

This response was developed by the Endocrine Society's Research Affairs Core Committee in response to NOT-ES-23-016 Request for Information (RFI): Environmental Justice Research Gaps, Opportunities and Capacity Building.

December 15, 2023

**Transformative environmental justice research and action:**

The Endocrine Society is enthusiastic about new opportunities to advance environmental justice for disproportionately impacted communities through research and community engagement. We recognize that lower-income settings are disproportionately affected by environmental injustice; this is true both for the domestic United States as well as the global context. We therefore urge the NIH Environmental Justice Working Group to consider advancing transformative research opportunities by supporting studies in lower- to middle-income countries and communities, including population-based studies to better understand complex exposure scenarios among communities facing environmental injustice. In support of this goal, we have attached our submission to NOT-TW-22-001 on Promoting Equity in Global Health Research as an appendix to this response.

**Scientific infrastructure to support environmental justice research:**

Comprehensive databases with a framework for efficiently sharing information among research and community partners will be necessary to support environmental justice research and engage communities. Resources will be needed to develop coordinated networks of researchers and communities, and support for biomonitoring studies with outputs relevant to community needs. We encourage NIH to work with EPA and WHO for domestic and international projects respectively to leverage existing resources, infrastructure, and expertise. As we stated in our response to NOT-TW-22-001, NIH should also:

- Conduct assessments to identify country- or region-specific research needs, including information on data access and capacity to utilize databases, biorepositories, and other resources for basic and clinical research.
- Support the cost of developing, maintaining, and enabling public-access databases in LMICs.
- Enable database access for researchers in LMICs, in particular for databases that may be underutilized. Support for training, including travel when necessary, could enable researchers to interact directly with the key research teams and points of contact for these databases, or to learn necessary coding skills for specific databases.



- Consider the feasibility of programs that would allow permanent international research teams with collaborations between the global north and global south, comparable to the Medical Research Council units in The Gambia and Uganda.
- Provide translation assistance/resources for those that aren't writing in their native language.

**Community partnerships to address environmental injustices:**

We are encouraged by the emphasis on building effective partnerships with communities to advance shared research interests. At a fundamental level, environmental justice research must involve collaboration with local researchers when possible, and engagement within the communities that are participating in research throughout the research lifecycle. For domestic and international work with environmental justice communities, research teams should be able to communicate effectively with local populations and community leaders to design questions based on their concerns; this may require education to build the necessary cultural competencies. NIH should also establish mechanisms for environmental justice communities to share their needs and interests with NIH directly so that this information can guide funding opportunities and research applicatio