

Frequently asked questions

Top questions

Will you provide guidance on an application before I submit it?

No. We cannot provide individual guidance on ideas either before or after submission. You should decide if your idea meets the criteria of one of the available challenges, or [sign up](#) to receive updates on future topics. Pay special attention to sections that indicate what will NOT be considered for funding.

How do I apply for a grant?

See the [GCA Application Instructions](#) page for step-by-step instructions on how to apply for a grant. All applicants must complete the application and submit their idea through our [AAS Ishango Online Application System](#) in order to have their idea considered.

Who is eligible to apply?

The call will be open to African investigators working in African based, domestic organizations, including non-profit organizations, for-profit companies, international organizations, government agencies, research and academic institutions. The call is also open to non-African investigators with an appointment/affiliation with any of the nine Institute Pasteur institutes in Africa, who are resident in Africa, with at least 18 months left on their tenure of service/affiliation by the time of receiving the award.

What are the criteria for selection?

Reviewers will be encouraged to champion proposals according to the following criteria:

- Challenges Responsiveness: Does the proposal address the problems described in the challenge? (Please note each challenge description includes a list of excluded items, typically under the heading "we will not consider funding for");
- Innovative Approach: Does the idea offer an unconventional or creative approach to the problem outlined in the challenge? Does it demonstrate application of a new or pioneering approach? Does the proposal describe how the project varies from current approaches, offers new premises or hypotheses to test, and does it provide a rational basis for expecting success?

The Round is closed. Can I still submit my idea?

- No. We can only accept ideas during an open Round. Any proposals submitted via email or otherwise will not be reviewed. You can see if a current Round is open by visiting our [website](#).

Are the current challenges the only ones under consideration at this time?

The challenges for a current round are listed [here](#). These are the only challenges under consideration at that time. Future rounds of GCA may repeat challenges, have a mix of previous and new challenges or only focus on new challenges. You may find other Grand Challenges funding opportunities from our global partners [here](#).

What if I forget my password?

If you forget your password, click on the "I forgot my password" link on the [AAS Ishango Online Application System](#) and you will be asked the security question you supplied when you first created your account. When you answer the question correctly, a temporary password will be emailed to you. Sign in with this password and then create a new one

What is Grand Challenges Africa?

Grand Challenges Africa is a scheme of the Africa Academy of Sciences' Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESAA) initiated to support the creation of extraordinary innovations that address Africa's health and developmental challenges.

The scheme seeks to promote Africa-led scientific innovations to help countries better achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by awarding seed and full grants to the continent's most impressive solutions.

AESA implements GC Africa in partnership with the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD Agency) the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and other partners.

How much are the Grand Challenges Africa grants?

Phase I grants will be for \$100,000 USD for a grant period of 24 months. Phase I projects that show promise will be eligible to apply for follow-on funding, called "Phase II."

How many awards will be funded?

We anticipate funding up to 20- Phase I awards each round although this number is dependent on the quality of proposals received.

Challenges

What challenges does the initiative address?

Current open Grand Challenges Africa challenges can be viewed [here](#). Future rounds of Grand Challenges Africa may address different challenges.

Who can I contact if I have a question about a particular challenge?

Please submit your challenge-related questions to GCAfrica@aasciences.ac.ke. Due to the volume of requests we will not be able to provide feedback on your individual idea, but we can answer general questions regarding the application process.

Can I submit multiple proposals for the same challenge?

Only one proposal can be submitted per applicant, so please submit your best idea. However, multiple submissions from an institution are allowed. For example, a single lab could apply three times to a single challenge if the principal investigator (PI), a post-doc and a graduate student each submit separate ideas as the lead. Applicants are advised to submit their best ideas as the calls are usually very competitive.

Application Process

Is there a specific format for the application?

Yes, please see a sample of the [Application Form](#) proposals that do not adhere to all restrictions may be disqualified. You must submit your application through our [AAS Ishango Online Application System](#).

Am I able to edit my profile and proposal once submitted?

Yes. You may edit and resubmit proposal content at any time prior to the close of the round.

When will I hear whether or not my application has been selected for funding?

We expect award notifications to be sent out via email approximately five months after the submission deadline.

What feedback can I expect if my proposal is not selected?

We cannot provide feedback specific to the technical content of each proposal. We will, however, communicate with applicants once a decision has been reached.

Are awarded grantees announced publicly?

Yes. We publicly announce winners approximately six months after a round closes.

Do I have to submit my proposal using the online application portal?

Yes. All applications must be submitted through the [AAS Ishango Online Application System](#) Please read the [Rules & Guidelines](#) for further details.

Is it possible to have multiple applicants on a proposal?

Partnerships and collaboration are welcome within a single application. However, applicants need to elect one Principal Investigator per team. If awarded, the grant will be made to the institution of the Principal Investigator. If you're planning to collaborate with another institution on your project, please read the [Rules & Guidelines](#), specifically the section addressing subcontracts, before you apply.

I submitted my proposal but did not receive a confirmation. How would I know if my proposal went through?

Our online system automatically sends an email when you submit your proposal. Occasionally these system generated responses could be tagged as SPAM mail so please check your junk mail folder regularly.

