



CURES

THE TUNISIAN HEALTH CENTER
FOR UNIVERSITY RESEARCH
EXCELLENCE & SUSTAINABILITY

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Technical assistance program to enhance research commercialization potential

Closing date: November 19th, 2023



1. Concept of the call

CURES Technical assistance program for research commercialization aims to promote the transfer, utilization, and commercialization of research results to foster the long-term growth of life sciences innovations and health technologies commercialization and therefore contribute to improving the quality of health care and the economic growth of the country.

Through this program, the CURES team of international and Tunisian experts will work closely with Tunisian researchers and technology transfer experts to help develop and implement technical and commercial roadmaps for their innovations, with a geographic focus on the Sfax region.

CURES is led by FHI 360, a global nonprofit with strong cross-sectoral expertise in health and private sector development. Research commercialization activities are supported by BioHealth Innovation (BHI), an innovation intermediary based in Maryland, that is internationally recognized as a leader in biohealth innovation and research commercialization.

The technical assistance program will be an ongoing activity in partnership with the university of Sfax and the Sfax research centers. This call is a first step to develop pilot projects and other activities that will be organized to enhance the knowledge and skills of the scientific community on the technology transfer and research commercialization aspects.

2. Background: What is CURES project?

The CURES “Tunisian Health Center for University Research Excellence and Sustainability” project is funded by the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination and implemented by FHI 360 in collaboration with the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the University of Sfax.

The aim of this project is to improve scientific research in Tunisia to be able to better prevent and treat non-communicable diseases (NCDs) through the establishment of a research and simulation center and the creation of a sustainable process for research commercialization and technology transfer to foster the health technologies commercialization.

3. Priority areas

This call provides priority to supporting research projects focused on the BioHealth sector. Some of these areas are the following:

- Therapeutics
- Diagnostics
- Vaccines
- Medical Devices
- Healthcare Services
- E-Health
- Mobile Health
- Electronic Medical Records
- Biomarkers and Tools
- Health Informatics
- BioHealth Cybersecurity
- Personalized Health
- AI, Machine Learning, Quantum

4. Eligibility criteria

1. Research projects involving researchers affiliated with the University of Sfax institutions; or
2. Research projects involving researchers affiliated with the Sfax Research centers: Sfax Biotechnology Center, Digital Research Center, and Olive institute.

5. Criteria for Selection

The CURES Technical Assistance Program seeks motivated and coachable research teams who are interested in the commercialization of their innovations. The program will provide technical assistance for research projects with commercialization potential, based on the following criteria:

- Bio / Health / MedTech focus
- Technological Readiness Level (TRL) 3: Solid research outputs – not just a concept.
- Potential for commercial application

6. Scope

CURES with its key expertise and extensive knowledge in biohealth innovations, technology transfer, research commercialization and academia-industry linkages offer pre-commercialization activities which include but not limited to:

- Technology assessment
- Assistance in developing technical plan to scale up the technology
- Intellectual property assessment
- Regulatory and clinical assessment
- Assessment of the technology commercial viability
- Development of commercial roadmap
- Assistance in market research
- Business development coaching
- Assistance in making the technology ready for investment
- Linkages with potential partners or funders

7. Application process

- The applicant should submit completed form via this [link](#)
- **All proposals and related data, knowledge and documents are treated in confidence.**
- Submission deadline: November 19th, 2023

8. Language

The proposal should be submitted in English. All communication through the support process will also be in English.

9. Proposal Evaluation and Selection process

CURES team will work in an open and transparent way to ensure everyone is clear on why projects have been selected for the pilot phase. The selection will be fulfilled in two-step process and will start immediately after the call cut-off date.

Step 1: General Eligibility Check

CURES team will examine initially the following:

- The online application form has been completed as required and submitted by the closing date.
- The eligibility criteria set out in section 4 are met.
- The overall concept is aligned with CURES scope (BioHealth technologies).

Proposals considered eligible will pass to step two, which will comprise the in-depth evaluation according to three criteria (described in section 5) by FHI 360 & BHI Committee.

Step 2: Expert evaluation

The evaluation will comprise an in-depth analysis of the proposal by CURES experts considering several requirements including the inventive activity, the TRL stage (3 or above), and the anticipated impact on healthcare. Inclusion of women researchers is encouraged.

Communication

All applicants will receive a short feedback report either accepted or rejected. The feedback will be provided within 1 month after the call closing date. If any delays in the evaluation process occur for reasons outside the control of CURES Consortium, this will be promptly communicated to the applicants via email.

If the application is successful, the CURES consortium will ensure needed steps to secure **confidentiality agreements**.

10. Contact

Questions about the program or the application can be sent to:

cures.technical.assistance@fhi360.org

