



**PacMOSSI**

Pacific Mosquito Surveillance  
Strengthening for Impact

# PacMOSSI Operational Research Grants: Guidelines for applicants.

2022/23 ●●●●●

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# Introduction

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This guide is for those applying for a PacMOSSI operational research grant, either a ‘kick-starter’ grant or a ‘substantial’ grant.

This document provides information about:

- the PacMOSSI Operational Research Grants Program
- grant eligibility, the application process, and how applications will be assessed.

Please read and understand the information in this guide before applying.

## What is operational research?

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What “operational research” is, is often misunderstood.

*Operational research is applied qualitative or quantitative research that aims to generate evidence in response to **practical everyday implementation challenges** to the effective and efficient delivery of health services or programs\*.*

\* For this grant opportunity, the proposed research **must respond to an operational challenge** to the effective and efficient delivery of malaria and/or *Aedes*-transmitting arboviral disease surveillance or response program or programs.

## The program

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This operational research grants program is part of a more extensive initiative, known as the PacMOSSI project. **The PacMOSSI project’s explicit aims is to strengthen the capacity of Pacific ministries of health for enhanced malaria and *Aedes*-transmitting arboviral diseases surveillance and control.** Learn more about the PacMOSSI initiative here: <https://pacmossi.org/>.

An essential component of PacMOSSI is to build Pacific ministries of health’s capacity to identify and respond to operational challenges in the delivery of malaria and *Aedes*-transmitting arboviral disease programs. To this end, the PacMOSSI Operational Research Grants Program was developed.

The PacMOSSI Operational Research Grant Program aims to:

- Strengthen operational research capacity of Pacific islands ministry of health staff and their national collaborators.
- Support skills development through opportunities to develop and implement operational research projects.
- Facilitate research in response to national officer-identified challenges to the effective and efficient delivery of malaria and/or arboviral disease surveillance and control programs.
- Build and share a body of Pacific-specific knowledge related to the surveillance and control of mosquito-borne diseases.

## Grant categories, funding amount and eligibility

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There are two categories of grants available.

### Kick-starter grants

'Kick-starter grants' of up to AUD10,000 are available to support small scale operational research activities led by Pacific Island country or territory ministry of health staff member/s.

To be eligible for a kick-starter grant, the following criteria must be met.

- The proposal must respond to an operational challenge to the effective and efficient delivery of malaria and/or *Aedes*-transmitting arboviral disease surveillance or response program; AND
- The principal investigator must be a staff member of an eligible\* Pacific Island country or territories' ministry of health; AND
- The proposal has the written endorsement of a senior officer (e.g., under-secretary or director level) of the health authority where the research will be conducted.

Applicants for kick-starter grants may be individuals or small teams. The scope and nature of the proposed research must align with the aims of the PacMOSSI project outlined in the 'The program' section of this document.

### Substantial grants

'Substantial grants' of up to AUD25,000 are available to individuals or research teams that are planning to undertake a more extensive operational research investigation.

The main benefactor of the grant must be a Pacific Island ministry of health. The research

must be (i) led by a ministry of health staff member, or, (ii) in countries where the ministry of health has an affiliation with a national organisation that conducts health research (such as a national university or national research institute), led by staff of the organisation in close collaboration with the ministry of health.

Extra-national organisations (such as international universities) may be involved. Their contribution should be in keeping with the aim of the PacMOSSI project; that being to strengthen the capacity of Pacific ministries of health for enhanced mosquito-borne disease surveillance and control.

To be eligible for a substantial grant, the following criteria must be met.

- The proposal must respond to an operational challenge to the effective and efficient delivery of malaria and/or *Aedes*-transmitting arboviral disease surveillance or response program; AND
- At least one of the investigators (not necessarily the principal investigator) is an employee of the ministry of health of the country or territory in which the research will be conducted, and the ministry of health collaborator/s must play a central role in research's design, management and/or implementation; AND
- The principal investigator must NOT be a principal investigator on another application submitted in the same grant round (they may, however, be a co-investigator on another application); AND
- The proposal has the written endorsement of a senior officer (e.g., under-secretary or director level) of the health authority where the research will be conducted.

**A maximum of two substantial grants will be funded for each Pacific Island country or territory per grant round.** This means that ministries may need to prioritise the proposals they submit/support.

In keeping with the aims of the PacMOSSI project, grants will be administered to ensure equitable access to grant funding.

## Grant rounds and key dates

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The PacMOSSI Operational Research Grants will be distributed in two rounds. Key dates for each round are presented in the table below.

