COVID-19 Situation: QNRF Interim Guidelines for Awardees, Research Offices and Researchers

This document is created to provide information and guidance for all QNRF awarded institutions and researchers affected by the outbreak of COVID-19 as a result of the measures taken nationally and internationally with regard to lockdown, work from home and flight cancelation.

In this regards, QNRF would like to emphasize that it is the responsibility of the Awardee /RO to ensure that all their researchers adhere and comply with the measures, directives laid out by the State of Qatar, and their institutions as the safety of people comes first and the issues related to their research projects can be overcome through available resources and alternatives. Similarly we call upon all our international awardees to observe guidelines and obligations issued by their respective national authorities.

QNRF flexibilities and actions:

1. **Projects at the pre-funding stage:**
   Projects with “Award Pending – Vetted” status will not be activated until the LPI submits a proof that he would start working in the project/lab.

2. **Ongoing Projects:**
   2.1 This section applies to QNRF projects from different programs includes but not limited to: NPRP/UREP/TGRP Calls:
      2.1.1 QNRF will ask each LPI to mark the status of his/her ongoing project(s) across all QNRF programs and specify whether it will be:
         - **Not Affected**: be carried out as usual
         - **Partially Affected**: submission of project management and mitigation plan through CR for QNRF assessment
         - **Detrimentally Affected**: to be suspended
      2.1.2 The status above should be duly vetted by the RO
      2.1.3 QNRF will assess the submitted project status and take the appropriate decision.
      2.1.4 Based on the status of the projects will be modified accordingly.
   2.2 This section applies to all Capacity Building Programs includes but not limited to: QRLP/GSRA/PDRA and ECRA:
      2.2.1 Awardees of the above will carry on receiving their stipends and tuitions as usual provided they submit that they submit confirmation letters from the ROs attesting that they are studying online or working physically in their labs or working from home, as appropriate.

3. **Travel:**
   3.1 Due to travel restrictions, any activities requiring travel should be postponed until the travel ban is lifted. QNRF strongly encourages researchers to work from home and have virtual meetings and conferences, etc. This would be beneficial to adhere to the project timeline.
   3.2 REMP’s Awardees: Due to travel restrictions, all awards are suspended until the travel ban is lifted.
   3.3 CWSP Events should be put on hold, due to travel restrictions, till further notice.
4. **Institutional Ethical Committees:**
   4.1 If the institution’s assurances for IRB, IACUC, or IBC will be expiring soon, ROs shall make sure to inform the Ministry of Public Health and obtain its approval/confirmation on the continuation of the work.
   4.2 Projects awaiting for ethical approval might have an extension based on the submitted justification
   4.3 QNRF encourages awardees to consult with IRBs and institutions about protective measures, such as:
      - Limiting study visits to those needed for participant safety or coincident with clinical care.
      - Conducting virtual study visits
      - Implementing flexibilities for required laboratory tests or imaging needed for safety monitoring

5. **Reporting Requirements:**
   In consideration of the COVID-19 situation, QNRF will show flexibility in the late submission of progress, final and financial reports, by stopping giving demerit points for delays extending up to two weeks while QNRF will continue giving merit points for active projects as per the current guidelines “Online Monitoring System”.

6. **New Calls:**
   6.1 QNRF will do its utmost to adhere to programs and initiatives that it has committed to in its annual business plan including the design, development and launch of new calls for all its funding program including NPRP, TGRP, CB,...etc by relying on its state-of-the art online platform; QGrant. In addition QNRF has developed other IT platforms to conduct all its pre-award activities including screening and peer reviewing and programmatic meetings. Hence QNRF calls on all its research community to exploit this opportunity to participate in all calls.
   6.2 For the current active funding opportunities, QNRF will consider extending the deadline upon providing a valid justification by the applicant.
   6.3 Submission of ECRA cycle 2 and PDRA cycle 6 calls will be extended until 29 June

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**P.S 1:** QNRF has provided a [link](#) for Frequently Asked Questions (and Answers) in response to inquiries on policies and programs affecting research progress

**P.S 2:** This document will be updated regularly to ensure consistency with the changes that may occur due to the Pandemic COVID-19