

## African Researchers' Small Grants Program (SGP VI)

### A. Overview

<b>Maximum funding per award:</b>	USD 30,000	
<b>Call Opening date:</b>	September 01, 2022, 08:00 GMT	
<b>Call closing date:</b>	September 30, 2022, 17:00 GMT	<i>Successful proposals will be facilitated by implementing partner, ARNTD.</i>
<b>Projected Announcement of awards:</b>	December 12, 2022, 15:00 GMT	

### Introduction

The African Research Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases (ARNTD) with support from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (Gates Foundation), through the Coalition for Operational Research on Neglected Tropical Diseases (COR-NTD), is seeking proposals for both operational and implementation research on “Emerging Challenges facing Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) program implementation in Africa.” This sixth edition of the Small Grants Program (SGP VI) is to support African researchers in both early and mid/late career to undertake operational or implementation research aligned with the goals established in the London Declaration on Neglected Tropical Diseases. SGP VI is comprised of two small grant funding tracks:

- a. Small grants for junior researchers
- b. Small grants for mid-career and/or senior researchers.

### Funding Organizations



### Who is the target group?

This call for proposals is targeted at outstanding researchers – especially beginning researchers – and academics based in research institutions or universities in Africa. Applicants will have to demonstrate that the proposed research or activity is aligned with country/program interests and has potential institutional/individual capacity-building impact. The small grants targeted at junior and senior researchers at the Masters or PhD level will provide grants ranging from USD 10,000 - 30,000. Applications are accepted in English, French, and Portuguese. However, shortlisted applicants will be required to submit full proposals and additional documentation in **English** in order to be eligible for the award.

### Objectives of the call

1. To increase African leadership, involvement and visibility in NTD operational and implementation research, including through direct engagement with national NTD programs;
2. To contribute to improving the research capacity of an existing cadre of African NTD researchers and strengthening African research institutions in the process by supporting operational and implementation research on NTDs that is locally originated and African-led;
3. To improve South-South communication and collaboration among researchers, policymakers and implementers, and for community participation in research and agenda-setting;

4. To provide an opportunity for young upcoming researchers not only to gain experience in research, but also in preparation of grant applications and management;
5. To supplement a clearly defined aspect of ongoing research or to answer a new question linked to ongoing research being carried out by mid-career/senior researchers;
6. To encourage a model of North-South collaboration which promotes engagement between researchers in the South and their control programs, and improves local leadership and ownership of initiatives and activities.

### **What's in Scope?**

In order to be considered for funding, the proposed research must be informed by existing evidence and identified gaps. Proposals must demonstrate significant potential to inform or develop further research activities.

**The program duration of this edition is 10 months.** Applicants must therefore provide clear evidence by stating specific variables which will ensure the completion of the projects within the 10 months' timeline of the program. Applications must focus on the five preventive-chemotherapy (PC) NTDs (lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, soil transmitted helminthiasis, schistosomiasis, and trachoma). Eligible proposals may focus on:

**Implementation and/or operational research that aims to improve the effectiveness of NTD programs. This may include:**

- Identifying factors that hinder equitable delivery of NTD program interventions to vulnerable groups.
- Developing, testing, and scaling practical solutions that are evidence-based, adaptive, and context-specific.
- Identifying ways to improve uptake, adaptation, and adoption of existing evidence-based strategies, tools to achieve elimination and control targets.
- Studies to develop or validate innovative new diagnostic technologies to support NTD program implementation and improvement in operations.

**This edition of the Small Grants Program includes several new focus areas:**

- Testing new models for post-validation surveillance or integrated surveillance strategies for trachoma and lymphatic filariasis. As NTD programs achieve success and scale down mass drug administration, implementing surveillance as part of program monitoring and evaluation to assure that program goals are sustained has emerged as a priority.
- Development of scalable solutions to the integration of morbidity management and disease prevention (MMDP) services into the national health system
- Developing and testing cost-effective, scalable, community-based strategies for vector collection and xenomonitoring in onchocerciasis and lymphatic filariasis hotspots
- Testable solutions to improve equitable access to NTD interventions for vulnerable populations (e.g. nomads, groups in conflict zones, hard-to-reach areas, refugees, etc).

### **What's out of Scope?**

SGP VI funding cannot be used for paying salaries, participating in meetings/conferences, payment of tuition/course fees, purchase of restricted commodities (e.g., contraception, pesticides, pharmaceuticals, vehicles, etc.), and for supporting existing programmatic M&E activities such as, but not limited to, mapping, mass drug administration, transmission assessment surveys (TAS), Kato-Katz impact evaluations, trachoma impact surveys/surveillance surveys, data quality assessments, onchocerciasis impact evaluations, onchocerciasis Stop MDA surveys, coverage surveys, knowledge attitude perception surveys, etc.).

