



African Researchers' Small Grants Program (SGP VII) Mid-Career Grant Call for Applications

Call opening date: November 08, 2024, 17:00 GMT
Call closing date: December 13, 2024, 17:00 GMT
Maximum funding per grant USD 70,000

Introduction

The African Research Network for Neglected Tropical Diseases (ARNTD), in partnership with the Coalition for Operational Research on Neglected Tropical Diseases (COR-NTD), is seeking for applications for both operational and implementation research for the seventh edition of the Small Grants Program (SGP VII). Through the Ending Tropical Diseases through Operational Research cooperative agreement funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), SGP VII aims to provide support to mid-career African research scientists to contribute to control and elimination agenda by improving neglected tropical disease (NTD) diagnostics, and addressing operational and other programmatic challenges through operational and implementation research portfolios. Research studies to be supported will be aligned with the goals established in the WHO 2030 NTD Roadmap.

Who are the target groups?

This request for applications is targeted at previous SGP grantees (SGP I-VI) who successfully completed and demonstrated excellence in the conduct of their projects. Applicants must meet the criteria as a mid-career researcher or academic based in research institutions or universities in Africa. Applicants will have to demonstrate that the proposed research or activity is aligned with their country's NTD Program interests and has potential for institutional and individual capacity-building impact. Although encouraged, applicants are not restricted to continuing or advancing their previous award research project. However, applicants must demonstrate some level of expertise and record of preliminary work in the chosen research area. Applicants can also demonstrate transferable skills and expertise to a sub/different discipline within the same or different disease area but within the scope of the request for applications. 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 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 supplement a clearly defined aspect of ongoing research or to answer a new question linked to ongoing research being carried out by mid-career researchers;
4. To contribute to strengthening African research institutions by supporting operational and implementation research on NTDs that is locally originated and African-led;
5. To improve South-South communication and collaboration among researchers, policymakers and implementers, and for community participation in research and agenda-setting;
6. To encourage a North-South collaboration model that facilitates productive engagement between researchers and NTD control programs, while promoting 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. Applications must demonstrate significant potential to inform or develop further research activities. The maximum number of awards is two (2) and the program duration is 12 months. Applicants must define clear milestones that will ensure the completion of the projects within the project timeline. This current call primarily targets projects focusing on the five preventive chemotherapy (PC) NTDs (i.e. lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, soil transmitted helminthiasis, schistosomiasis, and trachoma), skin NTDs, and those that aim at improving equitable access to NTD interventions for vulnerable populations (e.g. nomads/migrants, displaced populations, rural/hard-to-reach areas, populations who refuse treatment, and the disabled). Projects focusing on the integration of One Health and Artificial Intelligence (AI) approaches to combating PC and skin NTDs will also be considered. Eligible proposals may focus on:

1. Implementation research that aims to improve the effectiveness of NTD programs. This may include:
 - a. Identifying factors that hinder equitable delivery of NTD program interventions to vulnerable groups.
 - b. Developing, testing, and scaling practical solutions that are evidence-based, adaptive, and context-specific.
 - c. Identifying ways to improve uptake, adaptation, and adoption of existing evidence-based strategies and tools to achieve elimination and control targets.
2. Operational research with potential for generating knowledge that can directly inform programmatic decisions around program monitoring, stopping, and surveillance. Studies to develop or validate innovative new diagnostic technologies to support monitoring and evaluation of NTD programs are especially welcomed.
3. Post-validation and integrated surveillance that aims to identify any resurgence and to ensure infection and transmission remains below elimination thresholds. The types of surveillance that could be implemented, but are not limited to, surveillance of target population groups, xenomonitoring, and cross-sectional surveys.

What's out of Scope?

SGP VII 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.), or for supporting existing programmatic monitoring & evaluation (M&E) activities such as, but not limited to: mapping, mass drug administration (MDA), 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 (KAP) surveys, etc.

Eligibility criteria

1. Must be a mid-career researcher defined as a basic biomedical scientist, clinically qualified investigator, or public health researcher, who has previously successfully completed an SGP research grant as principal investigator.
2. Must hold a doctoral degree (e.g. Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Public Health, Doctor of Sciences). Clinicians (e.g. Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery; Doctor of Medicine; Doctor of Veterinary Medicine) 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., Master of Science, Master of Philosophy) or experience, but must be no more than fifteen years from their highest degree of study.
3. 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.
4. Applicants may pursue a disease, research question, or discipline different from their previous SGP award,
5. All applications submitted after the deadline of December 13, 2024, 17:00 GMT will not be reviewed, and all unsolicited attachments will not be considered.



Applications from all qualified researchers who have had to take career breaks due to health conditions and/or family demands are encouraged.

How to apply

1. Access the online application form and instructions [here](#), complete all required sections and submit on or before the deadline
2. The application form provides a link to download a budget template. This can be accessed [here](#). Complete all required sections by following the funding rules as outlined in the Review Guide and Instructions page of the Budget template. You will be required to upload the budget during the application process. **Please note that an application without an accompanying budget using the prescribed template will be rejected.**

Review of the application will take the following into consideration:

1. Eligibility of the applicant and the strength of their research 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 research¹
5. Feasibility of the project's successful completion within the 12 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 who do not check the required boxes of the checklist will be rejected. All shortlisted awardees will be supported to develop and submit a full proposal using a template that will be provided later. 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. 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. For further inquiries, email with the subject line "Inquiry SGP VII" to secretariat@arntd.org

¹ 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.