GloPID-R Zika Virus Research Workshop

University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil
November 30 to December 2, 2016

Concept note

Background

GloPID-R is a global alliance of 23 major public and private funders, of which the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR), the International Development research Centre (IDRC) are members, to support preparedness research; it is currently chaired by the European Commission (EC). The goal of GloPID-R is to facilitate an effective research response against significant outbreaks of new or re-emerging infectious diseases with pandemic potential, in order to save lives and economies worldwide. To achieve this goal the GloPID-R brings together relevant funding organisations to ensure that capacity and capabilities are in place to support the conduct of scientific research.

Late in December 2015, the Outbreak Committee of GloPID-R recommended the mobilisation of new funding for research on the Zika virus outbreak in Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) because of the eminent threat to health for the population at risk.

In March 2016, a Call for Proposals on "Addressing the urgent research gaps against the Zika virus and other emerging threats in Latin America" was launched by the EC. This Call for Proposals aimed to establish a multinational and multidisciplinary consortium across Latin America and other affected or at risk regions, able to implement the urgently needed research during the ongoing Zika virus outbreak (see the full Call Text here).

In parallel, a separate Call for Proposals on 'Canada-Latin America and the Caribbean Zika Virus Research Program' was launched in May 2016 by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the International Development research Centre (IDRC), which also aimed to support Zika virus research in the areas of: Pathogenesis; Diagnostics; and Vector studies, including the ecological transmission dynamics of Zika virus and the assessment of a systematic and integrated vector control approach involving communities complemented with the evaluation of new technologies (see the full Call Text here).

In the context of the GloPID-R collaboration, the funders of both above-mentioned Calls agreed to organise a joint workshop in Latin America for the funded Zika virus researchers, and to extend the invitation to other Glopid-R members to join and bring their projects to the workshop.

Scope of the workshop

The main scope of the workshop is to promote and establish collaboration and synergies between the Zika research projects funded by GloPID-R members in order to maximise the use of the available resources and avoid duplication.
From this perspective, the workshop will provide a setting for Zika virus research grantees from GloPID-R members to present their projects, to network with other grantees, to exchange ideas on the conduct of research, and to identify opportunities for active collaboration and coordination of the research efforts. This workshop should also be a reality check with local Latin American and Caribbean health authorities on the state of the outbreak, the need for research, and lessons learned up to now. It also encompasses a discussion on the challenges in North/South partnerships. The workshop will also integrate the concept of data sharing.

A measure for success for this workshop will be the establishment of active collaboration between Canadian-LAC research teams, EC funded research teams and other GLOPID-R funded teams, working together for a common goal within the context of GloPID-R.

Goal

The goal of the joint Zika virus workshop is to identify opportunities for, and put into action international synergy and collaboration between the respective grantees during the implementation of research and capacity development projects in support of the Zika virus response in Latin America and the Caribbean. This includes the use of common protocols, and governance structures (e.g. ethics and data safety management) as well as data sharing. (Note that data sharing is to be taken in its broad sense, i.e. including sample sharing, biobanking, harmonization of case definitions, measures and examination and sampling schedule).

Objectives

1. Provide a networking opportunity for the grantees funded by GLOPID-R members, and provide a platform for information exchange and learning.
2. Promote active coordination and synergy of the research and capacity development supported within the context of GloPID-R.
3. Obtain feedback from the grantees on future research and capacity building needs to address Zika and other emerging infectious diseases.

Participants

Approximately 70 participants are expected to attend the workshop. These will primarily comprise representatives of the projects funded by GloPID-R members, in addition to the Chairperson(s), invited speakers and representatives of the funders. Attendance will be by invitation only.

Expected outcomes and next steps

The workshop is expected to result in the active coordination and collaboration, at least between the Canada and EC funded projects, but preferably also with other GloPID-R funded research projects. In addition, feedback and learning from other experts in the field will ensure the improvement, where necessary, of existing project plans. This meeting will also provide an opportunity for GloPID-R to take measure of the first attempt at establishing collaboration among its member’s grantees. A follow-up meeting at the end of the granting should be considered.

A meeting report including recommendations will be produced and shared with all participants.