

Request for Proposal (RFP)

Operational research to strengthen evidence, use and adoption of the 7-1-7 target for performance improvement

Funding level

- USD 50,000-75,000 per project

Timeline

- Interested applicants are required to submit an Expression of Interest to contact@717alliance.org by 11.59pm ET on **February 16, 2024**.
- Invited full proposals will be due in **April 2024**.

Questions

- Please take a look at our Frequently Asked Questions on page 7 before reaching out to us.

Summary

[The 7-1-7 Alliance](#), a country-led initiative providing technical assistance and financial support for adoption and use of the 7-1-7 target in country, is requesting proposals for operational research projects. Two rounds of proposals will be accepted in 2024 and 7-10 research grants (suggested funding level: USD 50,000-75,000 per project) will be awarded. Applicants are required to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) by February 16, 2024 to be considered for the first round of funding.

Background and Justification for the RFP

Global health security requires that all countries have strong epidemic preparedness to effectively fight infectious diseases when they emerge. The COVID-19 pandemic reinforced the need for clear and ambitious preparedness goals to promote accountability and to align stakeholders for infectious disease detection and response. Achievable metrics and objectively verifiable benchmarks are an essential communication tool to improve the identification and control of health security threats, providing partners and donors a clear pathway for capacity strengthening and resource mobilization.

Since 2020, Resolve to Save Lives (RTSL) has undertaken several research and learning activities related to the 7-1-7 target (see 7-1-7 timeline for research and learning activities, **FIGURE 1**). RTSL conducted an extensive review of existing outbreak timeliness data to better understand if shared goals for timeliness might galvanize countries toward performance improvement and outbreak prevention. The initial study reviewed timeliness for 296 outbreaks that occurred during 2017-2019 and found a median 8 days to

detection and 3 days for notification. These historical data were triangulated with median incubation periods for epidemic-prone pathogens.

A review of 41 public health events from 5 countries found that 54% percent of events met a target of 7 days to detect (median 6 days), 71% of events met a target of 1 day to notify (median 0 days), and 49% of events met a target of 7 days to complete all early response actions. Eleven (27%) events met the complete 7-1-7 target, with variation among event types (Bochner et al, 2023). This review suggested that a 7-1-7 target is ambitious yet achievable for most outbreak events.



FIGURE 1: Timeline for research and learning activities related to the 7-1-7 target

The 7-1-7 timeliness target advocates for ≤7 days to detect, ≤1 day to notify, and ≤7 days to complete early response actions and is used to drive performance improvement for critical early response actions needed for infectious disease outbreaks. Beginning in 2021, the 7-1-7 target was piloted in six countries providing critical evidence for its application and contributions to local, national, regional, and global response. Preliminary findings from 7-1-7 pilots conducted suggest a Theory of Change (see Theory of Change, FIGURE 2) demonstrating that implementation of the 7-1-7 target can:

- catalyze performance improvement for outbreak response;
- be used as a communication and advocacy tool for policy change;
- prioritize efforts for financing and systems strengthening; and
- serve as a tool for accountability and reporting.

