



Policy Engagement Pilot Awards

Wellcome has funded four awards to support systemic approaches to the use of research in policy and practice for health, based in India, Vietnam, Kenya and South Africa. The projects range from new initiatives and the development of programme strategies, to the expansion of existing efforts. The pilots will run from April 2019 to September 2020.

Establishing Systemic Policy Engagement at OUCRU

Oxford University Clinical Research Unit (OUCRU) - Vietnam

To date, examples of effective policy engagement at OUCRU have been project-based and driven by individuals. This project aims to develop and pilot a more systemic approach. Research projects will be assessed for their potential policy impact; policy stakeholders' interests will be acknowledged and incorporated into project designs; and infrastructure and expertise will be developed to support policy engagement, ensuring that opportunities for impact are fully realised.

This project has three components:

- Strengthening our understanding of how policy engagement operates in Vietnam and within OUCRU. This includes an external policy-mapping project and an internal policy engagement review.
- Establishing a Policy Stakeholder Advisory Board to create opportunities for continuous engagement with key stakeholders beyond the life of the pilot.
- Conducting robust monitoring, evaluation and learning to inform our work to incorporate policy engagement into OUCRU's core functioning.

Enhancing Evidence Informed Decision Making for Health in Kenya

Kemri-Wellcome Trust Research Programme (KWTRP) - Kenya

KWTRP has a history of effective policy engagement, but it has been characterised by fragmented initiatives. The programme is now committed to a more strategic approach to institutionalising and deepening policy engagement. This project will pilot a combination of activities as part of a new strategic policy engagement framework at KWTRP.

The activities are aimed at facilitating bi-directional engagement and knowledge exchange between KWTRP researchers and health policymakers; enhancing the influence of research on health policy decisions; and aligning KWTRP research with health system priorities and policymaker demands for evidence. The activities include:

- Embedding researchers in policy-making processes at the national Ministry of Health and county departments of health (e.g. technical working groups, advisory committees, etc.).
- Facilitating regular policy dialogues and evidence familiarisation sessions with researchers, policy-makers and other stakeholders.
- Facilitating reciprocal 6-month secondments of staff between KWTRP and the Ministry of Health.

Policy Engagement for HIV & TB in Kwa-Zulu Natal

African Health Research Institute (AHRI) - South Africa

AHRI's research into HIV and TB has relevance at local, regional, national and international levels but the institution does not have a history of engaging policy-makers. This pilot project aims to develop AHRI's expertise, experience, partnerships and infrastructure, to stimulate a "research to policy action" pathway by:

- Creating an AHRI Policy Group, including scientists at different career stages, communications staff and administrators, who will act as internal advocates for policy relevant activities.
- Hosting two "research to policy action" fora with the Kwa-Zulu Natal (KZN) Department of Health, and a national conference involving the South African National AIDS Council, and national HIV and TB think tanks.
- Facilitating reciprocal staff secondments between AHRI and KZN Department of Health.

Advancing Equity in Decision-Making

India Alliance – India

Policy engagement is a new area of work for the Wellcome/DBT India Alliance. This pilot enhances the policy engagement aspect of two existing India Alliance projects on health equity. One looks at decision making for Universal Health Coverage in Kerala and the other at health inequity and marginalisation among tribal communities in Karnataka. The vision for this project is for tribal health and health equity to move higher up the policy agenda in Karnataka and Kerala, while also sharing lessons and tools to enable the systematic use of research knowledge in health policymaking elsewhere in India.

The pilot activities will include:

- Facilitating knowledge needs assessments, in consultation with decision-makers at state and district levels.
- Creating knowledge products (rapid literature syntheses, case studies, evidence score-cards, policy briefs) linking research to knowledge gaps.
- Organising bi-directional engagement events where research knowledge is presented, and the research to policy agenda is discussed.
- Building a community of engagement within the India Alliance and the national research community.