

Co-creating health innovations

Drones for the last mile delivery of vaccines and live-saving emergency drugs

Nepal has some of the most rugged and difficult terrain in the world, making delivery of emergency life-saving products to remote areas challenging. To save the lives of mothers, newborns and children and ensure that everyone has access to the health services they need, Options Consultancy Services (Options), in partnership with the Government of Nepal, Nepal Flying Labs and WeRobotics, is seeking seed funding and strategic partnerships to design and pilot a drone delivery system for emergency and life-saving drugs, vaccines, blood and supplies over a period of 18 months.



Strong local partnerships for a successful last-mile delivery system

In Nepal, the ecosystem to scale a drone delivery system is still in its infancy. However, drone technology has been piloted for tuberculous diagnosis and can be adapted for use at scale if it is integrated to work with the Nepal health system. Options has been working with the Government of Nepal for more than 20 years and for the last decade has been leading the UK Aid technical support for the Nepal Health System Strengthening Programme (NHSSP). Our relationships, knowledge of the national health system and of all local stakeholders makes us the ideal partner to integrate and scale a last-mile drone delivery system in the Nepal health sector.

Timeline for launching the Nepal drone innovation

We will first launch pilot drone projects in a couple of government chosen districts to test and adapt the innovation, setting up important systems for delivering COVID-19 vaccines. If successful, the innovation can be scaled nation-wide and deliver other medical supplies, such as equipment, organs and defibrillators.

Exploratory phase (6 months)



Stage 1

Create consortium and team, and form a **Government-led Technical Working Group as the core decision-making body** of the development of the innovation



Stage 2

Research and feasibility assessment to identify regular stock-outs hotspots and districts, with guidance from the government.



Stage 3

Obtain legal permissions to pilot the innovation



Stage 4

Series of sensitisation and consultative meetings with local government and district-level stakeholders, and any affected communities



Stage 5

Set up hardware based on the technical needs for the medical transportation in different geographical areas/terrains in Nepal

Learning phase (12 months)



Stage 1:

Design aerial map of facilities, central drugs stores and drone flight routes in selected districts; undertake intensive contingency planning and testing; develop standard operating procedures and flight communication systems, and a simple step-by-step user guide in Nepali.



Stage 2

Launch innovation in selected districts, provide health workers with in-depth training, mentorship on operating drones, monitoring, recording and reporting flight information, and to plan and forecast stock needs. Undertake local community sensitisation and trust-building activities.



Stage 3

Gather data from all stakeholders involved, document and share learning about the process and the design, health system impact and economic benefits of the innovation; and make adjustments to scale it.

Why Options

Options is a leading global health consultancy. We create and deliver health initiatives to ensure vulnerable women and children can access the high-quality health services they need. Our programming is flexible, tailored, evidence-based and politically informed, with a focus on building local skills and systems that last. Our work in Nepal has helped to expand access to high quality maternity care for women and their families. Read more about our work at: <https://options.org.np/>

With 20+ years of working with the Nepal Ministry of Health and Population and all the key health institutions in Nepal, Options brings an unparalleled understanding of the national and local context, including the complex strategies through which devolution is taking place. Globally, Options works with partners to create and implement locally informed and innovative solutions to complex health problems. With this initiative we can harness our deep understanding of the Nepal context with the ground-breaking use of drone technology to address one of the biggest innovation challenges: having impact at scale.

Contact

Please get in touch to help turn this vision into a reality:
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