

# Covid-19 Pathogen Genomic Sequencing (PGS) in Africa

## Frequently Asked Questions

### **Eligibility**

#### **Who is eligible for grants?**

This initiative is open to Africa-based organizations that have been invited to apply, including non-profit organizations, government agencies, and academic institutions. We will highly preference funding for projects in national public health institutes or other public laboratories with links to the public health systems. Individuals and organization classified as individuals for U.S. tax purposes are not eligible to receive an award from the foundation as part of this initiative. All grant funds would need to be awarded directly to organizations located in Africa.

### **Application Process**

#### **What must my application include?**

We encourage you to reference the request for [proposals document](#) along with the [application instructions document](#) to ensure that your proposal responds to the challenge. You are required to submit either a Microsoft Word® or PDF® document; no more than 3 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 – 3 pages maximum**

Section I: What is your idea and how will you test your hypothesis? (2 ½ pages)

1. Describe how your laboratory and staff can immediately put to use PGS technology at the site to respond to at least one of the challenges listed in the request for proposals document.
2. Given the fast-moving nature of the research field into SARS-CoV-2, how will you ensure that the results that your work produces are timely, and question being addressed is still relevant at the time when the results are available.
3. Work plan: Describe the sampling approach for obtaining specimens for genomic sequencing and how the sampling approach will be optimized to answer at least one of the challenges outlined above. In addition, describe how metadata and clinical, epidemiological, or other data will be collected and combined with the PGS data to answer at least one of the challenges listed in the request for proposals document.
4. Describe how the data generated from your project will be used to inform public health decision making in your country and/or region in a timely manner. How will you communicate your findings and engage with stakeholders to ensure uptake and use of your findings for these public health purposes?
5. Articulate how the capacity built through the proposed project will strengthen your institutions approach to using PGS for surveillance beyond the covid-19 pandemic.

Section II: Scaling Innovations through Partnerships (1/2 page)

We seek to encourage intra-Africa relationships across the continent. Use this section to describe how your project will either build on an existing partnership or start a new one.

## **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.

- 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](https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/Documents/Indirect_Cost_Policy.pdf)

## **Review Process**

### **How does the review process work?**

The Grand Challenges 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

- Applicant's capability to execute the work, and the appropriateness of the budget request.
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.
  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.

**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 Covid-19 Pathogen Genomic Sequencing (PGS) in Africa Project is a **grant of up to \$150,000 USD, provided to the organization**, with a term of up to twelve (12) months. Application budgets should be commensurate with the scope of work proposed. Indirect costs will be considered in addition to the \$150,000 award. (subject to the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's indirect cost policy](#)).

**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](mailto: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](mailto: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](mailto:grandchallenges@gatesfoundation.org).