



Job Description

Job Title: Head of Portfolio – NTD Research

Job Location: UK

Reports to: Director of Evidence, Research and Innovations

Responsible for: Global Technical Lead (NTD Research), Research Advisers, Consultants

Department: Evidence, Research and Innovations, Policy and Programme Strategy Directorate

Job Purpose:

Sightsavers is a non-for-profit organisation working in over 30 countries in Africa and Asia to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equality of opportunities for people with disabilities. We are one of the major global players in the delivery of programmes targeting elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) working primarily on five preventive chemotherapy NTDs, - trachoma, onchocerciasis, lymphatic filariasis, schistosomiasis and soil transmitted helminths (STH). High quality research is at the heart of our operations, and we hold Independent Research Organisation (IRO) status by UK Research and Innovation (UK RI). Our in-house Research team includes over 20 staff with expertise in epidemiology, economics, social science, GIS methods and systematic reviews.

We are seeking a senior research leader to provide strategic leadership and technical oversight for our NTD research portfolio. The post holder will have a senior role within the Research Directorate and will work closely with other research leads, the NTD Technical Hub and Country Offices. Your primary responsibilities will be to expand and strengthen our research portfolio and ensure that it is aligned with our NTD Strategic Plan and global research priorities. You will also act as the Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator on specific NTD studies and ensure that they are delivered on time, on budget and to the highest possible methodological and ethical standards. You will lead the NTD research team and provide direct line management to a number of posts.

Principal Accountabilities:

1. Lead the development and growth of our NTD research portfolio and ensure its strategic relevance and methodological rigour; provide organisational leadership in strengthening the evidence base of our NTD programmes and increasing global visibility of Sightsavers NTD research;
2. Provide scientific leadership and technical oversight into specific NTD studies, acting as principle or co-investigator and undertaking quality assurance and technical guidance. Amongst other research in the current portfolio, you will co-lead our recently awarded onchocerciasis and entomology research contract "Developing Innovation Scalable Solutions for Entomology and Cross Border

Transmission” (DISSECT) funded by the Global Initiative for Disease Elimination (GLIDE).

3. Work closely with the NTD Technical hub and NTD programmes to identify NTD research priorities aligned with the NTD Strategy, integrate research within NTD operations and facilitate effective uptake of research findings.
4. Work with the research uptake and learning (RUL) advisers and Sightsavers communications team to deliver the RUL and Research communication strategies and ensure visibility of NTD research within and outside Sightsavers.
5. Work with fundraising teams and NTD programmes to develop fundraising strategies and raise new income for NTD research and innovations; provide scientific leadership on NTD research grant applications; ensure technical oversight of deliverables, reports, budget management and donor compliance and communication across the portfolio.
6. Provide strong leadership in raising the profile of Sightsavers as a trusted partner in high quality NTD research; provide cross-organisational leadership in building new academic and non-academic NTD partnerships, high impact peer-reviewed publications and presentations at relevant scientific fora.
7. Oversee the work and line manage relevant research staff and consultants in line with organisational policies; ensure that Sightsavers research projects have appropriate expertise and technical support; support staff professional development and goals; build team capacity and enhance their integration with NTD teams – particularly in country offices.
8. Support the Director of Evidence, Research and Innovations and make contributions to cross-departmental and cross-organisational initiatives, including the delivery of the Research and Thematic strategies, Research, Knowledge and Dissemination group, Learning questions agenda, Innovations agenda, Programme and Council meetings and others.

The principal accountabilities are not meant to be an exhaustive list of tasks. The need for flexibility is required and the job holder is expected to carry out any other related duties that are within the employee's skills and abilities whenever reasonably instructed.

Jobholder Entry Requirements - *the essential knowledge, skills and behaviours required*

Knowledge (Education & Related Experience):

- A degree in Biosciences, Medicine or similar discipline (Essential)
- An MSc in Public Health, Epidemiology or equivalent (Essential)
- A PhD or Professional Doctorate (Essential)
- Excellent knowledge of NTDs and communicable diseases (Essential)

- Excellent knowledge of different study designs and methods, both quantitative and qualitative
- Considerable discipline experience in leading and conducting operational research in low-income countries, including epidemiological and entomological surveys (Essential)
- A soundtrack record of winning funding applications to external donors (eg. FCDO, Taskforce for Global Health, Philanthropic foundations, Research Councils) (Essential)
- Sound knowledge of NTD research organisations and networks (Essential)
- Considerable experience of disseminating research through scientific conferences and peer reviewed publications (Essential)
- Track record of managing research staff (Essential)
- Experience of managing research teams or departments (Essential)
- Good knowledge of disability issues and equity measurements

Skills (Special Training or Competence):

- Strong ability to design, lead and manage research projects (Essential)
- Excellent communication skills in English, both orally and in writing (Essential)
- Excellent data analysis skills using statistical analysis software e.g. STATA (Essential)
- Knowledge of qualitative data analysis methods, eg. using NVIVO (Essential);
- Strong ability to write funding applications, study protocols and donor reports (Essential);
- Project, team and consultant management skills (Essential);
- Ability to work across a variety of disciplines (Essential)
- Skills in planning and organising own work and that of others (Essential)
- Strong ability to write academic reports and publications (Essential);
- Experience of GIS software e.g ArcGIS, QGIS (Desirable)
- Strong decision-making skills (Essential)
- Commitment to equality of opportunity for disabled people (Essential)
- Written and spoken French (Desirable)

Key Relationships

Internal

- Evidence, Research and Innovations Directorate
- NTD Technical Director - NTD Technical Hub
- NTD Programme Directors – NTD operations
- Country offices and programmes
- Other relevant teams, Institutional Funding, Campaigns and Communications, Policy and Advocacy, Performance and Financing

External

- NTD community and networks, including WHO, ESPEN, COR-NTD and others
- Academic institutions in the UK, particularly LSHTM, LSTM, Imperial College
- Academic and research institutes in countries, where Sightsavers works
- Ministries of Health, National NTD programmes
- Donors, specifically Task Force for Global Health, FCDO, BMGF, UKRI
- Other NGOs and Coalitions

- Drug manufactures and donation programmes

Ability to Travel

Ability to travel - on planned visits, for up to 12 weeks of the year, in sometimes difficult locations.

Date as of: 27 September 2021