 24<sup>th</sup> March 2016. The mission of EAC RCE-VIHSCM is to contribute to solving existing performance challenges of the health supply chain management (HSCM) system in the EAC region through the generation of knowledge and its translation into research, policy and practice. One of the vital parts of health systems is efficient supply chain management for providing health institutions with essential medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, medical equipment, and products for family planning. The EAC RCE-VIHSCM also aims to offer an enabling environment to sustain the production and distribution of vaccines and other pharmaceutical products in the EAC region.

Among the RCE's Strategic Objectives is achieving excellence in research and the dissemination of knowledge that informs best and evidence-based practices for VIHSCM and supports the implementation of innovation in VIHSCM. Although research-based evidence in the EAC RCE-VIHSCM research priority areas has increased over the past few years in the EAC region, there remains a significant need to create and expand a more robust evidence base. This is essential for guiding policies and best practices to improve the production and distribution of vaccines and other pharmaceutical products.

For this reason, the EAC RCE-VIHSCM is launching a call for research proposals in the following priority areas:

1. Access to essential medicines and vaccines
2. Use of innovation and technologies in VIHSCM
3. Financing of medicines and vaccines
4. Supply Chain workforce: availability and strategies to build HR
5. Pharmaceutical and Bio-pharmaceutical Quality Assurance and Quality Control
6. Vaccinology
7. Vaccine Manufacturing
8. Medical Products Regulatory Affairs

Through a competitive selection process, funds will be provided to successful research proposals in the above areas. The research proposal should ensure specific emphasis on at least one of the indicated priority areas. Therefore, the needs of marginalized groups and the rest of the population should be considered, and where possible data should be disaggregated by sex, age and socioeconomic quintiles in the analysis plan.

While focusing on the priority areas, applicants are also invited to pay specific attention to the following issues: access to medicines and Universal Health Coverage; Climate Change;



the involvement of the private sector; medicines/vaccines in migration/disaster/outbreaks; medicines for non-communicable diseases. In addition, research projects on one of the above topics that include or make comparisons between different EAC countries (cross-countries studies) are encouraged.

## 2. Objectives of the grant

The EAC RCE-VIHSCM Research Grant aims to foster collaborative research among institutions within the EAC Partner States and provide relevant research evidence to inform decision-making.

The specific objectives are to:

- Create an enabling environment for research collaboration among the researchers in the EAC Partner States;
- Generate knowledge relevant to the EAC RCE-VIHSCM research priority areas in the EAC region;
- Share knowledge of research findings in the EAC RCE-VIHSCM research priority areas to support policy and decision-making;
- Enhance capacity building for early career researchers in VIHSCM.

## 3. Who should apply?

This Call for Research Proposals is open to all researchers from EAC public universities and research institutions as well as Government organizations with expertise in the VIHSCM. The Principal Investigator (PI) shall be working for one of the above-mentioned institutions, but the research team may include people from outside the mentioned institutions. Proposals respecting a gender quota of 30% for women and/or 30% of junior EAC researchers will be prioritised. Collaborations between research institutions from different EAC Partner States on multi-country proposals are allowed and encouraged.

## 4. Award and duration

The award amount shall not exceed EUR 20.000 for each proposal, and the research project shall be implemented within a period of 18 months from the date the contract is signed.

## 5. Submission of research proposals

All proposals shall be written in English and submitted via email to [rcevihscmresearch@gmail.com](mailto:rcevihscmresearch@gmail.com) with a copy to [adomina23@gmail.com](mailto:adomina23@gmail.com), the EAC RCE-VIHSCM Research Coordinator. During application, the applicant should specify the grant number given in the summary table (*see section 8*).

A complete application file with its annexes must include the following items:

- Cover letter indicating PI's contact details
- Completed proposal application form
- Budget and justification of budget lines
- Data collection instruments/tools



- Consent forms (in English and local language)
- Short CVs (max. 2 pages) of research team members, including a list of publications (not older than five years) (using Curriculum Vitae Template)
- Letter of support from the proposed host's institution

The proposals should use the recommended templates available on the EAC RCE-VIHSCM website: <https://hscm.ur.ac.rw>

Incomplete files and submissions after the deadline will not be considered.

## 6. Acceptable budget expenditure categories

The acceptable budget expenditure categories can be found in the approved revised guidelines for application and selection of research grants in priority areas of Vaccines, Immunization, and Health Supply Chain Management (VIHSCM), which are available on the EAC RCE-VIHSCM website: <https://hscm.ur.ac.rw>

## 7. Evaluation criteria and description

We encourage applicants to review the evaluation criteria in the approved revised guidelines for the application and selection of research grants in the priority areas of Vaccines, Immunization, and Health Supply Chain Management (VIHSCM) while preparing the documents, which are available on the EAC RCE-VIHSCM website: <https://hscm.ur.ac.rw>

## 8. Summary table with key dates

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|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Grant Title</b>      | Call for Research Grant Proposals in Vaccines, Immunization and Health Supply Chain Management (VIHSCM)   |
| <b>Grant Number</b>     | VIHSCM Research Grant 04 - 2025   |
| <b>Number of Grants</b> | Six (6)   |
| <b>Funding Purpose</b>  | The EAC RCE-VIHSCM Research Grant aims to foster collaborative research among institutions within the EAC Partner States and provide relevant research evidence to inform decision-making.  |
| <b>Key Dates</b>        | <i><b>Date of Issue: 12<sup>th</sup> May 2025</b></i><br><i><b>Closing Date: 11<sup>th</sup> July 2025</b></i><br><i><b>Feedback to applicants: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2025</b></i><br><i><b>Earliest Start Date: 1<sup>st</sup> December 2025</b></i> |



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| <b>Disbursement</b> | The funds will be paid in instalments to the applicant's home institution as per the contract. |
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## 9. Feedback to the applicants

The EAC RCE VIHSCM will inform applicants on the outcome of their application.

For more information, please contact Dr. Domina Asingizwe, EAC RCE-VIHSCM Research Coordinator:

- Email: [adomina23@gmail.com](mailto:adomina23@gmail.com)
- Phone: +250788876046

Done at Kigali on, ...../...../2025

Dr Stephen Karengera  
Director  
EAC RCE-VIHSCM