

GRAND CHALLENGES AFRICA

Inspiring innovation to address Africa's health and developmental challenges

GRAND CHALLENGES AFRICA – INNOVATION SEED GRANTS – Round 1 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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Call Closure date: 17th February 2017

Challenge 2: Finding cutting-edge approaches to advocacy and communication that will motivate citizens of Africa and African governments to support investments in scientific research development and innovation.

The Opportunity

In 1980, African leaders' Lagos Plan of Action^[1] called for countries to allocate at least 1% of gross domestic product (GDP) to Research and Development (R&D), to help spur the continent's development. In 2005 the African Ministerial Council on Science and Technology (AMCOST) endorsed the Science and Technology Consolidated Plan of Action (CPA)^[2], which re-emphasised the investment of 1% of GDP in R&D by the year 2010. The CPA was adopted by the Heads of State and Government in 2007 but to date very few African governments have increased their funding for R&D and only a handful are approaching the 1% target. Reports from the AU suggest that the lag is not primarily the result of limited funding, but of a lack of appreciation for the value of such investments. As a result, policy makers do not give R&D funding priority when developing annual budgets. To achieve targets set for SDG9 and ultimately targets set for MNCH in SDG3, African Governments' must increase investments in science, technology and innovation.

Program Goal

We seek to find cutting-edge approaches to communication and advocacy of scientific research in Africa to increase Government investment in R&D for interventions that seek to reduce childhood mortality, improve maternal health, and combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other communicable and non-communicable diseases. The goal of this call is to ignite new ways of communicating the importance of investments in scientific research and development to motivate African governments and their citizens to support increased investments in scientific R&D from within the continent to complement, and eventually surpass, global/external investments.

What We are Looking For:

- Proposals that deliver innovative ideas, and that show a compelling plan for how to communicate and sustain public engagement around the importance of science and technology investments led by Africa for Africa and with potential global applications;
- Ideas and approaches that demonstrate both the progress made so far by African governments in support of Science Technology and Innovation (STI) and the potential of broad local and external partnerships, and which debunk cynical views about the lack of interest by African governments to invest in Science and Technology and which convince, incentivize and steward African governments to dedicate substantial annual budgets to support Science and Technology programmes.

We Are Accepting Proposals with An Emphasis in Four Areas:

1. **Mobile:** We seek proposals for projects that will activate these rapidly emerging mobile telephony/digital networks and engage users, through basic and smart phone technologies, in ways that build support for science and technology investment in Africa by Africa for Africa. We seek proposals for projects that not only use mobile technology to gather, tell stories and source funding, but also compel people to collaborate and take collective and correctives action.
2. **Data:** We seek proposals for projects that produce new analysis of and insights to existing data about lack of existing science and technology efforts, and that use it to tell compelling, new stories

about how accelerating investments is important to achieving human development and socio-economic impact. We seek proposals that include strategies for how to interpret, visualize, organize and communicate data to broad audiences including policy makers, planners, strategists, development experts, funders, etc.

3. **Young audiences:** We believe it is critical to engage the large demographic dividend that is the youth of Africa in strategies to address Africa's challenges. We seek proposals for projects that will increase innovative ways of disseminating Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) education and enhance youth awareness of the importance of science and technology so they are informed advocates and leaders in creating solutions to locally relevant problems by becoming [Citizen Science](#) themselves. Proposals must include specific information about how to engage the youth, how to attract them into science careers, which youth audiences the project will reach, how it will activate those audiences, and why.
4. **Direct Appeal to African Governments:** When spent wisely consistently and at the right levels, scientific investments in Africa can reverse the economic impact of the huge African disease burden which is roughly estimated to reduce GDP by 20%^[3]. We seek innovative and creative proposals that would make a strong case and direct appeal to African governments to dedicate increased annual funding to research, science and technology in their countries.

We will not consider funding for:

- Projects not aligned with the African Academy of Sciences [strategic goals](#);
- Projects centered entirely around donations made by individuals to support narrowly defined development efforts;
- Projects that do not have a robust engagement strategy;
- Basic research without a clear objective to solve a communications and advocacy problem;
- Projects earmarking African Academy of Sciences funds for lobbying activity (e.g. attempts to influence legislation or legislative action) or efforts to influence political campaigns for public office;
- Projects that focus on a specific location or community, without a plan to expand the program more broadly;
- Projects centered entirely on running workshops without a clear outcome for communication and engagement strategy.

References

1. *Lagos Plan of Action for the Economic Development of Africa, 1980-2000*. (1982). Geneva, Switzerland: International Institute for Labour Studies.
2. Mugabe, J., & Ambali, A. (2006). *Africa's science & technology consolidated plan of action*. Midrand, South Africa: New Partnership for Africa's Development.
3. Fonkwo, P. N. (2008). Pricing infectious disease. The economic and health implications of infectious diseases. *EMBO Reports*, 9. doi:10.1038/embor.2008.110

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