Ministry of Health
Republic of Maldives

Guidelines for Submitting Research Proposals

To

National Health Research Committee

Health Information Section
Policy Planning Division

November
2012

Background Information

The National Health Research Committee (NHRC) was established in 1999. It was established as per a strategy outlined in the Health Master Plan 1996-2005 in order to strengthen the development and implementation of research relating to the health sector. The Health Information Unit at the Ministry of Health is the secretariat of this Committee. Since the establishment of the NHRC, it was agreed that all heath sector research projects be submitted to the Committee and its approval be sought before implementation. In this regard, the Ministry of Health issued a circular (23-C3/99/C-24) on August 15, 1999 to implement this strategy effective from September 01, 1999.

With effect from this date, the NHRC received several research proposals for approval. However, due to the lack of proper guidelines, the proposals received by the Committee were found to lack in some important aspects that had to be reviewed under the mandate of the Committee. A guideline was developed to assist medical and nursing practitioners, programme managers, students and other health care researchers in developing research proposals for submission to the NHRC. This revision is made along with different formats to be used so that uniformity in submissions can be ensured along with all relevant documents to facilitate appropriate review by the members of the Committee.

National Health Research Committee, Health Information Unit, Policy Planning Division, Ministry of Health Tel: 00 960 32 8887 ext: 182, 150 Email: ppd@health.gov.mv

Application for Research Registration and Approval

Each proposal submitted for approval should have a Research Registration Form completed with it. The Research Registration Form is attached at the back of this document and can be photocopied for completion. Copies of this guideline can be obtained from the PPD and on the Ministry of Health Website at www.health.gov.mv. Proposals should be submitted to the Ministry in print and in electronic form. One copy of the printed proposal should be submitted to the PPD (Health Information Unit) at Ministry of Health. Proposals can also be mailed to ppd@health.gov.mv.

The Proposal

All proposals should contain the following parts.

1. Title page

The title page must contain the following information:

- Title of the research
- The name of the organization that is proposing to do the research
- The name of the person (author or investigator) of the proposal
  Designation /Position of the author or investigator
- Duration of the project proposed

2. The Body

The body of the proposal should contain the following parts.

2.1: Introduction:

Context or the Statement of the Problem: This section should provide a brief statement on the problem that is going to be researched. Information such as current prevalence, incidence and so forth may be included in this section.

2.2. Purpose of the study and Objectives:

This section will state why the research is being proposed. This part should include the specific questions that the research is posing to answer. For instance if it is to measure a prevalence of a certain condition, it should be stated so. If the research is meant to measure the prevalence of contraceptive use in Maldives, relevant questions have to be asked.

Part 3: Review of the Literature

This is an important part of any research proposal. In fact the best way to go about developing a research proposal is to conduct a literature review first. The literature review gives insight into the problem at hand also to the theory behind the topic of research and the work done so far by other researchers. Any references used in developing the review should be referenced accordingly. Details of referencing styles will be outlined later in this guideline.

Part 4: Methodology

This section should provide details of the methods that would be used for the study. It should contain the following sections.

4.1 Research design:

This section should give an account of the exact design of the study. For instance it should state whether the study is a descriptive or an analytical. Furthermore, it should also be stated whether the study would be a survey, based on secondary data collection and so forth.

4.2 Definitions of terms

The major terms used such as the different variables used in the study should be defined in this section. For instance if a variable of the study is "waist-to-hip ratio" the following statement can be used as a definition. Waist to hip ratio (WHR): calculated by dividing the waist circumference (cm) divided by the hip circumference (cm). WHR will be used to indicate the prevalence of obesity and its socio demographic distribution. The cut-off points of WHR to define increased risk of CVD range from 0.9 to 1.0 in mean and 0.8 to 0.9 in women (Bonita et al, 2001).

4.3 Delimitations and limitations of the study

This section will state what exactly is going to be measured in the study and also what is not going to be measured in the study. Any other limitations such as time frame, sample design and any perceived biases must be stated in this section. It should also state whether the research can be conducted in an alternative way than the proposed method and why this method was chosen above the alternative.

4.4 Significance of the study:

This part should contain a brief statement on the impact this research will make in meeting the proposed purpose of the study. Any other perceived benefits of the research should also be stated in this part. Any preliminary observation already made by the author/investigator on this problem to be stated.

4.5 Sample, population or subjects:

This part should have an outline of the sampling methodology used for the study. Any perceived biases that may be posed due to errors in sampling should also be stated. It is advised that the complete sample calculations and/or the sampling frame be shown in this part of the proposal. Determining the sample at the outset will help the researcher to calculate the budget and other administrative measures needed for the study.

4.6 Instruments and materials:

This part should outline the instruments that will be used for the study. If the instruments include questionnaires and/or data collection forms these documents should be attached as appendices. If any equipment is required, proper justification, source of procurement, cost involved etc to be mentioned.

4.7 Data analysis:

This part should account for the procedures planned for data entry and analysis. Any computer based software that will be used should also be stated. Quality control measures that will be undertaken at all stages of the research should also be outlined.

4.8 Dissemination:

The arrangements for disseminating the preliminary and final reports should be outlined in this part of the proposal.

Part 5: CV and training:

This section should provide information about the chief investigator of the study and a CV should be attached as an appendix. Also, it should have information on the people who will actually implement the study and any training and other pre-study measures that will be taken.

Part 6: Project costs and time frame

Budget breakdowns and the time frame for the conduct of the study should be presented in this section. This should include staff requirement, if any, contingency expenses, non-recurring grant for equipments, travel grant for transportation cost etc It is advised that budget calculations be shown both in local currency(Rf) and in United States dollars ($). If detailed budget calculations are available, it must be attached to the proposal as an appendix.

Part 7: Ethical considerations

All research incorporate ethical issues such as obtaining consent and respecting the privacy and confidentiality of the subjects under study. Measures undertaken to ensure safety of the participants should be indicated in this section. Details are provided in the application format annexed to this document. If the research involves medical and/or investigative procedures, any ethical issues that might arise must be envisaged and measures taken to overcome these issues must be stated.

Part 8: References

All references used in the development of the proposals should be properly acknowledged both in the text and in a reference list using an approved referencing system. For example the document quoted in this document can be referenced in the list as follows.

Bonita R, de Courten M, Dwyer T, Jamrozik K and Winkelmann R (2001) Noncommunicable diseases and mental health surveillance. The WHO stepwise approach to surveillance (STEPS) of NCD risk factors, draft V3c. Geneva: WHO.

Detailed referencing information can be obtained from the following web sites.

http://www.lib.monash.edu.au/biomed/referenc.htm

http://www.ex.ac.uk/Affiliate/stloyes/ugradres/harvexer.htm

Part 9: Appendices

All appendices referred in the text above should be attached in this section. Any additional documents which may help in detail understanding of the project may be attached if deemed necessary.