

African Researchers' Small Grants Program (SGP VIII) Early-Career Grant Request for Applications

Maximum funding per grant:	\$30,000 (USD)
Maximum number of Awards:	Four (4)
Call Opening date:	July 24, 2026, 16:00 GMT
Call Closing date:	August 24, 2026, 17:00 GMT
Anticipated Announcement of awards:	November 15, 2026, 15:00 GMT

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 pleased to invite applications for the eighth edition of the Small Grants Program (SGP VIII), supporting implementation research. Funded by the UK government's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO) through its Global Research and Technology Development portfolio, the early-career grants component of SGP VIII is designed to support young African research scientists who are building careers in neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) research. The programme aims to strengthen their capacity to address implementation and other programmatic challenges through high-quality implementation research that generates evidence to improve NTD service delivery, policy and decision making.

Who are the target groups?

This call for applications is targeted at outstanding early-career researchers, PhD students, and academics based at research institutions or universities in Africa. Applicants must demonstrate that their proposed research or activity aligns with their country's NTD programme and has clear potential for institutional and individual capacity-building. Applicants must be supported by a senior NTD researcher who is committed to mentorship and skills development. Female applicants and those new to NTD research are particularly encouraged to apply. Applications are accepted in English, French, and Portuguese. However, shortlisted applicants will be required to submit their full proposals and any additional documentation in English to be eligible for the award.

Objectives of the call

1. To increase African leadership, involvement, and visibility in NTD implementation research, including through direct engagement with national NTD programmes;
2. To contribute to improving the research capacity of African NTD researchers and strengthening African research institutions in the process by supporting implementation research on NTDs that is locally originated and African-led;
3. To provide an opportunity for young upcoming researchers not only to gain experience in research, but also in preparation of grant applications and management;
4. To supplement a clearly defined aspect of ongoing research or to answer a new question linked to ongoing research being carried out by early-career researchers;
5. To improve South-South communication and collaboration among researchers, policymakers and implementers, while promoting community participation in research and agenda-setting;
6. To encourage a North-South collaboration model that facilitates productive engagement between researchers and control programmes, while promoting local leadership and ownership of initiatives and activities.

What's in Scope?

To be considered for funding, the proposed research must be informed by existing evidence and identified knowledge gaps. Applications must demonstrate significant potential to inform or develop further research

activities. A maximum of four (4) awards will be made, and each project must be completed within a 10-month period. Applicants must define clear milestones that will ensure the completion of the projects within the project timeline. This call primarily targets projects focusing on **trachoma, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, leprosy, lymphatic filariasis and visceral leishmaniasis**. Eligible proposals may focus on:

- a. Equitable intervention delivery of NTD programme interventions to vulnerable groups, including reaching never-treated populations and special populations (e.g., migrants, mobile populations, etc)
- b. Addressing the unique needs of women and girls within the context of NTD programme interventions
- c. NTD integration into Universal Health Coverage (UHC) and Health Systems Strengthening (HSS)
- d. Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention (MMDP) / Disease Management, Disability and Inclusion (DMDI)
- e. Integration of NTDs into other sectors (e.g., One Health, education, climate health)
- f. Identifying ways to improve uptake, adaptation, and adoption of existing evidence-based strategies and tools to achieve elimination and control targets.

What's out of Scope?

SGP VIII 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, and perception (KAP) surveys, etc.

Eligibility criteria

1. Must be an early-career researcher, defined as a basic biomedical scientist, clinically qualified investigator, or public health researcher, who has not previously successfully completed an SGP research grant as principal investigator or won a research grant worth at least USD 100,000.
2. Must either i) hold a master's degree with demonstrated research experience, ii) currently enrolled in a PhD programme, iii) hold a doctoral degree (e.g. Doctor of Philosophy, Doctor of Public Health, Doctor of Sciences) but must have graduated within the last five years, or iv) be a clinician (e.g. Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery; Doctor of Medicine; Doctor of Veterinary Medicine) with some specialist training (e.g., Membership or Fellowship) or demonstrate relevant research training and experience. For doctoral degree holders who have taken career breaks due to health or family responsibilities, the period of absence from research will be taken into account when assessing the five-year eligibility criteria.
3. Must not currently hold the rank of Associate Professor (or its equivalent), or a more senior academic position.
4. Must provide written evidence of commitment for mentorship and supervision from a senior researcher with a proven track record and ongoing commitment to NTD research.
5. Applications submitted after the deadline of August 24, 2026, 17:00 GMT will not be reviewed. Applications submitted without all the required information and attachments will not be reviewed. Unsolicited attachments received with the application will also not be considered.

Applications from all qualified researchers including those who have taken career breaks due to health conditions and/or family demands are strongly 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 research
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

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

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 that do not address all the requirements in 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. In addition, successful applicants 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 Secretariat where necessary.

Please click [here](#) to find answers to Frequently Asked Questions. For further inquiries, email with the subject line "*Inquiry SGP VIII*" to secretariat@arntd.org