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| **Programme for Evidence to Inform Disability Action** |
| **Call for Applications Round 1**  **Guidance** |

**January 2019**

**Executive Summary**

PENDA (Programme for Evidence to Inform Disability Action) is a consortium led by the International Centre for Evidence in Disability at LSHTM. It aims to create evidence to achieve long-term improved wellbeing and inclusion of people with disabilities in low- and middle-income countries, by developing knowledge, people and tools. PENDA has been funded by the Department for International Development in the UK (DFID) to fill an evidence-gap in disability and development.

PENDA seeks applicants to conduct an impact and process evaluation of a disability inclusive education programme in Bangladesh. The evaluation will need to assess approaches to disability inclusive development in the DFID funded Inclusive Futures programme. Further details about the programme can be found below.

PENDA will offer a grant of up to £500,000 GBP over a maximum of 36 months. This is one of four grants that will be made between 2020 and 2022. This call for proposals has a two-stage process: an open expression of interest stage and an invited full proposal stage. Applications are sought from organisations with experience in (1) impact evaluation, including randomised control trials, (2) research about disability and inclusive education and (3) working in low- and middle-income settings, particularly Bangladesh.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have and will meaningfully engage people with disabilities in their research. PENDA will prefer proposals from and led by organisations from low- and lower-middle-income countries (See Appendix A for eligible country list). Organisations from upper-middle and high-income countries are welcome to lead an application but should consider applying as part of a consortium or as co-applicant with an organisation based in a country in Appendix A. The expressions of interest will be scored, and 3-5 consortia will be selected to submit a full proposal.

There will be a strong focus on rigor in research in selecting the final one consortium. The research should generate robust evidence, which will support policy and programming direction for impactful disability inclusive development.

**APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR LETTER OF INTENT: 23:59 GMT 21st February 2020**

**Background**

Disability inclusion is a neglected issue in international development. Disability Inclusive Development means providing services that meet everyone’s needs. It means ensuring additional costs of disability are met, and disabled people can flourish on an equal basis with others.

While many countries have made progress in lifting people out of poverty, conditions for many people with disabilities have not improved [1]. People with disabilities and their families are poorer than people without disabilities in nearly all socio-economic indicators [1-4]. They are more likely to remain poor due to higher living costs, unpaid caring responsibilities, exclusion from education and employment, and entrenched stigma and discrimination [6].

The rights of people with disabilities, and the importance of inclusive development, have been enshrined in international treaties and agreements. The Global Sustainable Development Goals include eleven explicit references to people with disabilities [7]. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities (CRPD) has been signed by 175 countries, including the UK [8]. The UK has committed to reaching the poorest and most excluded people [9, 10].

There is a lack of evidence about how best to deliver inclusion. While there have been promising small-scale interventions that focus on supporting people with disabilities, funding has been limited, and evidence of effectiveness is often anecdotal. The global development community of governments, inter-governmental agencies, NGOs, and private funders increasingly demand evidence to fund programmes at scale. Due to the lack of evidence and data, it is harder to make the case for key actors to prioritise the inclusion of people with disabilities.

The Department for International Development (DFID) funded a disability-inclusive development programme called Inclusive Futures, in a consortium led by Sightsavers International, that will deliver interventions to improve the lives of people with disabilities in Bangladesh, Kenya, Nepal, Tanzania, and Uganda.

Alongside Inclusive Futures, DFID funded the Programme for Evidence to Inform Disability Action (PENDA), led by a team at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), to support policymakers to make evidence-based decisions on disability inclusion issues including poverty, health, education, stigma and discrimination. PENDA complements DFID’s inclusion strategy to address fundamental gaps in the inclusion of people with disabilities in mainstream development.

PENDA works with Inclusive Futures to deliver impact evaluations and generate evidence on which interventions have the greatest impact on the lives of people with disabilities. While six impact evaluations will be run by the LSHTM team, an additional four programmes will be evaluated through these grants by commissioned teams. The programmes to be evaluated will be preferentially selected from Inclusive Futures programmes.  Each impact evaluation will be complemented by a process evaluation of the programme.

Each funding round will focus on one Disability-Inclusive Development programme, with a stand-alone competitive-selection process. The programmes will focus on at least one of the key PENDA thematic areas of education, health, livelihoods, social protection and reducing stigma. The requirements for each call for proposals will vary slightly with the nature and scope of the project. The size and duration of each award may also vary, dependent on the corresponding Disability-Inclusive Development programme scope and timeframe. The expected duration is two to three years. The total project period for an application submitted in response to this funding opportunity must be completed by June 2023. A maximum ceiling of funding for each grant is set at £500,000, but applications will also be judged as to whether they are financially competitive.

