Senior Monitoring, Evaluation and Research (MER) Advisor: Epidemiology - Job Description

Background

Our vision is a world free of preventable disease, in which everyone everywhere can reach their full potential. We were founded in 2002 with a £20m grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and started life at Imperial College London as the Schistosomiasis Control Initiative. Consistently ranked globally as one of the most cost-effective non-profit initiatives, we have received significant funding since our inception including from the UK Department of International Development, USAID and philanthropic investors.

In 2019 we became an independent organisation, and the SCI Foundation continues to work across multiple sectors in numerous countries in Sub-Saharan Africa to deliver effective and robust health programmes that have a lasting impact.

What we do

Working in partnership with Governments, the SCI Foundation supports and facilitates public health programmes that reduce the impact of preventable diseases like schistosomiasis and soil-transmitted helminthiasis.

We provide technical and financial support to Ministries of Health, in line with their own strategies and plans, to enhance sustainability and strengthen health systems within countries affected by these diseases. We work to scale up their government-implemented deworming programmes by providing advisory support and conducting research and analysis on the outcomes.

To date, our team has supported up to 60% of all global schistosomiasis treatments being delivered annually and we are broadening our reach to coordinate with health programmes for other preventable diseases, as well as supporting disease prevention measures such as water, sanitation and hygiene and the management of the impacts of these diseases on individuals.

The role

- The Senior MER Advisor: Epidemiology will be a senior member of the MER team, reporting to the Director of MER, and will provide technical, scientific and managerial expertise on the development, planning and implementation of MER activities across large and complex Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) control programmes, particularly focused on schistosomiasis (SCH) and soil-transmitted helminths (STH) control. They will be responsible for managing: MER Advisors (2), MER Officer (1), Long and Short Term Technical Consultants (as required) and students and interns (as required).

- The post-holder will be responsible for the provision of scientific and epidemiological support to a range of activities, including survey design, survey implementation and analysis of the resultant datasets to ensure quality data for programmatic decision-making. The surveys will largely relate to schistosomiasis and STH programmatic monitoring and evaluation and operational research activities, including reassessment and geostatistical mapping, surveys to determine impact of programmes, and post-treatment coverage evaluation surveys. As
part of SCIF’s MER Survey Process, they will be expected to lead in developing protocols and implementation of activities and to further strengthen this end-to-end process to maximise operational excellence and in providing quality assurance and quality control.

- The post-holder will work closely with the MER Team in the preparation of internal and external reports summarizing key results to demonstrate programme effectiveness and impact. They will also work, across SCIF teams, to disseminate evidence and key learning that will contribute to knowledge management for programme and organisation optimisation.

- The Senior MER Advisor: Epidemiology will be responsible for staying up-to-date with, and introducing and/or adopting, where needed, new technologies and evidence-based practices that will increase the effective and efficient delivery of SCIF’s processes and programme support. The post holder will work closely with the Senior MER Advisors for Statistics and Operational Excellence and will manage the MER Advisor: Social Science, MER Advisor: Field Operations and MER Officer to ensure planned and timely delivery of survey support to ensure SCIF’s Strategic Goals, Objectives and Key Performance Indicators are being achieved.

- They will have opportunities to, and be responsible for, engaging with high level stakeholders including Ministries of Health, key partners in M&E and international agencies such as the WHO, and will support SCIF’s collaborations with research partners. Working very closely with the Programmes, Operations & Finance and Policy & Communications functions, they will ensure there is robust and comprehensive evidence to demonstrate to donors the positive impact of SCIF-supported programmes and projects.

Key Responsibilities

Monitoring, Evaluation and Research of SCH and STH control programmes

- Oversee specific aspects of MER within SCIF programmes and projects from initiation to completion, ensuring SCIF, country partner and donor requirements are being met.
- Lead the development of standardised best practices, including technical briefs and job aids, and tools for MER programme effectiveness and efficiency and to increase country ownership of high-quality data for decision-making.
- Ensure MER activities are implemented to a high standard and in line with SCIF strategy and objectives.
- Ensure continued review and development of SCIF M&E policies, survey design, processes and tools, including incorporating new scientific learning and published guidance.
- Manage the development of SCH/STH control and elimination M&E frameworks with MoH partners which align to their priorities and goals and advise Programmes team on annual surveys to support the frameworks.
- Preparation and sign-off of field survey protocols, standard operation procedures and electronic data collection and quality assurance processes.
- Oversee survey preparation, including procurement of survey equipment and consumables, high quality standardised training materials and training workshops, and the field survey implementation.
▪ Manage ethical clearance (IRB) process for MER surveys per organisational and country protocols.
▪ Development of standard analysis plans with the MER Biostatisticians.
▪ Development of Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Learning and Adaption strategy and workplan with Senior Advisors and Directors in MER and Programmes teams.
▪ Support the delivery of the SCI publication plan and the preparation of scientific manuscripts for publication as lead and also in support of MoH partners, SCIF colleagues and external collaborators.
▪ Act as lead technical resource to SCIF programme staff and country programme partners for MER of integrated NTD programme activities.
▪ Represent SCIF, at senior level, in endemic country technical advisory groups and stakeholder meetings to ensure technical expertise and guidance is used to strengthen programme activities.