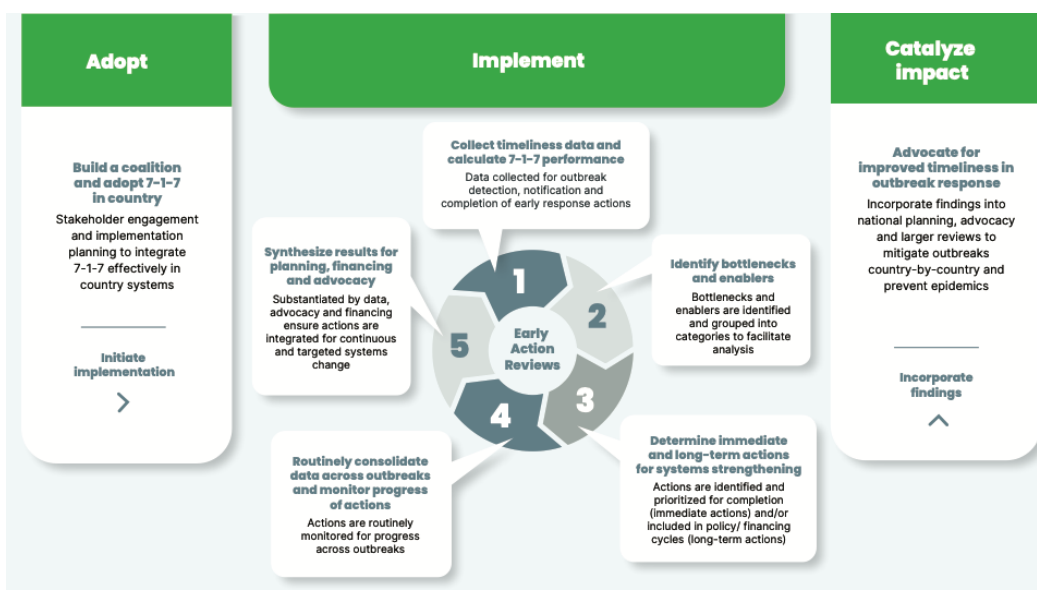


FIGURE 2: 7-1-7 Theory of Change

In response to the findings from the pilot, the 7-1-7 Alliance (the Alliance) was formed in February 2023 as a country-led initiative providing technical assistance, financial support through catalytic grants and a growing, global community of practice (see country map, **FIGURE 3**) to help all countries achieve the 7-1-7 target for outbreak detection and control.

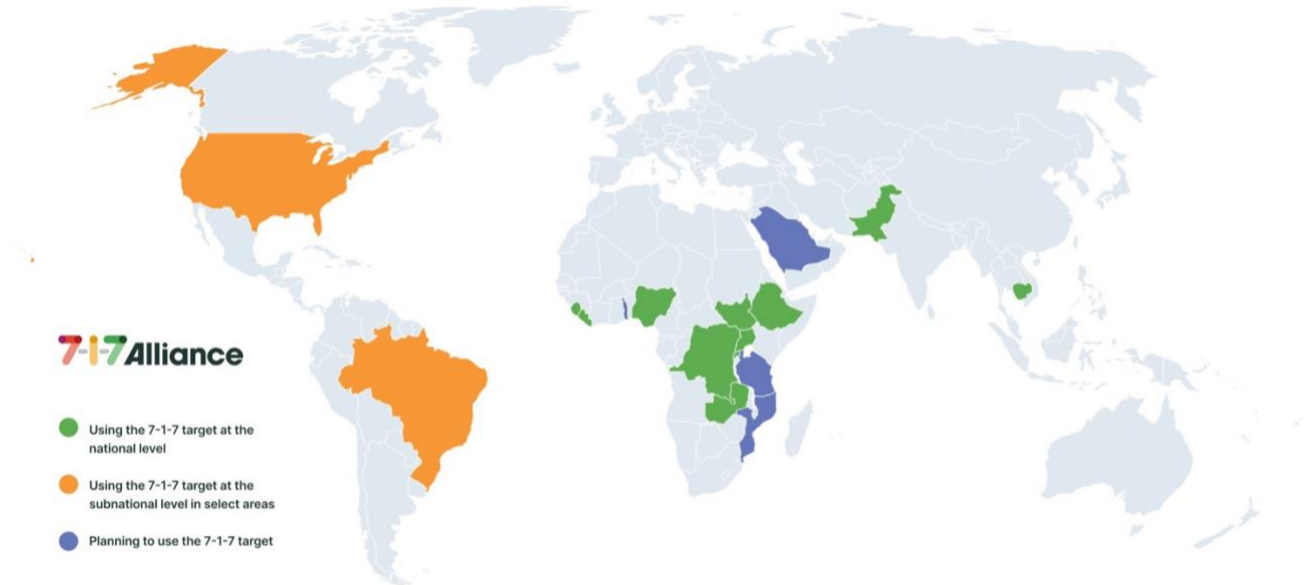


FIGURE 3: Members of the 7-1-7 Global Community of Practice

The 7-1-7 target has now been included in strategic policies, frameworks and operational plans of the World Bank and Global Fund, as well as many operational plans for partners and donors. In September 2023 the World Health Organization (WHO) launched its normative guidance on Early Action Reviews (EAR). This guidance leverages the 7-1-7 target and incentivizes countries around the globe to access 7-1-7 implementation resources and use the timeliness metrics to identify enablers and bottlenecks for timely detection, notification, and early response.

