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## Concept note

### CRVS Applied Research Training (CART) Initiative

*Strengthening applied research  
capacity for CRVS practitioners*

## Background

The CRVS applied research training (CART) initiative focuses on enhancing CRVS systems through supporting applied research on strategies, interventions, and tools. This involves designing projects to address practical questions, employing robust methodologies, and identifying key personnel for effective implementation and publication. The need to strengthen practitioners' research capacity is evident, as highlighted in the Asia-Pacific CRVS research forum held in 2023. Challenges include limited time for essential research activities within program settings, hindering the completion and utilization of quality research. Additionally, building a critical mass of trained researchers is crucial, as talented individuals may not engage in research, leading to a shortage of research capacity.

This project aims to strengthen the capacity of CRVS practitioners to conduct high quality relevant research. It builds on a successful model implemented previously by the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease and Medicins Sans Frontieres to build operational research capacity among health professionals, known as the "SORT-IT" model. While the project will be adapted for the CRVS context, the approach will be similar and incorporate the essential element as identified by Kumar et al. 2020,<sup>1</sup> Zachariah et al. 2020<sup>2</sup> and Zachariah et al. 2016.<sup>3</sup> Additionally, lessons reflecting the significant advances in elearning in recent years be considered to find the best blend and types of learning to achieve the objectives.

## Training

The training will be delivered through modular courses for CRVS practitioners in Africa and Asia and the Pacific, combining a mixture of elearning and face to face training. Each module will lead to the creation of a product on the path towards producing the final research products To move to the next module, a defined product of sufficient quality needs to be submitted. There will also be a mentorship or coaching component whereby experts in the area to be studied will provide input and feedback as the research develops.

Eventually, each participant will be expected to submit a paper to a peer-reviewed journal at the end of the course and to create appropriate dissemination products such as policy briefs, posters etc. Other key indicators of success, in addition to papers published, will be research disseminated at conferences and improvements in programmatic and service delivery, especially the second Asia-Pacific CRVS research forum. The project aims to build a cadre of enthusiastic, well-trained individuals in developing countries who will spear-head momentum for research within programme settings, the wider related CRVS areas and if appropriate within wider relevant settings to improve programmes and policies.

The training will consist of six online modules and two face-to-face workshops. The online modules will consist of six presentations and expected to last two weeks with two to three hours of active participation each day over 10 working days. The face-to-face modules will last one working week of full days with intensive group work.

**Online module 1:** Defining the research questions and carrying out a literature review  
*Deliverables:* research questions with preliminary research, literature review outline

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<sup>1</sup> <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/33308668/>

<sup>2</sup> Include link to the ref

<sup>3</sup> <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0160837>

**Online module 2:** Critically evaluating evidence and defining a hypothesis to be tested, research ethics  
*Deliverables:* literature review, updated research question and hypothesis, ethical review

**Online module 3:** Developing the research approach and evaluating and identifying data sources and methods

*Deliverables:* Conceptual framework, initial research proposal, including data source overview and elements from all three modules

**Face to face workshop 1:**

Presentation of proposals, small group work on similar topics, discussion of proposal and ways to improve, follow up to training modules

*Deliverables:* final research proposal, approved by facilitator/coordinator and supervisor/mentor

**Online module 4:** Collecting data and analyzing results

*Deliverables:* Data collection strategy, analytical plan

**Online module 5:** Interpreting and presenting results and writing up

*Deliverables:* outline of paper structure and how results will be presented, initial write up of findings following data collection

**Online module 6:** Determining policy implications and disseminating findings

*Deliverables:* draft research paper and dissemination strategy

**Face to face workshop 2:**

Presentation of drafts, small group work on creating policy briefs, discussion and critique of papers and plans to finalise, follow up to training modules.

*Deliverables:* final research paper and policy brief plus other dissemination and research uptake material

There will also be post training support in finalizing the papers, disseminating findings, submitting to journals and ensuring research uptake and use.

Furthermore, an alumni network of participants will be established in order to support one another and to facilitate peer review. This network would also include knowledge management and sharing of research findings, best practices, and tools.

Finally, the applied research produced will be used to strengthen and improve CRVS systems through the production and uptake of relevant and targeted evidence.

The thematic areas of the intervention include:

- Community engagement and incentives
- Civil registration system and processes
- Vital statistics
- CRVS workforce
- Cross cutting themes

The types of applied research are envisaged to include:

1. Operational research
2. Implementation research
3. Action research
4. Evaluation research

## Outcomes

1. Improved applied research skills and competencies among CRVS practitioners and capacity to conduct and communicate high-quality policy-relevant applied research and use evidence to inform their work.
2. Enhanced collaboration and partnerships between CRVS practitioners and academic and research institutions.
3. Increased funding opportunities for CRVS practitioners to develop their research skills and implement research projects.
4. Improved knowledge management and sharing of research findings, best practices, and tools.
5. Strengthened CRVS systems
6. Improved public health and other CRVS-related policies, programs, and interventions through improved relevant evidence from applied research.

## Schedule

| Month          | Activity   |
|----------------|--|
| February 2024  | Applications received  |
| March 2024     | Assessment of applications and notification of outcome<br>Launch of curriculum and online training modules developed |
| April 2024     | Online training module 1   |
| May 2024       | Online training module 2   |
| June 2024      | Online training modules 3  |
| August 2024    | 1 <sup>st</sup> face to face workshop  |
| September 2024 | Online training module 4   |
| October 2024   | Online training module 5   |
| November 2024  | Online training module 6   |
| January 2025   | 2 <sup>nd</sup> face to face workshop  |
| January 2025   | Virtual support for final products and submission of paper   |
| February 2025  |  |
| February 2025  | Establishment of alumni network  |
| March 2025     | Presentation of paper/draft at 2 <sup>nd</sup> CRVS Research forum   |