

The Implementation of the Research Fairness Initiative (RFI) at the Global Health & Tropical Medicine (GHTM) – Nova University of Lisbon



António Carvalho
Post-doctoral Research Fellow
RFI Implementation Team

Introduction

The GHTM – history, profile, networks, strategic relevance and rationale for the implementation of the RFI

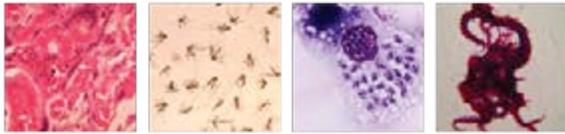
Work done so far

Work being carried out at the moment

Timeline

Quotes from the pilot interview





The IHTM/GHTM

GHTM – R&D Centre of the Institute of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (IHTM), Nova University of Lisbon, Portugal, Founded in 1902

Integrated Approach – From molecular level to global health systems – dealing with health issues affecting low income populations

Teaching and Training – Doctoral and Master's programmes in biomedical sciences, tropical medicine and public health





3 Research Groups

Vector-borne diseases – VBD

Tuberculosis, HIV and other opportunistic agents – THOP

Health of populations, policies and services – PPS

Two Lines of Research at the GHTM

Health challenges of travellers and migrants

Emerging diseases and environmental and climate change

22 Ongoing Research Projects (41% are International Projects)





Rationale for RFI Implementation

Generate internal discussion on issues of fairness; collaboration; equity; impact; North/South divide;

Implementation of standards to transform 3 domains of partnerships: fairness of opportunity; fair process; fair sharing of benefits, costs and outcomes



Strategic Relevance of the GHTM

“Entry point” to the CPLP - Angola, Brazil, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique, Portugal, São Tomé and Príncipe, East Timor and Equatorial Guinea

Post-colonial/intercultural approach – epistemological/political concerns with issues of fairness, impact, collaboration, knowledge and North/South unbalances (and how these affect science, technology and expertise)





Relevant International Networks

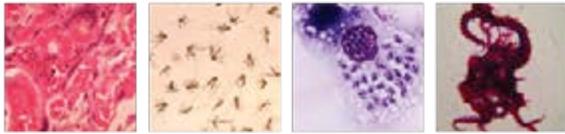
PECS-CPLP – Strategic Plan for Health Cooperation within the CPLP (2009-2016)

RINSP – CPLP Network of National Institutes of Health in the CPLP (2011-)

RESP – CPLP Network of National Schools of Public Health(2016-)

RETS-CPLP Network of Technical Health Schools (2009-)





The RFI Implementation Team at the GHTM

Paulo Ferrinho (Director of the IHMT, Full Professor)

Zulmira Hartz (Deputy Director of the IHMT, Full Professor)

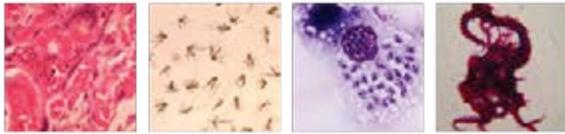
Maria do Rosário (Deputy Director of the IHTM, Full Professor)

Henrique Silveira (Deputy Director, Full Professor)

António Carvalho (Post-doctoral research fellow)

Sofia Santos (Project Management Office)





Summary of work done so far

A Post-doctoral researcher, in charge of implementing the RFI, was hired in July (António Carvalho)

We translated 3 relevant RFI documents into Portuguese:

RFI Implementation Guide

RFI Summary Guide

RFI Reporting Guide

We conducted a pilot interview with Henrique Silveira

We carried out a literature review focused on the RFI Evidence Base





Work being done at the moment

Preparation of a Special Issue of the *Anais do Instituto de Higiene e Medicina Tropical* to be distributed at the 4th meeting of the Health Ministers of the CPLP (Brasília, October 26, 2017) – To be published in late September (in Portuguese)

Editors: Zulmira Hartz and Paulo Ferrinho Co-Editor: Carel Ijsselmuiden,

Articles

1. Editorial - Zulmira Hartz and Paulo Ferrinho
2. Guest editorial - Carel Ijsselmuiden
3. Introductory article - an adaptation of the RFI Implementation Guide to the article format of the Proceedings
4. Second article - systematic literature review about the evidence for the first RFI domain - fairness of opportunity
5. Third article - evaluative research and equity/fairness
6. Research notes – short papers (case studies) about current work of the GHTM that illustrates RFI principles/concerns.



Timeline

Late September 2017 – Publication of the Special Issue of the Proceedings of the IHMT
Interviews will resume in October 2017

October 26 – Meeting of the health ministers of the CPLP – Presentation/advocacy of the RFI, **distribution of the Special Issue**

November/December – Preparation of the Internal RFI Report



Quotes from Pilot Interview with Henrique Silveira

Fairness of Opportunity

“Regarding future perspectives, at least from my point of view, my interest in implementing this initiative is to allow the institution to debate this issue [**international partnerships**]. (...) From my perspective, and although I believe that people are aware of this topic, and there are no occasions of terrible unfairness, there is **no clear policy to think about that**, or to try to find approaches that are really “fair” (...), it is not something that is debated in a structured fashion within the Institution. In that sense, at least one of my goals would be to **think institutionally with all partners** - that would be a good idea. (...)





The perils of regulation

Yes, I think that's interesting [a set of rules and regulations] , but one of the issues that often arises when we think about rules and regulations, we aren't talking about detailed rules, right? If we develop a working group to deliberate on those rules and guidelines, **inevitably they will be so complicated and full of details that they will not be viable**; when thinking about regulations, we have to think in detail, about regulating everything...of course **it won't work in practice, thus the discrediting of regulations...**



Concluding Remarks/Questions

Tension between the need to implement good practice standards and the tacit/informal dimensions of research environments (culture clash?)

Is it possible to define universal SOPs/directives/guidelines that do justice to local knowledge and particular research cultures? (Evaluative “eye from nowhere”)

Is it possible to revert global North/South unbalances through the reconfiguration of institutional policies?

Internal discussion already taking place – RFI is generating debate on “neglected” topics



Thank you! 😊

