

# **Strengthening Data Science Capacity and the Ecosystem: Enabling Data-Centered Public Health Interventions**

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

### **Eligibility**

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

Applications are invited from researchers working in healthcare, academia, industry, or research foundations, and will be welcomed from researchers actively working in any of the following regions: Africa, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and Brazil.

We're particularly interested in funding proposals led by early and mid-career researchers from institutions based in the regions mentioned above

#### **How many collaborators should be involved?**

Each proposal should involve a substantial collaboration between at least two research institutions in different countries encompassing Africa, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and Brazil. Each suggested collaboration should be key to advancing the project goals and yield insights that are unlikely in the absence of the co-produced approaches.

#### **Should all my collaborators be working only in regions mentioned in this RFP?**

Each proposal should involve a substantial collaboration between at least two research institutions in different countries encompassing Africa, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and Brazil. In addition, however, applications could include collaborations with institutions in other geographical areas.

#### **Could applications include collaborators from the same country?**

Yes, however each application should involve at least a collaboration with a research institution based in a different country encompassing Africa, India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Nepal, and Brazil. Proposals that solely involve collaborators from multiple institutions from the same country won't be funded.

#### **Who qualifies as early to mid-career researcher?**

We would consider researchers "early to mid-career" if they are more than three years out from their terminal degree (PhD, MD, etc.) or have extensive (between 10 and 20 years) rigorous research experience.

Applicants will need to demonstrate meaningful scientific contributions directly related to the scope of the grant they're applying for.

#### **Do I need to submit any supporting document from my mentor?**

We do not require any supporting document at this stage. You need to provide name and affiliation of your mentor and describe briefly how this mentor would support your proposal. However, we might require, at a later stage, a supporting letter from your mentor.

### **How much time do grantees have to implement their projects?**

Funded projects will have between 18 to 24 months to implement their projects from the date that the grant is awarded.

### **What should be the focus of proposals submitted to this Grand Challenges initiative?**

#### **Would any Data Science project fit in?**

Selected proposals will become part of a coordinated program aiming at Strengthening Data Science Capacity and the Ecosystem to Enable Data-Centred Public Health Interventions. This will include 2 cross cutting cores and 2 data re-use research projects. The focus of your proposal should fit within one of the 3 categories below:

- Capacity strengthening and training core
- Data governance and standards core
- Data re-use research projects

### **Types of proposals**

#### **How does this FRP differ from others?**

This is a coordinated program aiming at Strengthening Data Science Capacity and the Ecosystem to Enable Data-Centred Public Health Interventions. We expect all funded projects to work in close collaboration, to build on existing resources and ongoing initiatives such as the [Data Science Grand Challenges](#).

#### **What if my proposal covers more than one topic?**

If your proposal covers more than one of the areas highlighted in this call, please select the one where you think it fits better.

### **Application Process**

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

##### **Applicant Profile**

To begin your application, please click on the “Apply for this opportunity” button at the top of the challenge page. Through this link, you will be able to access the “Strengthening Data Science Capacity and the Ecosystem: Enabling Data-Centered Public Health Interventions” program. Either create a new account, or log-in to the system if you have previously created an account and begin your application by filing out the applicant profile.

##### **Proposal File – 4 pages maximum**

##### ***Proposal Format***

Your proposal must be formatted as follows.

- No longer than 4 pages maximum
- 11-point font or larger
- At least 0.5” margins all around
- Single line spacing
- Standard character spacing (neither expanded nor condensed)
- Arial or Times New Roman font
- Microsoft Word® or Adobe® PDF filetype

- Entire file size of 3MB or less
- Please do not include a cover sheet with your proposal. A cover sheet will be automatically generated from your registration data.

**Applications that do not adhere to these restrictions may be blocked from submission and review.**

### ***Proposal Content***

Along with this application instructions document, 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 4 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.

**Please include the following in your proposal:** (suggested lengths in parentheses)  
(Indicated page limits are guidelines only for individual sections, but **your entire proposal document may not exceed 4 pages.**)

- 1) **Executive summary (~1/2 page)** The summary should indicate the specific problem that the proposal seeks to address, the approach proposed to solve this problem, and the expected impact of the project – if successful – at the end of the grant period. At the beginning of this section, include one or two sentences in bold that capture the essence of your idea.
- 2) **Proposal information (~ 1.5 pages)**
  - a. Describe the specific goals of the project and how they are responsive to coordinated program objectives noted in the Request for Proposals. Describe how your project would collaborate and support other funded projects, under the 2 other categories, to enable the coordinated program within the two-year funding timeframe?
  - b. Include a brief presentation of any relevant ongoing initiatives and/or existing resources you'll be leveraging.
  - c. Describe the project plan and the key milestones and deliverables your project will generate throughout its lifespan. Include any key dependencies between activities or interim milestones that will influence project decisions or directions.
- 3) **Core team (~1/2 page):** Include a table summarizing the composition of the core team, including their affiliation/s and geographical location, the role of each collaborator and their skills/experience relevant to this call. This should include data partners, if any. Briefly describe the collaboration and how it will contribute to achieving the project goals. This table should include information about your mentor.
- 4) **Data Sources (~1/2 page):**
  - a. If you're applying for a data re-use project, please describe the data you intend to use for this project and include in the description whether you already have access to the data or not. If you're using

multiple data sources, we recommend you include a table summarizing this information.

- b. If you're applying for one of the cores, please include how you intend to leverage data sources used by the data re-use projects and if you plan to use any other data sources.
- 5) **Stakeholders and community engagement (1/2 page):** Describe briefly how you intend to get stakeholders and the wider public/communities involved throughout the process. How would they contribute? How will the project impact them?
- 6) **Path to impact (1/2 page):** What would your next steps be if you are successful in this work? How would this proposal contribute to accelerating data-centered health research and improving health emergency preparedness?

### **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](#))

Additionally, please provide a one (1) paragraph Budget Narrative to explain the major cost drivers, how costs relate to planned activities and target outcomes and how the funding would be distributed across partner organizations.

### **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 application review process is executed in five 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
  - How would the proposal contribute to the coordinated program implementation and building re-usable resources?
  - 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:
    - investigators capabilities and potential for the suggested collaborations to advance the project goals and yield insights that are unlikely in the absence of the collaboration and co-produced approaches
    - value in terms of appropriateness of the budget and timeline relative to project complexity, collaborative aspects, risk, and potential impact
3. Shortlisted proposals may be invited for short interviews. Additional information will be provided to Investigators before the interviews
  4. The fourth 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.
  5. The fifth 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 Global Call to Action, 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 primary applicant 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?**

Successful proposals receive up to USD \$250,000 grant with an 18-to-24-month grant duration.

**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).