



REPUBLIC OF KENYA



Funding Research for Sustainable Development

CALL FOR CONCEPT NOTES

UPSCALING OF HEALTH RESEARCH PROJECTS – NRF005/2023

1. Background

Access to healthcare services is a basic human right, yet millions of people worldwide are still unable to receive the essential health services they need, as per the World Health Organization (WHO). Like many developing countries, Kenya is working towards achieving Universal health coverage by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The government's recent focus on the healthcare sector is crucial for achieving SDG number 3, which aims to ensure good health and well-being for all. However, according to the Community Health Strategy (2020-2025), Kenya's growing population, increasing healthcare needs, including non-communicable and infectious diseases, as well as the COVID-19 pandemic, have stretched public funding and decreased international funding for healthcare. Therefore, it is essential for the country to collaborate with relevant stakeholders and mobilize research and development resources to maximize the limited available resources and achieve the best health outcomes.

The National Research Fund (NRF) has aligned its research and innovation funding programmes to the set national research priority areas. These priority areas are guided by the country's development goals spelt out in Kenya Vision 2030, Medium Term Plans (MTPs) and the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA). In line with these national priorities, NRF provides research grants to the scientific community to address identified strategic societal challenges through competitive national multidisciplinary research projects, bilateral/multilateral co-funding programmes, institution infrastructure grants, innovations and postgraduate fellowships.

NRF intends to promote public-private sectors' collaborative approaches to upscale the uptake of research outputs to firms in projects that have been previously funded and have commercial & up-scalable potential. The targeted projects for up-scaling will be based on the national priority areas of Health. Increasing investment to support collaborations of knowledge generators and enterprises in these priority areas is a catalyst to spur national growth and accelerate SDG goals addressing good health and well-being.

This nationally rolled-out call is action-oriented and will provide previously funded NRF researchers and innovators in Health with the tools needed to commercialize their research results and connect with potential customers and investors. The call has been developed with the support of Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC) through the Science Granting Councils Initiative (SGCI).

2. Scope

This call for research concept notes targets health projects with a potential multiplier effect on other economic sectors and demonstrates innovative mainstreaming of gender and inclusivity. Some of the areas of focus may include but are not limited to:

- i. Reproductive Health
- ii. Infectious Diseases
- iii. Communicable and Non-Communicable Diseases
- iv. Emerging Health Issues
- v. Mental Disorders
- vi. Vaccines and Immunizations
- vii. Health Systems and Policies
- viii. Health IT

3. Objectives

The objectives of this call are to:

- i. Enhance putting research findings from previously funded health projects into economic and social uses;
- ii. Promote uptake of research outputs by firms;
- iii. Support the scaling up of effective interventions in health priority areas to inform policy;
- iv. Promote public-private partnerships in research and innovation in health;
- v. Enhance gender equality and inclusivity in Research, Science and Technology sectors.

4. Eligibility

The NRF is committed to promoting partnerships between public institutions, researchers and the private health sector industry. Research teams are encouraged to submit concept notes leading to collaborative research projects to ensure the uptake of the potential interventions.

The concept notes to be submitted must consider the following:

- i) Applying teams must have a previously funded NRF project in health;
- ii) Applications must be endorsed by the Chief Executive Officers of the applying institutions.
- iii) The minimum consortium composition must have a university or public research institution and a health sector industry player. Provide a rationale for the formation of

the consortium and a description of their respective roles in the proposed research project;

iv) The proposed research teams will be expected to include the expertise required to deliver quality products. The team should include young career researchers for mentorship.

v) The consortium must describe the governance and co-ordination arrangements necessary to produce quality work and support fair and equitable partnerships;

vi) The applicant must provide a consortium agreement signed by the collaborating institution specifying each party's responsibility in managing the grants and the human resources attached to the project.

vii) The agreement should cover issues of confidentiality, intellectual property rights and publication;

vii) The consortium must clearly identify the project Principal Investigator (PI);

viii) Applications must be submitted by the PI from the lead research-based institution. The lead institution must be registered in Kenya;

ix) The PI will assume responsibility for ensuring that the project activities are appropriately co-ordinated and implemented and will coordinate any necessary communication between the team and the NRF;

x) The PI must be able to assemble a qualified research team that can begin work as soon as the grant is awarded.

Note: NRF strongly encourages the involvement of collaborators from the private sector and international research institutions. Such collaborators are encouraged to contribute additional resources for the projects.

Budget and Grant duration

The budget available for this call is **KES. 30,000,000**. Only two (2) projects will be considered for a grant of up to a maximum of **KES. 15,000,000** each.

The project's expected duration is a maximum of eighteen (18) months. Funding on an individual concept note will depend on the nature and duration of proposed activities and must be justified in terms of resources needed to achieve the objectives of the project. The funding is conditional on the approval of the concept notes' technical and financial aspects. In the award, the value for money will be a key criterion for grant approval.

Applicants for this grant may request funds for the following categories of expenditures: -

i). The direct cost for undertaking research which shall include but not be limited to research equipment, consumables, essential infrastructure and upgrading systems development;

- ii) Research output trials and technology transfer costs;
- iii) Mobility costs (travel, accommodation and subsistence expenses) for project activities for professional and non-professional personnel not exceeding 20% of the total grant;
- iv) Research management costs should not exceed 7.5%;
- v) Costs related to organizing seminars and workshops within the project;
- vi) Capacity building, knowledge sharing and research uptake and dissemination.
- vii) Monitoring and evaluation

The budget application template to submit the research concept notes is available at www.researchfund.go.ke.

6. Application and Review Process

a) Application process:

The concept notes for this call must be submitted by **20th June 2023**. Only successful applicants will be invited to submit full proposals.

Applications should be submitted to grants@researchfund.go.ke.

b) Review process:

In the review of eligible concept notes, the following Evaluation Criteria will be used:

- i) Relevance of proposed research;
- ii) Feasibility;
- iii) The potential impact of the proposed research;
- iv) Suitability of the proposed research design and methodology;
- v) Technical capacity of the research team;
- vi) Inclusivity;
- vii) Sustainability of the project.

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