The objective of this research is to generate evidence through impact evaluations, including randomised controlled trials, in combination with a process evaluation of what Disability Inclusive Development interventions can positively change the wellbeing of people with disabilities. It is expected that the four grants will contribute to an overall programme of learning about how best to improve the inclusion of people with disabilities using interventions. **Current call – Inclusive Education in Bangladesh**

The current, and first, Call for Applications is to conduct an impact evaluation on an inclusive-education programme funded under the Inclusive Futures’ programme.

*Programme Summary*

The programme aims to strengthen systems for the enrolment, retention and support of children with disabilities at primary level of mainstream education in Bangladesh.

Children with disabilities often have poorer educational outcomes compared to their peers without disabilities [14]. For example, children with disabilities are less likely to attend school, and even when they do attend, have lower educational attainment. Key barriers to the inclusion in education include negative attitudes on the capacity of children with disabilities to learn, difficulties traveling to school and the lack of an inclusive school environment (e.g. adapted communication and teaching strategies, teacher training on disability, accessible infrastructure) [15].

Led by a consortium, the Inclusive Futures programme will deliver an inclusive-education intervention for 5-16-year-old children with disabilities in three subdistricts over two districts in Bangladesh. The intervention will work with children, teachers, school leaders, and local communities. The intervention will provide assessment, assistive devices, counselling, and technology solutions.

The programme will work closely with teachers and schools to increase capacity for disability inclusion, particularly those children with severe and multiple disabilities. Children will receive direct support through assessments, referrals, counselling, provision of assistive devices including accessible technological solutions, adaptation of teaching and learning materials, involvement of parents and peer to peer support to enable their effective participation in the mainstream school system. Parallel pathways will also be strengthened such as home-based and community-based schooling as required if appropriate. Interventions will be predominantly at primary level education with secondary level education focusing primarily on providing skill training and follow-up for children and teachers in primary schools to assist children with disabilities’ transition to secondary school. Working closely with Disabled People’s Organisations (DPOs), the programme will conduct accessibility audits and sensitise communities and educational authorities about disability inclusion. Governance and policy focus will be on strengthening Bangladesh Governmental educational implementation strategies through collaboration between departments of education and health.

*Target Recipients*

5 to 16-year-old children with disabilities in two districts of Bangladesh, namely Narshingdi and Sirajganj. The project will specifically target children who have either dropped out of school or have never been enrolled due to an inaccessible and unsupportive educational environment. This target group will include children with severe and multiple disabilities who are particularly left behind due to an inadequately equipped educational environment. Within this project, the definition of severe and multiple disabilities will cover several areas of functioning including cognition, communication, mobility, social interaction, hearing, speech and sight. The term “severe” will refer to a deficit in one or more areas that significantly impacts on children’s education.

*Evidence gap to evaluate*

The successful applicant will be expected to evaluate the impact of the programme on children with disabilities’ access to education in Bangladesh and to conduct a complementary process evaluation. Applicants will need to demonstrate meaningful engagement with people with disabilities throughout this study. Specific research questions to be addressed will be developed during the evaluation design workshop, but applicants should consider the overarching question: What effect does this holistic intervention have on educational outcomes of children with disabilities?

**PENDA Evaluations**

*Application process*

This call for proposals has a two-stage process: an open expression of interest stage and an invited full proposal stage.

*Eligibility*

Applicants will need to demonstrate that they have and will meaningfully engage people with disabilities in their research. PENDA will strongly prefer applications led by research organisations based in low- and lower-middle-income countries (see Appendix A for a list of countries). Applicants from institutions based in upper-middle- or high-income countries are welcome to apply but are strongly encouraged to partner with another institution from a low- and lower-middle-income country to strengthen the application. More details can be found in the Assessment Criteria section. A majority (greater than 50%) of the budget must be spent on activities in the country of implementation.  Only legally registered organisations and consortia of registered organisations, not individuals, may apply. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to conduct research to international standards of excellence in impact and process evaluations, and ensuring disability inclusive research practices.

*Deliverables*

Once a team has been selected for the evaluation they will meet with the intervention-delivery partner to discuss and develop the research design. The contract agreement will only be signed once a protocol has been agreed, although activities to prepare the contract (such as due diligence) can take place concurrently with the evaluation-design stage. The successful evaluation team will be responsible for ethical review with their own research organisation and within the country where the research will take place.

