



NATIONAL FOUNDATION FOR DEVELOPMENT OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY AND THE NATIONAL COMMISSION ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY THE COVID-19 RESEARCH CHALLENGE UNDERSTANDING THE PANDEMIC IN JAMAICA

BACKGROUND

In early January 2020, a novel coronavirus (COVID-19) was identified as the infectious agent causing an outbreak of respiratory illness in Wuhan, China. Jamaica recorded its first confirmed COVID-19 case on March 9th, 2020. Since then, there have been more than 5000 confirmed cases and over 70 deaths in Jamaica. Around the world much research has been conducted on COVID-19 since the pandemic began, with more than 25,000 peer-reviewed scholarly journal articles published. However, none of those research papers have addressed the COVID-19 in Jamaica. Also true is the fact that the virus has not behaved as predicted in some developing countries in Africa, peaking earlier than expected. Jamaica needs more research on COVID-19 that is tailored to its own reality and useful to the general public locally. To help bridge this gap the NFDST is issuing a COVID-19 Research Challenge.

RESEARCH TOPICS

The COVID-19 Research Challenge will fund a survey of families, who had members infected with COVID-19, to increase the understanding of COVID-19 disease in Jamaica and help prevent others from suffering its effects.

The survey should help to answer the following questions:

1. Who has been most susceptible to, and severely affected by, the disease (including demographic factors such as: age, gender, occupation, home size)
2. What symptoms did the infected persons experience?
3. Prior to the onset of symptoms, what activities did the infected persons participate in and what preventive measures, if any, did they take?
4. Did family members, and close contacts, of the infected catch the disease?
5. What treatments or therapies, including home remedies, did infected persons use to combat the disease and any indication of the effectiveness of these treatments?
6. Was the medical history of the infected persons related to the severity of the disease they experienced? Similarly, was the medical history of their family members related to whether they too contracted the disease.

FUNDING

The total amount of funding requested must not exceed JMD \$1.5 Million. The maximum duration of the research survey may not exceed **2 months**. Funding will be paid in two equal instalments for use exclusively for survey-related activities undertaken after the commencement of the study. The proposed survey must represent a defined piece of research with deliverables that can be attained within the specified budget and time frame, but may form part of a larger project.

ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible for the challenge, you must:

- 1) Be Jamaican,
- 2) Be normally resident in Jamaica,
- 3) Be affiliated with a recognised higher education, public or private research organization or unit **Not** be affiliated with the National Foundation for the Development of Science and Technology (NFDST) or the National Commission on Science and Technology (NCST).

HOW TO APPLY

Download the “**COVID-19 Research Challenge**” application from the NCST website: www.ncst.gov.jm. Submit the completed form along with your draft survey instrument and an itemized budget by email, in portable document format (PDF), to jmfearon_ncst@mset.gov.jm with subject heading “COVID-19 Research Challenge” no later than **16th October 2020**.

Any questions about the challenge or the application process must be submitted by email to jmfearon_ncst@mset.gov.jm. In addition to responding by email, answer to all questions will be posted on the NCST website no later than 2 days after their submission.

PUBLICATIONS

The awardee **MUST** write a report on their findings in English that can be understood by the general public no later than 1 month of the survey completion date.

KEY DATES

13th October 2020 – Last date for questions

16th October 2020 – Application submission deadline

23th October 2020 – Announcement of results

23th December 2020 – Draft Survey Report due

SELECTION CRITERIA

	Criteria	Maximum Score
1	Scientific merit and alignment with the objectives of the Research Challenge	25
2	Clear, realistic, and measurable objectives that can be achieved within the allotted timeframe using the resources available	20
3	The necessary qualifications and experience to conduct the proposed research and achieve its stated objectives	20
4	The draft Survey instrument (to be finalized after the commencement of the project)	15
5	Itemized and justified budget	20
	Total	100