Team Management
▪ Manage the MER Advisor: Social Science, MER Advisor: Field Operations and MER Officer in line with key performance indicators, ensuring clarity over MER plans and priorities.
▪ Support the MER team to perform to a high standard by contributing to the promotion of a culture of employee engagement, training, development and empowerment to ensure job satisfaction and employee retention.
▪ Contribute to the monitoring and reporting against SCIF organisational goals and objectives through key performance indicators.

Project Management
▪ Lead or support the process of SCIF grant applications, ensuring organisational and global priorities are addressed and to ensure sustainable financial support to country programmes.
▪ Monitor progress of projects and ensure regular status review meetings are held to discuss protocol development, milestones, risks, issues, and actions required.
▪ Responds and/or manages responses to data requests from donor and programme colleagues.

Communication and Networking
▪ Provide reports and publications highlighting MER achievements for websites, peer-reviewed journals, policy publications and other communication channels, in conjunction the SCIF team, MoH partners and external partners, to promote the positive impact of SCIF-supported programmes.
▪ Develop and build on partnerships within the NTD community and the broader development sector to support the disease elimination effort.
▪ Facilitate regular communication and liaison between implementing partners on MER activities and foster the sharing of methodologies.
Represent SCI F externally as required, representing the views and interests of SCI F in international forums.

Prepare papers and/or presentations for, and attend, international meetings/conferences as required.

**Personal specification**

**Essential knowledge, experience and qualifications**

- A post-graduate qualification or equivalent in public health, epidemiology or a related quantitative discipline.
- Strong management, administration and leadership experience within a similar role, preferably in public health.
- Strong experience in epidemiological survey design and sample size calculations.
- Proven experience of statistical analysis in an epidemiological context.
- Strong experience in supporting data collection in field surveys and setting up and managing electronic data capture platforms (e.g. ODK, SDK, SurveyCTO).
- Demonstrated proficiency using GIS mapping software platforms (e.g. QGIS, ArcGIS).
- Proven experience in using R, or other statistical coding packages (e.g. SAS, STATA) and a willingness to learn R.
- Publication record in scientific journals.
- Technical knowledge of the control and elimination of neglected tropical diseases, or a related field such as malaria, vaccines, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and One Health.
- Experience of working in a similar role within the global health or international development sector, preferably within African countries, and ensuring compliance with international donor requirements.
- A strong understanding of health systems in low-Income countries.
- Demonstrated experience in project/programme management.
- Proven experience in leading reporting processes and report writing.
- Experience of developing, monitoring and managing research budgets.

**Essential skills and abilities**

- French language, both written and spoken, to enable working in a Francophone environment.
• Proven ability to work independently using own initiative.
• Demonstrated management and/or supervisory skills.
• Demonstrated ability to work in a team and with external partners through an open and collaborative approach.
• Proven organisational and time-management skills.
• Strong verbal and written communication skills and ability explain and build capacity of/for epidemiological concepts to non-experts.
• Excellent analytical and computing skills with strong attention to detail.
• Willingness to travel regularly to Africa and countries in other regions.

Desirable knowledge, skills and experience
• PhD in public health, epidemiology equivalent or related discipline;
• Language qualification, or skills, in Portuguese and/or Arabic and/or Swahili

SCI Foundation Values
We expect all employees to abide by our Code of Conduct that sets out the principles that everyone who works at SCI Foundation must follow. Our three values underpin everything we say and do:

Transparency – We believe in proactive transparency. Supporters and beneficiaries have the right to know exactly what we do and how we do it.

Empowerment – We believe in people and in unlocking their full potential. We are committed to developing everyone involved in our work, as people are our greatest asset.

Inclusion – We believe that no-one should be left behind. Every individual we interact with is valued and respected.

Application Information
Interested candidates should submit a detailed CV and covering letter.

The closing date for the receipt of applications is 7th September 2021 with first interviews taking place w/c 24th September 2021.

Referees will only be contacted post the interview stage.

Please note that applications received after the deadline will not be accepted.
DATA PROTECTION – By submitting an application you agree that SCI Foundation collects and manages the information that you provide. Your personal information will be used for recruitment purposes only. Your application will be treated with strict confidentiality.

SCI Foundation is committed to diversity and equal opportunities for applicants and employees. SCI Foundation strives to ensure equal employment opportunities and equal access to employment and does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, colour, national origin, religion, physical or mental ability, marital status and age. Applications will be treated with strict confidentiality.