The evaluation team will be expected to produce high-quality research outputs. Trials should be reported using the CONSORT guidance[[1]](#footnote-2). Process evaluation results should describe the intervention in detail and refer to a theory of change. Results should be disaggregated by gender. Measurement of outcomes relevant to specific hypotheses is expected, and projects should be measuring impact across the theory of change of their projects through their evaluation frameworks. PENDA will expect evaluation teams to produce high-quality research outputs, producing peer-reviewed publications during the course of the evaluation: for example, a protocol paper, baseline paper, a quantitative impact paper, and a process evaluation paper. Evaluation teams will also be expected to present at conferences organised by LSHTM under PENDA.

Successful applicants are expected to engage on a regular basis with the PENDA team, providing updates and inputs from the research into the overall PENDA programme. This engagement will include quarterly performance and financial reporting; funds will be disbursed on a quarterly basis in arrears based on satisfactory delivery milestones and actual expenditure in line with the DFID financial year (April-March).

A final report that accounts for financial expenditures and that captures a clear assessment of the evidence generated should be delivered. A percentage of the funds will be held back until after the submission and approval of the final research report, details of this will be included in the grant contract terms and conditions.

Reporting instructions and templates will be detailed in the contract terms and conditions for the successful applicants.

*Dissemination and data sharing*

Applications should include a brief overview of how the research team plans to disseminate results, and the different audiences they intend to reach. Scientific publications and presentations are important, but other modes of dissemination should be considered. UK-Government-funded data must be made openly accessible under Open Access rules.

*Due Diligence*

LSHTM is responsible for financial and programmatic monitoring of sponsored project funds awarded to the School and assesses and monitors sub-recipients to determine risk and reasonably ensure proper stewardship of funds. Therefore, before a contract is awarded, PENDA will conduct a ‘due diligence’ process with the final applicants for grant funding to ensure adherence to principles of good governance throughout the life of the funding. The purpose of this is to establish early any undue risk to LSHTM or to the PENDA funding from DFID. It also enables LSHTM to evaluate whether the proposed grantee has the academic, financial and legal standing to support a high quality and sustainable partnership with LSHTM. This process assists LSHTM in ensuring that sub-recipients comply with applicable laws, regulations, terms, conditions and any other award requirements, whilst meeting performance goals. Where there are risks identified with a potential grantee LSHTM will include additional assurances and clauses in contracts. Follow up due diligence processes will be conducted during the life of the grant in line with LSHTM’s Due Diligence and Monitoring Policy[[2]](#footnote-3).

*Global Access, Data and Ethics*

PENDA is committed to fostering meaningful access to supported research for the target beneficiaries of each funded project, particularly those beneficiaries among the marginalized and poor in low- and middle-income countries; promoting prompt and open dissemination of research findings and data arising from funded activities; and ensuring that funded research is conducted in a manner that complies with relevant ethical standards. These commitments are documented in LSHTM’s Research Data Management [11], Open Access Publishing [12], and Good Research Practice [13], which should be reviewed by all applicants before submission. These will need to be adhered to by applicants if an award is granted.

*Intellectual Property*

Any Project Specific Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) created under this Contract shall be owned by DFID. DFID grants LSHTM and the successful applicant a licence to use any DFID Background IPR and Project Specific IPRs for the purpose of fulfilling its obligations under this Contract during its Term. DFID nor LSHTM will obtain any right to Applicants background IPR or Third Party IPR. Further details regarding Intellectual Property will be outlined in the grant contract terms. Any papers published in academic journals must be published under an open-access agreement, or the accepted manuscript submitted to a publicly-accessible repository managed by a public institution.

**Application**

This section describes the application and assessment process. The application process for funding will include two stages: (1) an open call for expressions of interest and (2) invited proposals. Only teams invited to do so should apply to the full-proposal stage.

To prepare the application you should consult these guidelines as well as documents on the PENDA website referring to the overall aims and approach of the programme, and the selection-criteria document.

Applications must include all required information and attachments. Only complete applications will be considered for review.

Deadline for submission of Expression of Interest: 23:59 GMT 21st February 2020

Applications should be submitted via email to [penda@LSHTM.ac.uk](mailto:penda@LSHTM.ac.uk)

Anticipated deadline for submission of full proposal: 23:59 GMT 25th March 2020

Deadlines and timeframes are subject to change.

Questions about this Call for Applications may be submitted by email to [penda@LSHTM.ac.uk](mailto:penda@LSHTM.ac.uk) by 31st January 2020, any questions submitted after this date may not get a response. Answers to questions will be posted at <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/research/centres-projects-groups/penda#grants> by 5th February 2020.

