

Notice of MESA grant availability & application instructions

DESCRIPTION OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY

Researchers are invited to apply for grants from the Malaria Eradication Scientific Alliance (MESA). The aim of these MESA grants is to fund one or more scientific investigation in two research areas pertinent to the science of malaria elimination and eradication. These projects will contribute to MESA's objective of catalysing needed research in malaria eradication science.

These MESA grants will support two malaria eradication research areas: health systems' readiness and measurement of transmission.

KEY AIMS

Proposals addressing health systems' readiness should build on the malaria eradication research agenda.⁽¹⁾ Proposals may include, but are not limited to research that:

- Develops and partly validates structured approaches to establish the minimal essential needs, feasibility and systems readiness for malaria elimination in endemic countries (extended feasibility study).
- Establishes structured approaches to understand where efficacy of interventions is lost (from efficacy to effectiveness or 'efficacy decay analysis').

Proposals addressing measurement of transmission should build on the malaria eradication research agenda.⁽²⁾ Proposals may include, but are not limited to research that:

- Measures the force of infection (incidence of malaria infections/time) in programmatic settings.
- Optimizes malaria surveillance and response approaches.
- Addresses the role of asymptomatic malaria infections in malaria transmission.
- Addresses the relation between population genetic diversity and malaria transmission intensity.

MESA GRANT INFORMATION

The grants available are in the range of 50,000 to 200,000 USD. The expected project period ranges from 6 to 24 months.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

- The principal investigator (PI) and co-PI must be appropriately qualified (scientific expertise and project management experience) to lead the scientific project and to realize the project objectives.
- The host institution (legal entity hosting the PI) may be either a public or private institution (including civil society, industry, medical, military, research) or a public-private partnership.

- The proposed project may or may not have co-funds. Where the project objectives cannot be accomplished without co-funding, evidence of the co-funding is needed.

APPLICATION

The proposal should include:

A. Project summary

The summary is a stand-alone, one page description of the project, which must include the project objectives. If the project is selected for a MESA grant, the project summary will be posted online.

B. Project narrative

- Rationale

Describe the rationale for the project and why it is necessary. Summarize the evidence base for the hypothesis and objectives. Explain how the proposal differs from past work or builds upon it. Describe the importance of the project in relation to the key aims in this call for proposals (above).

- Project goals and objectives

State the long-term, overarching goal(s) of the project. Describe the objectives i.e. the specific outcomes that will be accomplished in order to reach the stated goal(s) and milestones. The objectives must be attainable within the project period and should be specific, measurable, and realistic.

- Project methods and study design

Describe the proposed project activities, the methodology and the analysis plan. Provide a timetable indicating activities. Describe the limitations of the project, potential risks to achieving the project objectives and handling of such risks.

As appropriate to the research project, methodological descriptions may include:

- Experimental plans, technical aspects
- Ethical considerations
- Study setting and participants / model
- Specificity, sensitivity
- Data collection, data management
- Statistical considerations including pertinent sample size calculation and analysis plan
- Where the project proposal is a pilot or proof of concept study, include a description of how the work will be developed.

- Project partners

Describe the role and responsibilities of each party or partner in the project, including the PI and co-PI. Describe the project coordination. Personnel should be clearly identified and should correspond with the budget request (see below).

- Significance

Describe the significance of the project to malaria eradication efforts, its relevance beyond the MESA grant and possible next steps. Include any plans for future funding.

- Peer reviewers

List up to 3 individuals as potential peer reviewers and up to 3 individuals who should not be considered for peer review.

C. Budget

MESA grants may only be used to cover expenditures which are directly relevant to the project and not indirect costs (categories include personnel, supplies, travel costs and other direct costs). The budget spreadsheet should follow the template (available to download) and include unit prices. Requests for salary for personnel must include full time equivalent costs, the % dedication to be directly charged to the project and where possible the name of the person. The narrative supporting the budget must justify the requested budget and demonstrate a clear connection to project activities and objectives.

PROPOSAL APPLICATION CHECKLIST

- ☐ Project proposal (<8 pages Word)
- ☐ Budget (1 page Excel)
- ☐ PI's curriculum vitae (1-2 pages)
- ☐ Co-PI's curriculum vitae (1-2 pages)
- ☐ PI's conflict of interest statement

SUBMISSION INFORMATION

- Please submit your proposal in English.
- The text must be no more than 8 pages in a Word document, Arial font size 12. Figures, tables, budget, CVs and conflict of interest statement are not counted in the 8 page limit.
- The reference list must not exceed 20 references.
- Your budget should use the Excel template (available to download).
- Submission deadline: 21 August 2012, 12 noon CET
- E-mail your proposal to mesa@isglobal.org with subject heading 'Submission of proposal health systems' readiness / measurement of transmission'.
- By submitting a proposal to the call, the PI agrees to the MESA transparency criteria (below).

APPLICATION REVIEW

A. Review process

- The MESA Secretariat performs a preliminary check that the proposal is complete, adheres to the call and to MESA transparency criteria.
- The MESA Steering Committee agrees potential peer reviewers for each proposal.
- A minimum of two peer reviewers appraise each proposal (criteria below).
- The MESA Steering Committee reviews the proposals and the peer reviewer appraisals and takes the final decision on projects to be funded. When a MESA Steering Committee member has potential conflict of interest, s/he will not take part in decision-making for the specific proposal.
- Amendments of the project and/or the budget may be requested before funding.
- The MESA Secretariat informs the PI.
- The list of funded projects is published online.
- The MESA Secretariat administers the grants for the approved projects.

B. Appraisal criteria

- The project makes an important contribution to the understanding of malaria eradication science.
- The rationale and project design are based on the best available evidence.
- The methods and statistical analysis plan are suitable to address the project objectives.
- The project proposal demonstrates reasonable indications of feasibility and objectives are achievable.
- Ethical issues are adequately addressed.

- The project team includes active participation of scientists and/or scientific institutions from malaria endemic countries.
- The project team, resources and budget are well-suited to the project and the accomplishment of the project objectives in the project period.
- Equal opportunities.
- Capacity building in malaria endemic countries.

C. Transparency criteria

PIs awarded MESA grants agree:

- That the project summary is posted online.
- To present their work during a MESA-organised meeting.

PIs awarded MESA grants commit to:

- Publishing the results of the project irrespective of the findings (as far as possible in an open access journal).
- Providing access to the raw, anonymised data for secondary analysis once the study is completed.
- Declaring sources of co-funding.

AWARD ADMINISTRATION

- Successful PIs will be emailed. PIs whose projects are not selected for funding will not receive e-mail notification.
- The MESA Secretariat administers the grants for all approved projects.
- The project period for selected projects begins on the date the grant agreement is signed by the MESA Secretariat.
- PIs are required to submit a final scientific and financial report after 30 days of the end of the project period to the MESA Secretariat. PIs may be asked to submit a mid-term report in addition.

CONTACT

For further information on MESA please consult www.isglobal.org and contact the MESA Secretariat at:

mesa@isglobal.org

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1. The malERA Consultative Group on Health Systems and Operational Research (2011) A Research Agenda for Malaria Eradication: Health Systems and Operational Research. PLoS Med 8(1): e1000397. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000397
2. The malERA Consultative Group on Monitoring, Evaluation, and Surveillance (2011) A Research Agenda for Malaria Eradication: Monitoring, Evaluation, and Surveillance. PLoS Med 8(1): e1000400. doi:10.1371/journal.pmed.1000400