# Establishment of an African Procurement and Supply Chain Observatory for Public Health and R&D Reagents and Laboratory Supplies

Grand Challenges

## Rules & Guidelines

**Applications due no later than May 21, 2026, 11:30 a.m. U.S. Pacific Time**

**Supporting Materials**

1) Full RFP - Establishment of an African Procurement and Supply Chain Observatory for Public Health and R&D Reagents and Laboratory Supplies
2) Application Instructions
3) Budget Template and Narrative
4) Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) Document

**Key dates and deadlines***

| Key Dates | Event |
|---|---|
| April 16, 2026 | Application period opens |
| April 29, 2026, 8:00-9:00 AM Pacific Time | Webinar |
| May 21, 2026, **11:30 a.m. US Pacific Time** | Application period closes, deadline to submit |
| By end of July 2026 | Applicants notified of decisions |
| November 2026 | Estimated start dates |

*Any changes to the Key Dates and Deadlines will be updated on the Grand Challenges website.

**Eligibility Criteria**

To ensure continuity from the stakeholder meeting held in June 2025, the application process is structured around the following criteria:

- Applications for this Grand Challenges RFP are by invitation only, with a limit of one proposal per institution. Consortia of institutions or applicants are strongly encouraged for Option B.
- This Grand Challenge is open to the following types of organizations: non-profit organizations, for-profit companies, academic, research institutions, international organizations, and consortia.
- Individuals and entities treated as individuals for U.S. tax purposes are not eligible for awards under this initiative.

Upon registration, applicants must provide information about the tax status of their organization as different terms and conditions may apply. You should confirm your organization's tax status with the appropriate advisor or entity within your organization such as your grants or contracts department, finance, or office of sponsored research. The foundation may request additional information regarding your tax status. For information about tax statuses, you may check with your own advisors and review information provided on the Internal Revenue Service web site at: www.irs.gov.

**How to Apply**
Please review the Application Instructions as you develop your proposal.

Changes to the Rules and Guidelines and to the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document will be posted periodically, including any changes to the dates listed above. Please read the FAQ document before submitting any questions or concerns.

**Awards**

- **Option A** (**Observatory Platform Hosting Institution**): We will consider proposals requesting up to $750,000 USD with a grant term of up to 36 months.
- **Option B** (**Technical Architecture and Systems Integration Partner**): We will consider proposals requesting up to $1,500,000 USD in total funding, comprising up to $500,000 USD for Phase I and up to $1,000,000 USD for Phase II, over a grant term of up to 24 months. Continued funding for the Technical Architecture and Systems Integration Partner beyond Phase I will be subject to sufficient performance, validation, and achievement of technical and operational milestones. For the estimated start date, please refer to the Rules and Guidelines for this RFP.

Application budgets should be commensurate with the scope of work being proposed. Indirect costs are allowable and should be included within the total requested funding (subject to the Gates Foundation's indirect cost policy).

**Review Process**

*Handling of Applications*
When submitting materials to the Gates Foundation please keep in mind that because we have a focus on achieving charitable outcomes, we view information that we obtain through our grantmaking as a public good. Subject to the Gates Foundation's Privacy Policy, the Gates Foundation may also share information you provide to us (either orally or in writing) with third parties, including external reviewers, consultants, contingent workers, key partners and co-funders. You should assume that nothing will be kept confidential and should not include any information in the proposal, budget, supplemental materials, or reports that you consider proprietary.

Additionally, the foundation is required by the IRS to publish a list of its grants. The foundation also provides general descriptions of its grants on its web sites, in press releases, and in other marketing materials. These Rules and Guidelines are subject to these Terms of Use.

*Review of Applications*
This Grand Challenges application review process will be executed in six steps:

1. Initial Screening
   Applications will undergo an initial screening to assess whether proposals address the key needs outlined in the topic. Submissions that are clearly unrelated will be removed from consideration.

Excluded proposals may include:

- Ideas that are conceptually relevant but not aligned with current strategic priorities of the Grand Challenges initiative
- Lines of inquiry deemed ill-suited to the scope or goals of the initiative

Applicants whose proposals are not advanced beyond this stage will be notified of the decision but will not receive detailed feedback.

2. Expert Review
   In the second step, reviews are chaired or co-chaired by technical leads from the foundation and, in some cases, other funding partners and are conducted by reviewers both outside and within the foundation. For this RFP, reviewers will include foundation staff involved in procurement as well as external experts with subject-matter expertise in PSM. Applicants are encouraged to clearly demonstrate their depth of expertise—particularly for Option B submissions, where strong technical knowledge and experience will be critical for evaluation.

   Proposals will be evaluated based on the following:
   - Eligibility and Alignment
     - Demonstrated compliance with the eligibility criteria outlined in the RFP
     - Clear alignment with the expected roles and deliverables
   - Project Plan
     - Strength of investigator and organizational capabilities, including potential for effective collaboration, to deliver a product that meets RFP specifications on time
     - Budget appropriateness and overall value for money
     - Feasibility of proposed timelines, considering project complexity, risks, and potential impact

3. Shortlisting and Interviews
   Based on the initial review, the top 2–3 proposals within each option will be shortlisted. These teams will be invited to participate in interviews with the Executive Committee to further assess their capabilities, approach, and overall fit.

4. Final Selection and Matching
   Following the interviews, the Executive Committee will recommend the top proposals. The executing teams will then make the final decisions and determine optimal pairings or matches across selected partners, as appropriate.

5. Alignment and Iteration
   Selected teams will be invited to submit a full proposal on Gates Foundation templates and will engage in an iterative process to refine project scope and ensure alignment. This stage may also include engagement with SFA for additional thought partnership and alignment.

6. Due Diligence and Award Finalization
   The final step will include a due diligence review, along with direct discussions to confirm and negotiate any adjustments to the proposed projects.

*Management of Conflict of Interest*
To identify and avoid conflicts of interest among application reviewers, such reviewers will not be permitted to review proposals from organizations with which the reviewer has self-identified conflicts of interest.

**Eligibility and Notifications**
Please review the Gates Foundation's sample terms and conditions. Please note that depending on the tax status of your organization, alternate terms and conditions may apply. Please also review the Gates Foundation's standard Request for Proposal (RFP) Terms and Conditions.

**Privacy Notice and Terms of Use**
When submitting materials to the Foundation please keep in mind that because we have a focus on achieving charitable outcomes, we view information that we obtain through our grantmaking as a public good. Subject to the Gates Foundation's Privacy & Cookies Notice, the Foundation may also share information you provide to us (either orally or in writing) with third parties, including external reviewers, consultants, contingent workers, key partners and co-funders. **You should assume that nothing will be kept confidential and should not include any information in the proposal, budget, supplemental materials, or reports that you consider proprietary.**

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For more information, please review the Grand Challenges Privacy and Terms of Use.

**Representation:**
By providing any Submission Materials, you represent to the Gates Foundation that (i) you have the right to provide any personal information submitted; (ii) you are a duly authorized representative of the Applicant and agree to be bound by the terms set forth above, without amendment and (iii) none of the information in your Submission Materials is confidential or proprietary.

**Frequently Asked Questions**
Answers to many application questions can be found on the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) document.

**Inquiries**
Please direct all questions about this initiative, selection criteria or application instructions by e-mail to the following address: grandchallenges@gatesfoundation.org.