

Metagenomic Next Generation Sequencing to Detect, Identify, and Characterize Pathogens

Frequently Asked Questions

Eligibility

Who is eligible for grants?

This initiative is open to both foreign and domestic organizations, including non-profit organizations, for-profit companies, international organizations, government agencies, and academic institutions. Individuals and organizations classified as individuals for U.S. tax purposes are not eligible to receive an award from the foundation as part of this initiative.

Application Process

What must my application include?

We encourage you to reference the request for proposals overview document and the challenge rules and guidelines to ensure that your proposal responds to the challenge. You are required to submit either a Microsoft Word® or PDF® document; no more than 2 pages in length describing your project as well as a one-page budget table and narrative. Please do not include a cover sheet with your proposal. A cover sheet will be automatically generated from your registration data.

(Indicated page limits are guidelines only for individual sections.)

Proposal Document – 2 pages maximum

1. Introductory information (1/2 page):
 - A short description of the specific problem your proposal addresses
 - Indicate in one or two sentences **in bold** the essence of your idea for a solution (1-2 sentences)
 - Why your idea is unconventional or creative
2. Proposal information (1 page):
 - A clear hypothesis for the proposed work
 - A brief description of the work you will undertake to achieve proof of concept for your idea
 - What essential data you expect to generate
3. Path to impact: What would your next steps be if you are successful in this work? How would you bring your idea to impact? (1/2 page)

Budget Table and Narrative – 1 page maximum

Please use the [budget template](#) (linked and on the application portal) to include a breakdown of allowable direct costs under the following categories. Please include any equipment and/or reagents within your budget.

- Personnel
- Subcontracts
- Subgrants

- Capital Assets/Equipment
- Travel
- Supplies
- Other Expenses
- Indirect Costs (please review the [Indirect Cost Policy](#))

Am I able to edit my proposal once submitted?

Yes, you may edit your proposal up until the specified deadline.

What amount of indirect cost is available?

Details of the foundation indirect cost policy guidelines can be found here:

https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/Documents/Indirect_Cost_Policy.pdf

Review Process

How does the review process work?

The application review process is executed in four steps:

1. The first step consists of screening applications to evaluate whether proposals address the key needs described in the topic. We screen for responses that are completely unrelated or specifically excluded in the topic description. Excluded responses encompass ideas related to the topic but that, for strategic reasons, we are not funding under the Grand Challenges initiative. In addition, we exclude proposals considered incremental advances, appropriate responses that are similar to work in which the foundation or other Grand Challenges programs are already investing, or avenues of inquiry we deem ill-suited to the Grand Challenges initiative. Applicants with proposals removed from consideration during the screening process will be notified that their proposals were declined but will not receive specific feedback.
2. 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. Reviewers are selected from the world’s leading researchers and comprise both experts in the topic area and experts in complementary areas. Not all reviewers have deep expertise in the topic; please consider this information when drafting your proposal.

The criteria considered in these reviews are:

- Potential to lead to solutions with substantial impact related to the specific topic
 - Scientific and technical excellence & innovation, including:
 - creativity of the project’s approach and clear differentiation from existing approaches
 - a clear and rigorous conceptual framework for the activities
 - Project Plan, including:
 - investigator and organization capabilities and potential for collaboration
 - value in terms of appropriateness of the budget and timeline relative to project complexity, risk, and potential impact
3. The third step is the validation and final selection of the proposals to be funded by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may recommend the proposal be funded, subject to specific modifications which will be negotiated as part of the award

process. Organizations invited to submit full proposals will be provided additional technical instructions at that time.

4. The fourth and final step is a due diligence review and to directly discuss and negotiate any adjustments to the proposed project recommended by the Executive Committee. Investigators will be contacted as part of the due diligence review.

Can I get a list of potential reviewers who might be assigned to my application?

No. We do not make public the roster of reviewers.

Can I request that my application not be reviewed by a specific individual?

No. However, we will ask reviewers about conflicts of interest and will not assign reviewers with conflicts.

Will I receive specific feedback on my application if it is not selected?

Due to the rapid proposal and review timelines applicable to this Grand Challenge, applicants with proposals that are not selected for award may receive a notification of decline without specific feedback.

Award Information

Are grant awards made directly to individuals?

No. All awards are made to the organization where the individual holds their primary appointment. Institutions must agree to the terms and conditions governing the grant award prior to award activation.

How much money will each grant provide?

The funding level for the Metagenomic Next Generation Sequencing to Detect, Identify, and Characterize Pathogens Project is **a grant of up to \$200,000 USD, provided to the organization**, with a term of up to 24 months, depending on the scope of the project. Application budgets should be commensurate with the scope of work proposed. Indirect costs should be included the \$200,000 award. (Subject to the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's indirect cost policy](#).)

Where can I find a list of approved sequencers for budgeting purposes?

Please reference this [list of approved sequencers](#).

I already have an approved sequencer; will I need to purchase a new one?

Awardees will not need to purchase a new sequencer.

Technical Support

I forgot my password. How do I reset my password?

You can request to update your password within the application site. If you continue to have issues, please reach out to grandchallenges@gatesfoundation.org.

How will I know if my application was submitted?

Once an application is submitted, an email confirmation will be sent.

I'm having trouble uploading my application file. What should I do?

If you are having issues submitting your application, we would encourage you to submit from a different browser. If the issue persists, please email the specifics of your problem to grandchallenges@gatesfoundation.org.

How often do you intend to update the Frequently Asked Questions, and do you plan to provide answers to all questions submitted?

We will periodically post answers to questions as they are submitted, but do not have a specific schedule. We will provide answers on this page that are of relevance and of general interest to potential applicants. For answers to specific questions that are not covered here, please email grandchallenges@gatesfoundation.org.