

Health and Science Research Request for Proposal

TOPIC

Efficacy of Tobacco Harm-Reduction (THR) Products as Tools for Smokers to Quit Combustible Tobacco Products

Issue date	March 31, 2022
Closing date	May 16, 2022
Closing time	12:00 noon, Eastern Standard Time (EST)
Submit proposals to	(See submission instructions in RFP)
Financing instrument	Grant
Financing amount	Budget not to exceed US \$400,000 Paid in US dollars, amount consistent with proposal and work plan
Financing duration	Maximum of 8 months, consistent with proposal and work plan
Contact information	support@smokefreeworld.org

Introduction

The enormous global health burden of combustible smoking is well established and undisputed. In 2019, the number of cigarette smokers worldwide was over 1.1 billion, with tobacco smoking accounting for nearly 7.7 million premature deaths globally.¹ Without intervention, deaths attributable to smoking will increase over the coming decades. The global healthcare community has a critical window to change the course of the tobacco epidemic.

The last decade has seen the proliferation of tobacco harm-reduction (THR) products (e.g., snus, vaping devices, heated tobacco products), which have been shown to contain significantly lower levels of harmful constituents.² A recent Cochrane Review concluded that “moderate-certainty evidence” supports the view that electronic cigarettes with nicotine increase quit rates compared to nicotine replacement therapy and e-cigarettes without nicotine.³ There remains a need to assess the efficacy of THR products as tools to support smokers in moving away from combustible tobacco and toward smoking cessation.

The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World (“the Foundation”) is seeking proposals that will lead to the development of clinical trial protocols to determine the efficacy of THR products as “off-ramp” tools that adult smokers may use to quit or reduce their exposure to harm from combustible tobacco products. Submitted proposals may incorporate recent technologies where relevant to overcome the traditional recruitment/follow-up, data quality, inclusivity, and cost challenges associated with clinical studies. This RFP seeks a proposal for independent research that has the potential to build on the current evidence base and improve outcomes for smokers in areas of unmet need that are aligned with the [Foundation’s strategy](#). Work performed under this RFP will assist the Foundation in determining what (if any) clinical studies should be carried forward.

¹ [https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(21\)01169-7/fulltext](https://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(21)01169-7/fulltext)

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/e-cigarettes-around-95-less-harmful-than-tobacco-estimates-landmark-review>

³ <https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/doi/10.1002/14651858.CD010216.pub6/full>

Objective: Develop and publish protocols for clinical trials to evaluate the efficacy of THR products as tools to assist smokers in quitting combustible tobacco.

Deliverables

- Comprehensive literature review of clinical trials conducted for similar work
- Fully developed clinical research protocol for the study
- Study protocol submitted to a peer-reviewed journal or open science journal for publication
- Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for partnership with clinical partners (if applicable)
- Ethical approval by relevant committee/authority in participating countries

The Foundation will evaluate the protocols for their potential to deliver a scientifically robust clinical study and fund the selected organization(s) to undertake clinical studies.

Expected Qualifications

Eligible institutions include universities, medical/cessation centers, research facilities, and other research partner organizations with strong experience in clinical study design. Clinical research experience in addiction and tobacco cessation is desirable.

Proposals should be submitted by entities registered in their country of origin with an ability to accept research grants from not-for-profit foundations incorporated in the United States.

Geographic Focus

The geographic focus should be global, but the Foundation is especially interested in work addressing smokers in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

Estimated Budget and Duration

- Budget not to exceed US \$400,000
- Duration not to exceed 8 months

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate submissions:

- Expertise and prior experience, including demonstrated experience on similar projects
- Research presence, including in LMICs
- Ability to meet the objectives of the RFP
- Cost and timeline
- Adequate resources (quantity and type) to satisfy project scope and timeline
- Key organizational documents provided to the Foundation as part of the due diligence process, as outlined in [Grant Policies and Procedures](#)

The Foundation will prioritize proposals that demonstrate a commitment to our values, including diversity, equity, and inclusion, and that provide the Foundation with the opportunity to interact with diverse teams, bringing a range of perspectives.

Submission Instructions

Applications should be submitted through the Foundation's online portal, which can be accessed [here](#). This link will start the new application form. Upon clicking the link, you will be prompted to log in, and then taken to the application form.

The application form has links to three templates, which are listed here for your convenience.

- [Proposal template](#)
- [Budget template](#)
- [Work plan template](#)

You may save your application at any time by using the Save & Finish Later button at the end of each page.

To return to an in-progress application, [log in to the portal](#).

A list of application portal FAQs can be found [here](#).

If you have any technical issues, please contact the grants management team via support@smokefreeworld.org, and we will be happy to help.

Key Information

The Foundation may disclose proposals, documents, communications, and associated materials submitted in response to this RFP to its employees, consultants, legal counsel, contractors, and potential co-funders. The applicant should carefully consider the content of submitted materials

if there is any concern about the impact of disclosure of confidential or proprietary information. Although submissions will not be disclosed publicly during the evaluation process, all funded projects (scoping and final awards) will be made public. The Foundation will work with awardees to ensure that any materials made public will not disclose protected information.

To be considered for an award, the applicant agrees that the Foundation may:

- Amend or cancel the RFP, in whole or in part, at any time
- Extend the deadline for submitting responses
- Determine whether a response does or does not substantially comply with the requirements of the RFP
- Issue multiple awards

The applicant must ensure that it has responded to the RFP with complete honesty and accuracy. If information in the applicant's response changes, the applicant will supplement its response in writing with any deletions, additions, or changes within five days of the change. Any material misrepresentation, including omissions, may disqualify the applicant from consideration for an award.

About Foundation for a Smoke-Free World

The Foundation for a Smoke-Free World is an independent, US nonprofit [501\(c\)\(3\)](#) private foundation with the purpose of improving global health by ending smoking in this generation. The Foundation focuses its grantmaking in three broad categories: health and science research, agricultural diversification, and industry transformation. Funded by annual gifts from PMI Global Services Inc. ("PMI"), the Foundation is independent from PMI and operates in a manner that ensures its independence from the influence of any commercial entity. Under the Foundation's [Pledge Agreement](#) with PMI and [bylaws](#), PMI and the tobacco industry are precluded from having any control or influence over how the Foundation spends its funds or focuses its activities. For more information about the Foundation, please visit www.smokefreeworld.org.