



# ICARS

## International Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance Solutions

### The Threat of Antimicrobial Resistance

Effective antimicrobials are an essential cornerstone of modern health systems and societies. Antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is therefore one of the greatest threats to health, society, and economies and the World Health Organisation (WHO) has classified it in the top 10 health threats. Without sufficient action, AMR will jeopardise the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, and deaths due to AMR are projected to rise to 10 million by 2050 – more deaths than cancer and diabetes combined. The World Bank predicts the economic impact of AMR to exceed the financial crisis of 2008/9 and to impact Low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) the most and assesses that investment in AMR mitigation is one of today’s highest yield investments.

International awareness has increased and consensus exists globally on the high-level policies and interventions needed. In response, over 170 countries now have a national action plan (NAP) developed or in development, and several initiatives are established internationally and nationally. Yet, as highlighted in the final report of the United Nations Interagency Coordination Group (IACG) on AMR from April 2019, the global response does not sufficiently match the scale and scope of the issue and challenges remain in implementation of NAPs, particularly in LMICs. This is precisely the challenge that ICARS will address.

### An International Partnership to Mitigate AMR in LMICs

With a vision of a world in which AMR no longer poses a threat to the health of humans and animals, the environment, global food security and economic prosperity, the Danish government has, with support from the World Bank, initiated the establishment of the International Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance Solutions - ICARS.

ICARS is a new solutions development partnership that works with LMICs and stakeholders to conduct independent intervention and implementation research which identifies evidence-based solutions to specific AMR-related issues that individual LMIC governments give high priority to solve. ICARS will hereby support LMICs in implementing aspects of their AMR National Action Plans (NAPs), thereby supporting the global efforts to mitigate AMR.

Taking a holistic One Health approach, all activities will be solution-focused. ICARS will work multidisciplinary across human, animal (terrestrial and aquatic), plant, food, and the environment and give significant focus to social and economic sciences. ICARS has five core principles that will be adhered to in developing and delivering all activities.

#### ICARS’ Core Principles

<b>Country Ownership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Projects must be country-owned and led</li> <li>• Priorities defined by individual countries</li> <li>• Integrated top down (e.g. government, local authorities) and bottom up (e.g. professionals, academia, community representatives) approach in country</li> </ul>
<b>One Health Lens</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A collaborative, multisectoral and holistic approach</li> <li>• Activities relevant to one sector while recognizing the impact of the other sectors (human and animal health, the environment, food security and economy)</li> <li>• AMR-specific and AMR-sensitive activities</li> </ul>
<b>Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A solution development partnership - with key stakeholders at national and local levels and where relevant at regional and international levels</li> <li>• Alignment and collaboration across sectors and disciplines</li> <li>• Maximising the use of limited resources, building on existing work/networks for an effective approach to avoid duplication</li> </ul>
<b>Solution-Focused</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focusing on providing policy-relevant evidence-based solutions</li> <li>• Translation of country national action plans, international policies and frameworks into practice on the ground</li> <li>• Identifying enablers as well as causes and barriers to implementation of existing solutions</li> <li>• Combining immediate action with long-term vision</li> </ul>
<b>Sustainability</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost-effective solutions (economically feasible and practical for the country)</li> <li>• Laying the foundations for change and supporting initial implementation</li> <li>• Integrating into existing resources, systems and infrastructure, where possible</li> <li>• Capacity and capability building in country</li> <li>• Alignment to other global and country agendas and priorities (e.g. SDGs, Universal Health Coverage and other challenges such as COVID-19)</li> </ul>



### **ICARS Role at a National Level: Bridging the Gap between Policy and Practice**

Upon an LMIC government request and commitment to act, ICARS will work closely with national and local stakeholders to identify priorities and to develop evidence based, context-specific and cost-effective solutions to mitigate AMR using intervention and implementation research. The research projects will support countries in implementing their NAPs and thus contribute to bridge the gap between policy and practice. ICARS will avoid duplication, build on, and strengthen the essential wider efforts to address AMR within the country. ICARS will utilize existing expertise within the country and build further capacity so that efforts can be sustained and scaled up at national and international levels. Research projects will include economic evaluations to inform of the cost-benefit of the identified solutions. The projects can be executed by ICARS internally or can be commissioned.

### **ICARS Role at an International Level: Filling Gaps in the Global Response**

ICARS will work as a solution development partnership anchored by hubs with projects and activities in various locations around the world. Through its work, ICARS will play a key role in the delivery of the United Nations General Assembly AMR Resolution agreed in September 2016 and fill some of the gaps in the global response highlighted by the IACG-recommendations.

ICARS will work with policy-makers, international experts and stakeholders such as the Tripartite (WHO, FAO, OIE), UNEP and other UN/International organisations to feed into the wider international efforts by producing independent evidence synthesis, assessments and reports that will highlight gaps in evidence that require further attention. Where appropriate, ICARS will provide recommendations and actively engage with other stakeholders to advocate for action and to determine analyses needed to support policy- and decision-making. ICARS will make its knowledge, evidence, and solutions available in open global repositories.

### **Organisational Framework and Governance**

ICARS consists at the moment of a small secretariat that is laying the ground for the development of ICARS. It is the strategic ambition to transform ICARS into an international organisation within few years, but already during 2020 ICARS will take steps towards becoming an independent organisation with clear governance and structure.

The governance model for ICARS will be structured around a Board of Trustees, the ICARS Secretariat and a Technical Advisory Forum. A Donor Forum is envisaged to ensure donor engagement.

### **Partner with ICARS and Contribute to the Fight against AMR**

Given the urgency to act, the Danish government has put forth initial funding and is willing to continue to invest alongside other partners committed to finding solutions to the global AMR challenge. Only in partnership, can we close the existing gap and mitigate AMR in LMICs. ICARS invites committed governmental bodies, policymakers, foundations and international organisations to partner with ICARS. A partnership with ICARS may take several forms, including political support and commitment, in-kind contributions and/or financial contributions. ICARS also seeks LMIC partners that are committed to mitigating AMR and willing to show leadership.

ICARS has established relationships with the Tripartite (WHO, FAO and OIE), the CGIAR and is in negotiation on partnership with a range of funders and organisations. To demonstrate how ICARS will operate and add value to the global response, ICARS aims to initiate a number of demonstration projects in 2020, and the first demonstration projects are currently being developed in Vietnam and Georgia. ICARS is furthermore in initial talks with several African countries.

### **More Information**

To learn more about ICARS and possible ways of collaboration, please visit the ICARS webpage or contact the ICARS Secretariat:

- [www.ICARS-global.org](http://www.ICARS-global.org)
- [contact@icars-global.org](mailto:contact@icars-global.org)