## B. Eligibility

### General criteria:

1. Must be currently employed by or enrolled as a student in an academic, health, or research institution in Africa for the duration of the grant
2. Must demonstrate having a commitment to NTD-related research as well as the skills and experience required to carry out the proposed work
3. Must be able to provide evidence of research output, including publications and/or presentations at scientific conferences
4. Applications are accepted from all African countries. We particularly encourage applications from the following countries that have not yet had an applicant: Algeria, Cabo Verde, Comoros, Djibouti, Equatorial Guinea, Eswatini, Guinea, Lesotho, Mauritania, Mauritius, Morocco, Niger, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, and Tunisia.
5. We especially encourage female researchers to apply.

### Specific to applicants for the junior researchers' grants:

1. Must be an early career researcher, defined as a basic biomedical scientist, clinically qualified investigator, or public health researcher, who has not previously competed successfully as principal investigator for a major research grant (i.e., ≥USD 200,000)
2. Must hold at least a Master's degree or should be actively enrolled in doctoral studies. Applicants holding a doctoral degree (e.g. PhD, DrPH, DSc) must have graduated no more than five years ago. Clinicians (e.g. MBChB, MBBS, MD, DVM holders), who have not completed a Master's degree must have some specialist training (e.g., Membership, Fellowship) or be able to demonstrate relevant research training/experience
3. Must not currently hold positions above lecturer/assistant professor level or equivalent
4. Must be able to provide written evidence of commitment to providing mentorship and supervision from a senior researcher with a track record and ongoing commitment to NTD research.

### Specific to applicants for the mid-career/senior researchers grants:

1. Must be a mid-career/senior researcher, defined as a basic biomedical scientist, clinically qualified investigator, or public health researcher, who has previously competed successfully as principal investigator for a major research grant, but is no more than fifteen years from their highest degree of study
2. Must hold a doctoral degree (e.g. PhD, DrPH, DSc). Clinicians (e.g. MBChB, MBBS, MD, DVM holders), who have not completed a PhD must have completed specialist training (e.g., Fellowship) or be able to demonstrate relevant training tied to research (e.g., MSc, MPhil), or experience
3. Must hold a position no lower than Senior lecturer/Senior Scientific Officer level or equivalent
4. Must demonstrate that they have a track record and ongoing commitment to NTD research
5. Must demonstrate that the intended project is a clearly defined aspect of ongoing research or aimed at answering a new question linked to ongoing research.

## C. Application

### How to apply

1. Access the online application form and instructions [here](#), complete all required sections and submit ahead of the deadline<sup>1</sup>
2. The application form provides a link [here](#) to download a budget template. Complete all required sections by following the funding rules as outlined in the Review Guide and Instructions page of Budget template. Upon completion, please click [here](#) to upload a copy of your budget. Please note that an application without an accompanying budget using the prescribed template will not be reviewed.

### Review of the application will take the following into consideration:

1. Eligibility of the applicant and possession of a qualified team
2. Scientific merit and overall quality of the proposed project
3. Significance of the research and potential impact
4. Potential for scaling up the research<sup>2</sup>
5. Feasibility of the project's successful completion within the 10 months' period of the grant funding
6. Demonstration of reasonable and realistic estimation of costs

An independent panel will review all complete applications submitted, culminating in the preliminary shortlisting of grant awardees. You may download the reviewers' guide [here](#). You are kindly advised to go through the application checklist [here](#) to ensure that you meet all the eligibility criteria and conform to all the requirements. Applications which do not check all the boxes of the checklist will not advance for review. All shortlisted awardees will be supported through training to write and submit a full proposal based on a template. The final award and disbursement of funds will be conditioned on the head of department/unit of the host institution in which this award will be based confirming in writing that the research will be supported with appropriate space and facilities and administered in the name of the organization. In addition, successful applicants for the junior researchers' grants will be required to submit a letter of support from a senior researcher and mentor who will serve as their "research quality guarantor", and will be equally responsible for the success of the research project. Funded research will be closely monitored via bi-weekly calls with the ARNTD Secretariat, submission of quarterly reports, and field monitoring and evaluation visits by the ARNTD where necessary.

Please click [here](#) to find answers to Frequently Asked Questions by previous applicants. For further inquiries, email with the subject line "Inquiry SGP VI" to [secretariat@arntd.org](mailto:secretariat@arntd.org)

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<sup>1</sup> All applications submitted after the deadline of **September 30, 2022 at 17:00 GMT** will not be reviewed, and all unsolicited attachments will not be considered.

<sup>2</sup> We encourage proof-of concept projects which demonstrate potential for scale-up to benefit program implementation (control and elimination of NTDs) as proximally as possible and which could be attractive for later funding from other sources.