Ultimately, identification of 7-1-7 bottlenecks and enablers can be used to inform sectoral and multisectoral capacity strengthening goals detailed in national planning, such as National Actions Plans for Health Security (NAPHS). The NAPHS, through one to two-year operational plans, or through their five-year strategies, align and support capacity performance for the WHO’s International Health Regulation Monitoring and Evaluation (through States Party Annual Reporting, the Joint External Evaluations and relevant action reviews), and where relevant, the World Organization of Animal Health’s Performance of Veterinary Services Pathway.

While the initial findings from 7-1-7 implementation are encouraging, there remains a need to conduct operational research to better understand contextual factors that facilitate implementation and the impact on systems performance. Outputs from the operational research should support adaptive policy and program management, ensuring that resources to scale the approach address needs in different settings. With funding from Wellcome Trust, the Alliance will support an ambitious agenda for research and learning in 2024.

Objectives of the RFP

- Address questions about the evidence base and impact of 7-1-7 target
- Improve the integration of 7-1-7 in country systems
- Refine the 7-1-7 implementation process
- Explore new use cases for 7-1-7 in animal health

Proposals Tracks

Research proposals should address one or more of the objectives below. Questions have been summarized to reflect the areas of inquiry related to the Theory of Change in Figure 2 above.

Evidence base and impact of the 7-1-7 target

This objective seeks to address questions about the evidence base and impact of applying the 7-1-7 target in countries, regions and globally. Operational research should address questions about impact, value and breadth of outputs and outcomes, return on investment and the usefulness of predictive modeling. Research approaches that would be relevant in this category may include but are not limited to:

- Impact assessments to address the use of 7-1-7 in terms of reduced mortality / outbreaks prevented / outbreaks mitigated.
- Estimate the impact of the 7-1-7 target over time in terms of reduced mortality / outbreaks prevented / outbreaks mitigated.
- Economic analysis (e.g., return on investment) to understand the societal benefit/value of the 7-1-7 target.

Integration of 7-1-7 into country systems

This objective seeks to describe the challenges countries/states/localities face when seeking to successfully adopt and integrate 7-1-7 into their national/subnational systems. Operational research for this section should address questions about starting conditions, stakeholder engagement / coalition building, training and implementation resources, workflow integrations, costing/financing, and considerations for zoonotic outbreak response requiring a multisectoral, One Health approach. Research approaches relevant in this objective may include but are not limited to:

- Analysis of contextual factors that support effective adoption and use of 7-1-7, this should include stratification by region, governance type, health system, etc. Qualitative factors such as political will and engagement, and breath/depth of stakeholder involvement should also be considered.
- Analysis of training and resource gaps and needs for decision-makers (sensitization resources) and implementers (adoption and use resources).
- Analysis of data collection and data management gaps and needs for effective and sustainable use of 7-1-7 target in national/subnational workflows and systems.
- Analysis of effective stakeholder engagement and coalition building for end-to-end use of 7-1-7 (analysis to action), including 'entry point' for use as well as multisectoral, One Health engagement needs for zoonotic diseases.
- Analysis of costing/ financing required for first use and ongoing use.
- Assessment of effective adoption models in different contexts, such as federated vs. centralized vs. decentralized governance structures; where technical leadership of 7-1-7 is situated (e.g.,

emergency operation center in Ministry of Health, National Public Health Institute, disease surveillance department, etc.)

Implementation process for the 7-1-7 target and available resources for use

This objective seeks to understand and address the operational challenges countries face when implementing Early Action Reviews and the 7-1-7 target. Operational research for this section should address questions for each of the implementation steps outlined in the Theory of Change (steps 1-5), including data collection and calculation, the identification of bottlenecks and enablers, priority actions, monitoring and reporting, and effective policy change. Research approaches relevant in this objective may include but are not limited to:

- Analysis of timeliness metrics stratified by disease type, considering how metrics may differ and what intervals are achievable. Research may consider challenges when calculating metrics for 'rolling' outbreak such as cholera or diphtheria.
- Analysis of how data availability (suspect vs. lab confirmed cases) and/or surveillance systems (event-based vs. indicator-based) influence reporting, calculation of metrics, and timeliness of detection, notification, and early response actions. This may include looking at broader health systems factors related to further neglect of diseases where data is not available.
- Analysis of bottleneck categories, including available implementation resources and an evaluation of how categories inform immediate vs. long-term action/policy. This may include a cross-analysis of bottlenecks as they relate to global and regional capacity strengthening frameworks, as well as how bottlenecks vary (or not) for endemic vs. epidemic-prone diseases, ultimately informing broader use of the 7-1-7 target for systems strengthening and health security.
- Assessment of effective approaches for integrating long-term actions from 7-1-7 into planning, financing, and/or advocacy.