*Stage 1: Expression of interest*

The expression of interest must be submitted using the template in Appendix B, and include the following:

1. Team structure and experience (300 words, 2-page CVs). State the role and the experience of all named researchers.
2. Collaboration and partnership (300 words). Describe how you will achieve meaningful partnership with researchers based in low- and middle-income counties, and with people with disabilities.
3. Capacity to implement (300 words). Explain how the team will implement the evaluation, with reference to experience. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to conduct research of international standards of excellence.
4. Research interest (300 words). Briefly describe the questions you think are important for this area of disability inclusive development.
5. Budget (300 words). Please include top line budget figures with short justification.

Expressions of interest will be assessed by two independent panels: the PENDA Evaluation Advisory Group, and the PENDA core team, plus an independent thematic expert.  Assessment will be based on experience and composition of the team.

The following criteria will be applied:

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| Criteria | Measures | Weight (Total = 100) |
| Disability research | Record of disability research projects completed, including published research  Evidence of inclusive research, e.g. involvement of DPOs and disabled researchers | 30 |
| Evaluation experience | Record of evaluating large-scale health and/or development projects across multiple settings  Capacity to conduct cluster-randomised controlled trials  Capacity to produce world-class mixed-methods research outputs  Conducting impact and process evaluations | 20 |
| Southern leadership | Primary institution in a low- or lower-middle-income country, particular experience of research in Bangladesh  Meaningful participation of people with disabilities  Primary institution based in Bangladesh  Potential PIs and co-PIs based in Bangladesh | 20 |
| Operational partnerships | Record of partnerships with organisations capable of delivering the evaluation | 20 |
| Education | Record of conducting research on education projects, including recruiting schools and parents to studies in low- and middle-income countries, and interviewing and testing children | 10 |

Evaluations should explicitly and systematically integrate disability inclusion and gender equality considerations at all stages, including in staffing, delivery and budgetary considerations. Applications and partnerships led by people with disabilities and women are strongly encouraged. Multidisciplinary/cross-sector teams are strongly encouraged, to ensure relevant scientific and disability expertise is in place.

It is essential that project teams include member(s) with an understanding of the local infrastructure and governance context (including relevant laws and regulations) and the social, political and economic context. In doing so, research projects/IEs can better address the needs of and impacts on the community, and identify risks to intervention success.

Specific objectives for the integration of governance and value for money include: enhancing the accountability and transparency of country institutions, supporting citizen participation and ownership in development processes, and strengthening service-delivery capacity at all levels. Applicants will be asked to include considerations of good governance and value for money in their applications.

**References**

1. United Nations. Disability and Development Report: Realizing the Sustainable Development Goals by, for and with persons with disabilities New York, : UN, 2018.

2. Banks LM, Kuper H, Polack S. Poverty and disability in low-and middle-income countries: A systematic review. PloS one. 2017;12(12):e0189996.

3. Mitra S, Posarac A, Vick B. Disability and poverty in developing countries: a multidimensional study. World Development. 2013;41:1-18.

4. Mizunoya S, Mitra S. Is there a disability gap in employment rates in developing countries? World Development. 2013;42:28-43.

5. Mizunoya S, Mitra S, Yamasaki I. Towards inclusive education: The impact of disability on school attendance in developing countries. 2016.

6. World Health Organization & World Bank. World report on disability: World Health Organization; 2011.

7. United Nations. Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Disability n.d. [cited 2019 March 12]. Available from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/about-us/sustainable-development-goals-sdgs-and-disability.html>.

8. United Nations. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) 2019. Available from: <https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-with-disabilities.html>.

9. Department for International Development. Global Disability Summit - final summary. London, UK: DFID, 2018.

10. Government of the UK. DFID's Strategy for Disability Inclusive Development 2018-23. In: Development DfI, editor. London, UK2018.

11. London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. LSHTM Data Management Plan for research projects 2017. Available from: <https://researchonline.lshtm.ac.uk/id/eprint/3716765/>.

12. Salehian S, Gibson A, Fodor A. Publishing Open Access - Interactive Guide 2018. Available from: <https://researchonline.lshtm.ac.uk/id/eprint/4645489/>.

13. London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. Good Research Practice Policy 2019. Available from: <https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/files/good-research-practice-policy.pdf>.

