Annex 1: **ERI TB OR Course Brief**

European Tuberculosis Research Initiative Operational Research Course

Background

The European Tuberculosis Research Initiative (ERI-TB) was launched by WHO Regional Office for Europe in 2016 to advance TB research in the region. It is a platform to enhance operational research (OR) capacity in the WHO European Region. Operational public health research is an important source for evidence-based recommendations for efficient and effective TB programme management and the relevant policy decision-making. Evidence from operational research studies is one of the most important components to boost the innovative provision of high-quality healthcare services. The SORT IT (Structured Operational Research and Training Initiative) model has contributed to building research capacity and produce evidence for improved public health programme performance.

With the aim of creating an organisational culture of evidence based management, where policy and practice are informed by operational research, and to improve TB programme performance, the ERI-TB OR course for the period of 2018-2019 will support countries in undertaking operational research projects and in developing the adequate skills. The ERI-TB OR course adopted SORT-IT framework and adapted to the need defined by the European TB research priorities agenda[1]. Through this course, participants will be supported to conduct OR projects within the five shared research priority areas in the countries of the WHO European Region:

- Case detection and screening,
- Access to treatment and compliance,
- Optimizing treatment regimes,
- Collaboration with HIV programs,
- Infection control.

The ERI-TB will teach the practical skills needed to plan, undertake, monitor and publish operational research. The course duration is of 5 months, divided in 3 modules with clear milestones and measurable targets, as mentioned below. Participants will go through the whole research process and complete the course delivering a manuscript to be submitted for publication in peer-reviewed scientific journals, aiming at influencing policy and practice.

Purpose: To develop the practical skills for conducting operational research, publishing the findings and fostering policy and practice change.

Course curriculum: The course comprises three modules which will be held in Copenhagen, Denmark as follows.

Module 1: Research Questions and Protocol Development – October, 01 – 06, 2018
This module will help participants develop a thorough understanding of operational research a draft research protocol. The teaching will be through lectures, discussions, exercises and use of completed and published operational research as examples, and participants will have the opportunity to present and discuss their written protocols with the facilitators.

Brief content overview:

- Introduction to Operational research;

[1] Click https://bit.ly/2NFXA7P to see the full list of the identified high priority research questions.

- Research Terminology;
- Asking the right research questions;
- Aims and Objectives;
- Ethics;
- Developing a plan of analysis;
- Drafting research protocols.

(Key Deliverable Output: A Draft Scientific Protocol)

Module 2: Data management and data analysis – October, 08 – 12, 2018

This module will take place after a one day break upon completion of Module 1, and seeks to help the participants understand data management and data analysis. The module will consist of:

1 day: Data entry (Ensure efficient quality-assured data collection)
2 days: Data analysis
1 day: Application of learning on specific projects
1 day: Plenary and feedback

Brief content overview
- Designing an efficient data entry instrument
- Making an efficient computer data entry questionnaire
- Entering and validating data entry
- Introduction to data analysis
- Producing relevant analysis results in tabular form
- Daily homework on own electronic data entry instrument

(Key Deliverable Outputs: Draft electronic data entry instrument; understanding of key principles in conducting biostatistical analyses and interpretation of results)

Module 3: Scientific paper writing – March, 01 – 08, 2019

This seven-day module will help participants write their scientific papers and deal with on-line submission and editors' and reviewers' comments

Brief content overview

- Learn the principles of writing a scientific paper
- Learn how to deal with peer review

(Key Deliverable Output: Draft manuscript submitted to a scientific journal)

Faculty for the course
The course will be conducted by the faculty from World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe, collaborating partners and alumni of the earlier courses, who are familiar and delivered assistance in the east European and central Asia.

What does the participant's organisation gain?
- A person who is well trained in operational research can help their program or institutions undertake relevant operational research to identify challenges and improve programme performance in a sustainable manner;
- The initiative would also foster medical staff-retention in program activities including operational research. It should consequently attract qualified staff and reduce turn-over which may hamper continuity of research initiatives.

What does the participant gain?

- Practical skills for undertaking the entire operational research process from conception to publication and beyond;
- The experience of learning and sharing knowledge within a team of motivated participants and talented facilitators in operational research (who act as mentors) from different countries;
- An opportunity to excel and gain visibility in operational research and to prepare for increased research responsibilities and research leadership in their country;
- Participants are strongly encouraged to help train and eventually lead others as mentors, to maximise the development of long-lasting capacity and impact.

Course follow-up:

- In between the modules 2 and 3, candidates will return to their respective health programmes/projects to continue their routine work and collect the data pertaining to their research projects;
- Participants will be contacted intermittently after course completion to determine accomplishments and policy and practice impact of their studies. They will also become part of an operational research "alumni" group.
- Course facilitators will be available to provide advice upon request.