New use cases for 7-1-7

This objective seeks to explore the use of 7-1-7 for broader health security challenges and subsystems that impact pandemic preparedness, a priority interest being animal health. Research approaches relevant in this objective may include but are not limited to:

- Analysis of the 7-1-7 target to demonstrate the use case in animal health, including zoonoses. This may be done by reviewing Early or After-Action Reviews, or other data sources.

Eligibility

Civil Society Organizations (CSO), Nongovernmental Organizations (NGO), Ministries of Health and national public health institutes working at the national, subnational, and local levels. Governments may also nominate a non-governmental organization to manage and administrate the grant.

Proposal Requirements

- Applications must focus on health **research** studies. Health research does NOT include projects that primarily focus on capacity building, education, training, or project implementation (for more information on catalytic grants to support 7-1-7 adoption and use in countries, please reach out to contact@717alliance.org).
- Applications must address one or more objectives described above. Depending on how proposals are crafted, some research may address more than one objective.

- Preference will be given to proposals that are policy/practice relevant research with direct impact on 7-1-7 evidence, adoption and use as outlined in the Theory of Change (Figure 2).
- Applicants should include interdisciplinary investigators as relevant.
- Grantees must align with policies on [responsible research](#) and obtain review from an external Institutional Review Board (IRB) prior to project start.

Application Process

February 16, 2024	Interested applicants are required to submit an Expression of Interest (EOI) by 11.59pm ET on February 16, 2024 to contact@717alliance.org . All EOIs will be reviewed by the 7-1-7 Alliance Review Team and, if accepted, applicants will be invited to submit a full proposal.
March 15, 2024	Applicants invited to submit a full proposal will be notified by March 15, 2024.
April 2024	Invited full proposals will be due in April 2024. Proposals will be selected through a competitive peer-review process.
April/May 2024	Funding will be available for a project start in April or May 2024.
May/June 2024	A second round of funding will be announced in May/June 2024.

Format of the Expression of Interest

Cover page: Include the application title; information on each prospective principal investigator and co-investigator (name, highest degrees, academic rank or position, college/organization/institution); and anticipated amount of support that will be requested.

Cover letter: 1-2-page cover letter (excluding references) with key words in bold. The application should be written for an audience that extends beyond the applicant’s own discipline and should include the following sections:

- Introductory paragraph highlighting the RFP objective(s) the applicant is best placed to address in their proposal
- 1-2 paragraphs introducing the applicant and relevant project experience
- 1-2 paragraphs highlighting especially qualified staff/partnerships with emphasis on interdisciplinary work and local/regional partnership
- 2-3 paragraphs highlighting the strategic aim of the proposal, context for potential methods/research plan and anticipated policy and program impact of the research
- 1 paragraph justifying the anticipated budget request and resource needs
- Full name, title and signature of the senior officer.

Reporting and Other Requirements

All awardees must submit one mid-project report (technical) and a final report (technical and financial) with an accompanying policy brief that can be used for adaptive policy and program management for the 7-1-7 target.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the duration of the grant?

The grant period will be for 12 months.

Are overheads (often referred to as indirect costs) allowable?

Overheads / indirects are allowable up to 15%.

May we submit more than one Expression of Interest?

Multiple EOIs (discreet project ideas) can be submitted from one organization.

Can we apply for more than 75k?

The range of 50-75k is a strong recommendation. However, more funding can be requested if the scope, scale and potential operational research outputs could justify the request.

Should research projects focus on the 7-1-7 Alliance countries highlighted above in Figure 3?

The WHO's Early Action Review (EAR) and 7-1-7 target are open source and available for use by any country so there are no limitations or expectations for country partners.

Other Questions

More information is available on the [7-1-7 Alliance website](#). All questions may be directed to contact@717alliance.org.