14. Mizunoya S, Mitra S, Yamasaki I. Towards inclusive education: The impact of disability on school attendance in developing countries. 2016

15. Banks LM, Zuurmond M, Monteath-Van Dok A, et al. “I feel sad that I can’t go to school”: Perspectives of children with disabilities and their guardians on factors affecting inclusion in education in rural Nepal. Oxford Development Studies 2019;(accepted manuscript)

**APPENDIX A**

Country Eligibility

Applicants primarily affiliated with institutions legally incorporated in countries on the following list should be meaningfully involved, if not lead, any application for PENDA funding.

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| Low-Income Economies (GNI per capita of $995 Or Less) | Lower-Middle-Income Economies (GNI per capita between $996 and $3,895) | Upper-Middle-Income Economies (GNI per capita between $3,896 and $12,055)\* |
| Afghanistan  Benin  Burkina Faso  Burundi  Central African Republic  Chad  Comoros  Congo, Dem. Rep.  Eritrea  Ethiopia  Gambia, The  Guinea  Guinea-Bissau  Haiti  Korea, Dem. People's Rep.  Liberia  Madagascar  Malawi  Mali  Mozambique  Nepal  Niger  Rwanda  Senegal  Sierra Leone  Somalia  South Sudan  Syrian Arab Republic  Tajikistan  Tanzania  Togo  Uganda  Yemen, Rep.  Zimbabwe | Angola  Bangladesh  Bhutan  Bolivia  Cabo Verde  Cambodia  Cameroon  Congo, Rep.  Côte d'Ivoire  Djibouti  Egypt, Arab Rep.  El Salvador  Georgia  Ghana  Honduras  India  Indonesia  Kenya  Kiribati  Kosovo  Kyrgyz Republic  Lao PDR  Lesotho  Mauritania  Micronesia, Fed. Sts.  Moldova  Mongolia  Morocco  Myanmar  Nicaragua  Nigeria  Pakistan  Papua New Guinea  Philippines  São Tomé and Principe  Solomon Islands  Sri Lanka  Sudan  Swaziland  Timor-Leste  Tunisia  Ukraine  Uzbekistan  Vanuatu  Vietnam  West Bank and Gaza  Zambia | Albania  Algeria  American Samoa  Armenia  Azerbaijan  Belarus  Belize  Bosnia and Herzegovina  Botswana  Brazil  Bulgaria  China  Colombia  Costa Rica  Cuba  Dominica  Dominican Republic  Ecuador  Equatorial Guinea  Fiji  Gabon  Grenada  Guatemala  Guyana  Iran, Islamic Rep.  Iraq  Jamaica  Jordan  Kazakhstan  Lebanon  Libya  Macedonia, FYR  Malaysia  Maldives  Marshall Islands  Mauritius  Mexico  Montenegro  Namibia  Nauru  Paraguay  Peru  Romania  Russian Federation  Samoa  Serbia  South Africa  St. Lucia  St. Vincent and the Grenadines  Suriname  Thailand  Tonga  Turkey  Turkmenistan  Tuvalu  Venezuela, RB |

\*Data sourced from World Bank Country and Lending Groups Classification for 2019: https://datahelpdesk.worldbank.org/knowledgebase/articles/906519-world-bank-country-and-lending-groups

**APPENDIX B**

**Expression of Interest Template**

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| **Principle investigator:** |  |
| **Institution of principle investigator:** |  |
| **Other named researchers:** |  |
| **Other institutions:** |  |
| **Overall budget:** |  |

1. Team structure and experience (300 words, 2-page CVs of team members to be attached separately).

*State the role and the experience of all named researchers (N.B. please delete italicised text)*

1. Experience working on research on education, in particular research on children with disabilities (300 words).

*State the role and the experience of all named researchers (N.B. please delete italicised text)*

1. Collaboration and partnership (300 words).

*Describe how you will achieve meaningful partnership with researchers based in low- and middle-income counties, and people with disabilities, particularly in Bangladesh. (N.B. please delete italicised text)*

1. Capacity to implement (300 words).

*Explain how the team will implement the impact and process evaluation, with reference to experience. Applicants must demonstrate the ability to conduct research of international standards of excellence. Applicants must demonstrate how they intend to meaningfully engage people with disabilities in the research. (N.B. please delete italicised text)*

1. Research interest (300 words).

*Briefly describe the questions you think are important for this area of disability inclusive development. (N.B. please delete italicised text)*

1. Budget (300 words).

*Please include top line budget figures with short justification. (N.B. please delete italicised text)*

1. http://www.consort-statement.org [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. https://www.lshtm.ac.uk/sites/default/files/Sub-Recipient\_Due\_Diligence\_and\_Monitoring\_Policy.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)