

India Health Fund to boost research on TB, malaria

The India Health Fund (IHF), an initiative by Tata Trusts, in collaboration with the Global Fund has come forward to financially support innovations and technologies designed to combat tuberculosis and malaria.

The IHF aims to support new products and strategies that impact the entire lifecycle of TB and malaria, from prevention to post-cure recovery. It has recently invited project proposals.

“The IHF aims to support individuals and organisations with already germinated innovative strategies, services, products, such that they become sustainable and scalable solutions in addressing TB and malaria. It is not a fellowship to do research from scratch,” said Jayeeta Chowdhury, programme head-IHF, Tata Trusts.

While not disclosing the quantum of funding earmarked for the initiative, Ms. Chowdhury said a “large partnership building is under way” and it is a “long-term exercise” aligned with the country’s goal of eliminating TB by 2025 and malaria by 2030.

“IHF will promote innovative solutions such that they are widely accessible and are affordable,” she added.

Tough challenge

TB and malaria pose long-standing health challenges for India.

The two diseases account for over 4.23 lakh deaths and around 15 million lab-confirmed cases every year.

The quantum of funding might increase in the future depending on new partners joining the IHF initiative. “Effort will be made to expand the partnership and have a wider base of donors/investors,” Ms. Chowdhury said.

Four research areas

The four areas of research for which applications are invited are: use of technology and data science to strengthen surveillance of TB and malaria, inform early warning systems, and improve early detection and prompt treatment; promotion of robust molecular diagnostic facilities feasible for primary healthcare in low-resource settings; innovations on effective communication strategies that will prevent transmission of TB and malaria, and enable people to protect themselves from the diseases, and, finally, research on innovative approaches to vector surveillance.

The last date for submission of applications is March 19. More details can be found at www.indiahealthfund.org.

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Rama was born normal. By the time she was six, her life underwent catastrophic events — blindness, breathing problems, asthma, growth problems.

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