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Review Process

What is the review process?

The review process will be done in three steps:

1. An initial screening for responsiveness to the problem described in the challenge;
2. Evaluation by two groups of reviewers -- one with significant expertise in program management specific to each challenge, and another group of individuals with a history of identifying creative solutions to difficult scientific problems. In each case, reviewers will be encouraged to champion a small number of ideas they consider to be both uniquely innovative and testable;
3. A series of due diligence activities to ensure a legal and financial capacity to perform work described in the proposal.

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- Innovative Approach: Does the idea offer an unconventional or creative approach to the problem outlined in the challenge? Does it demonstrate application of a new or pioneering approach? Does the proposal describe how the project varies from current approaches, offers new premises or hypotheses to test, and does it provide a rational basis for expecting success?

Will my idea be treated as confidential during the review process?

- The AAS/AESA has put in place policies and procedures exclusive to the Grand Challenges Africa initiative that is intended to restrict public dissemination of grant application materials. These policies and procedures include, when possible, having external reviewers sign confidentiality agreements and requiring that reviewers destroy or return to the AAS all copies of information acquired or created during the course of performing a review. In some instances, however, we are unable to put in place confidentiality agreements or to police the use of grant application materials

Grant Terms and Conditions

Do you publish or publicly disseminate proposals or grant applications materials?

The AAS/AESA Data Protection statement sets out what AAS/AESA will do with the information that it collects from you during the grant/award application process and throughout the life of the grant/award (including all information relating to the grant/award application and, as applicable, any subsequent grant/award made).

The AAS/AESA may publish details of successful grants/awards and their outputs, including your name, employing organisation, project title, a summary of the grant/award and its value and, in the case of grants/awards funding research, scientific/academic abstracts and lay summaries of research (e.g. via the internet or via publicly accessible databases or other modes of publicity).

Who signs the grant agreement?

During the application process, you are required to provide your Institutional Officer's information. The Institutional Officer is the person authorized to sign the grant agreement on behalf of your organization. If awarded, all relevant due diligence questionnaires and the grant agreement will be sent to this person. We strongly encourage applicants to provide accurate contact information.

How is intellectual property handled?

We respect the intellectual property of our grantees, but we ask them to structure their IP in a way that allows the developing world to access their drugs, vaccines, diagnostics, or any other health interventions at an affordable price. Our Global Access Objectives aspire to ensure that the poorest of the poor have access to any knowledge or products that we fund. We do not provide a blueprint for exactly how this should be done; we leave that to our partners. Please see [Rules & Guidelines](#) for a full description of the Global Access Objectives.

What are the reporting requirements for these grants?

Annual and Final Financial and Scientific Progress Report will be required from all GCA Phase I grantees. Detailed instructions for the reporting format will be provided post award. Please see the [Rules & Guidelines](#) for a full description of the reporting requirements.

How can I spend my grant funds?

The full terms and conditions of the grant award are detailed in the [Rules & Guidelines](#). Please note that indirect costs are not allowed under GCA Phase I grants.

Are the GCA Phase I initiative open to applicants from outside Africa?

The call will be open to African investigators working in Africa based, domestic organizations, mainly non-profit organizations, international organizations, government agencies, research and academic institutions. The call is also open to African scientists working outside Africa but their proposed work must be in collaboration with an African institution (that will manage the grant if awarded) and must also lead to an innovation that will be implemented in Africa i.e. an innovation suitable for scaling in a low resource setting but which could also be globally applicable. Investigators working for foreign organizations will therefore be required to provide evidence of collaboration with an African-based organization that will test and implement the innovation.

Technical Support

Who can I contact if I have a question about a particular challenge?

Please submit your challenge-related questions to GCAfrica@aasciences.ac.ke. Due to the volume of requests we will not be able to provide feedback on your individual idea, but we can answer general questions regarding the application process.

Where do I go for website related issues?

Please contact GCAfrica@aasciences.ac.ke for questions and issues with using this site.

I can't log in. Where do I get my temporary password?

When you first create an account, a temporary password is sent to the email address you have provided. If the email does not appear in your inbox please check your "Junk Mail" folder. Sometimes emails are blocked by an enterprise level spam filter. When you first log in using your temporary password, you will be prompted to change your password.

What if I forget my password?

If you forget your password, click on the "I forgot my password" link on the [AAS Ishango Online Application System](#), and you will be asked the security question you supplied when you first created your account. When you answer the question correctly, a temporary password will be emailed to you. Sign in with this password and then create a new one.

Does GCA provide Grant Writing support?

We will not provide individual grant writing support for your application. However AESA regularly organizes grant writing workshops and boot camps. Please check our website or sign up to receive our regular newsletters for information on when these training opportunities are announced.

Are there other review criteria other than those outlined in the Rules and Guidelines?

No we do not use any other criteria other than the quality of the application and the provisions outlined in the Rules and Guidelines. Further our policy encourages applications from people from all backgrounds and diversities and we do not discriminate on the basis of geography, nationality, gender, religion, physical or mental attributes .To achieve this ideal of a non –biased merit based review we require that no personal or institutional identifying information is provided in your application.