Grant round	Applications open	Applications close	Anticipated notification of application outcome
1	9:00 am (AEST) on Monday, 3 October 2022	5:00pm (AEST) on Wednesday, 30 November 2022	January 2023
2	9:00am (AEST) on Wednesday, 1 February 2023	5:00pm (AEST) on Friday, 3 March 2023	April/May 2023

## Grant assessment criteria

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Applications submitted will be assessed by two reviewers independently. When the two reviewers are not in agreement, the proposal will be assessed by a third reviewer. The PacMOSSI Operational Research grant administrators will approve funding based on the reviewers' recommendation.

A scoring matrix will be used to support a transparent and fair assessment process. The scoring matrix includes assessment against three criteria. These are:

### Criteria 1: Project impact (40%)

This criterion focuses on a project's potential to positively impact an operational or implementation challenge faced in delivering mosquito-borne disease surveillance and response activities. Applicants may demonstrate project impact by:

- articulating the operational or implementation challenge the project will address;
- articulating how the project will respond to this challenge;
- describing how the project aligns with MOH's priorities, strategies, and broader health system strengthening agenda;
- providing evidence of ministry of health endorsement;

- explaining how the results of the project will influence policy, programs, or practice;
- describing how the results of the proposed research will be translated into action;
- describing how results of the project may be scaled to have broader impact within and outside a country or territory;
- describing how the project will build national operational research capacity and improved surveillance and control of mosquito-borne diseases;
- articulating how the project is contributing to the PacMOSSI aims.

## **Criteria 2: Project methodology (30%)**

This criterion measures the suitability of the proposed scientific methods to address the aims and objectives of the research. Applicants may demonstrate appropriate project methodology by:

- detailing methodologically robust plans for sample selection, data collection, analysis, and results reporting/dissemination;
- providing draft versions of data collection tools that will be used;
- demonstrating appreciation of the risks associated with the project and presenting strategies to mitigate these risks;
- articulating how good research practice will be maintained.

## **Criteria 3: Capacity, capability, and resources to successfully complete the project (30%)**

This criterion focuses on the research team's ability to deliver the project. You should demonstrate this by:

- providing details about the proposed team members and the contribution each team member will make to the project;
- identifying the tools, resources, and equipment that will be required to implement the project successfully;
- providing a realistic project plan, timeline and budget; and
- identifying any risks to project success and presenting strategies to mitigate these risks.

## How to apply

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Applications cannot be submitted until the opening time/date. Submissions received after the closing time/date will not be considered.

Each application will need to identify a principal investigator. The principal investigator is the researcher that will lead the project and be responsible for its success. A principal investigator cannot be listed as a principal investigator on more than one application in the same grant round; however, they may be a co-investigator on other applications.

All applications must be submitted online via the grant application portal. The portal can be accessed from the PacMOSSI website ([www.pacmossi.org](http://www.pacmossi.org)).

A MS Word version of the application form is downloadable from the operational grant page of the PacMOSSI website. Applicants are encouraged to use the MS Word document to draft their application and cut and paste content into the online submission system when ready.

A detailed project budget is to be uploaded as part of an application. A project budgeting tool has been developed and is downloadable from the operational grant page of the PacMOSSI website.

A unique record number will be generated once an application is received. Please record this number and use it in any communication you have about your application with the PacMOSSI grant administrators.

The principal investigator's email address recorded in the application will be used for all communication from the PacMOSSI grant administrators.

## Timeline of grant assessment

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The expected time to process applications is as follows.

Activity	Timing
Application screening and quality check	Up to 1 week
Independent peer review and PacMOSSI steering committee review	Up to 2-4 weeks
Notified of outcome and feedback	Up to 1 week
Author amendments and second review. Grants officially	Up to 1-2 weeks



awarded.

## Guidance and support

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Applicants that require assistance developing their proposals have several support options. These are:

- Applicants may enrol in the PacMOSSI operational research training course. The course is self-paced and will take 4- to 6-hours to complete. It will lead participants through a process of identifying an issue suitable for operational research and determining appropriate research methods. It will discuss the practicalities of implementing operational research and exploring how the results may be communicated to maximise impact.
- Email the PacMOSSI coordinators on <pacmossi@jcu.edu.au> to organise a one-to-one discussion.

## Project monitoring and outputs

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Successful applicants will be required to provide an update on their project's progress. The timing of this report will be specified in the grant award. A template to guide reporting will be provided.

At the completion of a project a technical and financial report must be provided to the PacMOSSI Operational Research grant administrators.

## Updates and new information

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New information relating to the PacMOSSI Operational Research Grants Program will be posted on the PacMOSSI website (pacmossi.org).