Annex 2: Criteria for successful nominees

1. Nomination should be made by the Member State considering the available country data. Please note that research using already available data form the TB register is preferred as prospective studies are unlikely to fit into the time-line and expected outputs of the course.
2. Nominees should be involved in the implementation of the national programmes, and represent either national institution and / or NGO, both operating in disease-specific fields (particularly involvement in TB and/or HIV).
3. Nominees should provide written commitment (Questions 21, 22 of the nomination form, Annex 3) to attend all three modules of the training course, return to their programme or institution after the course and implement course knowledge at programme level for at least 12 months.
4. Nominees should provide a written statement from their supervisor or relevant authority, attesting to the applicant permission to devote time and efforts to carry out and publish his/her operational research.
5. It is preferable for the nominees, to be e in possession of a Master's in Public Health (MPH) or equivalent, or in the process of post-graduate education in public health or communicable disease be preferred
6. Written and spoken English is an asset.
7. Must be computer literate.
8. Must bring to the course a laptop with a Microsoft Windows operating system.
9. Nomination deadline: 3 August, 2018
10. A completed nomination form presented below (Annex 3).

11. **Nominees should outline their proposed research project in a half page** (Questions 17-19 of the nomination form, Annex 3) describing the research question and the issue to be researched, identified among the five shared priority areas for TB OR. The five priority areas have been identified by the countries as the following:
    - Case detection and screening,
    - Access to treatment and compliance,
    - Optimizing treatment regimes,
    - Collaboration with HIV programs,
    - Infection control.

We will seek for gender balance during the selection process.

If clarifications are needed, please contact:

Dr Karapet DAVTYAN and Dr Andrei DADU
Secretariat of the European TB research Initiative at the WHO's Regional Office for Europe

E-mail: eurotbri@who.int or eurotb@who.int

Annex 3: European Tuberculosis Research Initiative Operational Research Course Nomination Form

Personal Information of Nominee						
1.	*Name*					
2.	*Surname*					
3.	*Gender*					
4.	*Mobile/telephone*					
5.	*Email*					
6.	*Citizenship*					
7.	*Country of work*					
8.	*Current Job*					
9.	*Employer / Organization*					
10.	*Spoken English (circle the correct answer)*		Excellent	Good	Average	No
11.	*Written English (circle the correct answer)*		Excellent	Good	Average	No
Supervisor (Program Manager/Medical Director) Information						
12.	*Full Name*					
13.	*Job title*					
14.	*Organisation*					
15.	*Email*					
16.	*Mobile/telephone*					
Proposed research description						
17.	**Title of the Operational Research Project (25 words maximum)**					

18.	**Formulate the problem statement/Background to your research question (200 words maximum)** ……

	Formulate the Research questions that you propose to develop into an Operational Research project during the course (75 words maximum) **Research Questions guidance:** Formulate and submit a research question based on the five priority areas and relevant research question examples identified by the countries as the following: • **Case detection and screening,** 1. *"What is average time to TB diagnosis among the various risk groups and what are reasons for diagnostic delay?"* 2. *"What are the most effective approaches to the management of close contacts of MDR and XDR-TB index patients?"* • **Access to treatment and compliance,** 1. *"What are the main reasons for patients to discontinue treatment in the Region?"* • **Optimizing treatment regimes,** 1. *"What is the optimal preventive regimen for tolerability, efficacy, safety and compliance for close contacts of isoniazid resistant, MDR and XDR-TB index patients?"* 2. *"What are the extent and impact of the short course MDR- TB regimen in National TB programmes in the Region?"* • **Collaboration with HIV programs,** 1. *"What is the optimal screening algorithm for active TB and latent TB infection among people living with HIV"* 2. *"Integrating TB-HIV care: What are the best models for delivering TB-HIV treatment and monitoring?"* • **Infection control.** 1. *"For how long do patients with drug-sensitive and drug-resistant TB remain infectious after starting treatment?"* The research will have to be carried out within a 5-8 month time frame. Therefore, we strongly encourage research projects that are based on monitoring and evaluation data that is already collected and available in registers or treatment cards. Prospective studies and studies involving patient interventions and patient questionnaires are less likely to be suitable for this course as they may not be completed within the available time frame.	
19.	**What is the Status of Data Collection**	**19.1.** Data have already been collected and are available **19.2.** Data are being collected and will be completed within the time frame of the course **19.3.** Data are not available and will have to be collected prospectively

1. Failure to provide all of the above requested information will result in the rejection of the nomination. Incomplete nomination forms will be discarded.
2. Please note that all supportive documents must be in Word or PDF format.