Scope document – Africa Open Lab Call for Proposals

GSK Africa Open Lab call for applications Jul 2025–Sept 2025

The GSK Africa Open Lab's next call for research proposals focused on funding innovative high-quality infectious disease research is now open with up to **£100,000** available per award. The aim is to fund projects whilst supporting the professional development of future African research leaders based in Sub–Saharan Africa (SSA).

The deadline for submitting applications is **3rd September 2025** at 17:00 GMT.

The research projects

Your project must meet the following criteria.

Research proposal of relevance to the understanding of the following disease areas:

- Malaria
- Tuberculosis or drug-resistant tuberculosis
- Drug resistant bacterial infections
- Enteric infections

Malaria (may include but not limited to research addressing)

Epidemiology (characterisation) in children hospitalised due to malarial anaemia and severe malaria, with focus on management of those discharged with anaemia (e.g. description of preventive malaria treatment and treatment outcome)

Treatment of malaria with artemisinin-based combination therapy (ACTs):

- Level of compliance with ACTs
- Risk factors that lower compliance and their link to treatment outcomes in a real-world setting
- Resistance to ACT

Seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC) and perennial prevention of malaria

- Level of resistance to drug used in SMC
- Cost of delivering SMC and cost of care of a malaria case and the impact to caregivers and the affected individuals
- Risk factors that lower compliance (inc. different populations) and their link to treatment outcomes in a real-world setting

Description of standard of care and treatment seeking behaviours and dynamics

Diagnosis of malaria. Detection of low level parasitaemia in asymptomatic carriers. Detection of mixed infections; prevalence of non-falciparum malaria

Treatment for P. vivax/ovale radical cure. Evidence of chloroquine resistant strains. Risk factors for effective treatment (compliance, G6PDH deficiency)

Effectiveness of vaccines

Approaches to increase the uptake of malaria vaccine and other interventions

Biology of vectors

Tuberculosis or drug-resistant tuberculosis (may include but not limited to research addressing)

Understanding prevalence of isoniazid (H) resistance and the influence of H resistance in HRZE treatment outcomes

Understanding prevalence, characteristics, clinical outcomes of extensively resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) and pre-XDR TB

Understanding emergence of resistance to newer therapies

Level of compliance to TB treatment: drug sensitive, drug resistant and TB preventative treatment

Risk factors that lower compliance (inc. different populations) and their link to treatment outcomes in a real-world setting

Drug resistant bacterial infections (may include but not limited to research addressing)

Phenotypic and genomic surveillance of AMR and surveillance of AMU (anti-microbial use), anti-microbial access and stewardship

Resistance mechanisms of priority bacterial pathogens (as identified by the WHO)

Impact of vaccines, WASH and Infection, Prevention and Control (IPC)

Wastewater based epidemiology of AMR

AMR at One Health interface

Enteric infections (may include but not limited to research addressing)

Typhoid fever, paratyphoid fever, NTS diseases

Prevalence, incidence, and/or case fatality of typhoid fever, paratyphoid fever, invasive non-typhoidal Salmonella (iNTS)

Disease in different real-world settings (with focus on children under 5 years with granular data by month of age in first year), possibly including prevalence and incidence of disease caused by drug resistant strains

Cost of the illness possibly from different perspectives (healthcare system, societal)

iNTS disease – Proportion of carriers of nontyphoidal Salmonella (NTS) among population, mode of transmission and reservoir

Surveillance of potential Salmonella serovar replacement following introduction of Typhoid conjugate vaccine (TCV) vaccines

- Case fatality rate of enterocolitis disease due to Non Typhoidal Salmonella
- Treatment of infections caused by Salmonella with focus on outcomes of treatment and resistance to antibiotics

Epidemiology of viral infections (rotavirus/ norovirus).

Research may address one or more of the following:

- infectious disease epidemiology, pathophysiology, aetiology or prevention and treatment of primary disease
- significant gaps in knowledge about the diversity and causes of disease, their presentation, variations in clinical features and responses to medicines and vaccines
- mechanisms for improving access to and appropriate use of medicines and vaccines

Research can include studies addressing the emergence of antimicrobial resistance linked to these infectious diseases, antibiotic stewardship and initiatives that seek to optimise the access to and use of existing and new antimicrobial therapeutics, diagnostics and vaccines in SSA.

Research should generate significant data to strengthen further funding proposals that could lead to additional grant funding from other organisations and/or research collaborations in the longer term

- Proposals must demonstrate the specific health needs their research will address and how they will engage with specific stakeholders to bring about change in health policy and practice.
- Proposals nested in ongoing trials must include a statement from the PI of the main study confirming the study is complementary and not overlapping with the primary aim of the parent study. The PI should also confirm the availability of samples for their use.
- Applicants are strongly advised to ensure that they meet the eligibility criteria before applying

Projects focused on drug or vaccine discovery or those using animal models will not be considered for this round.

Eligibility

The applicant - you must meet **all** of the following criteria:

- The principal investigator must be an African scientist in the early stages of their research and academic career, defined as: a basic biomedical scientist, clinically qualified investigator, or public health researcher, who has not previously competed successfully as principal investigator for a major research grant (>£100,000); not being more than 5 years past their last postgraduate degree (career breaks, clinical roles and time out of academic research will be taken into consideration)
- The minimum formal qualification required is a graduate degree. Most applicants will be expected to have a MSc, PhD, Pharm D or an MD. Applicants can hold a lecturer appointment, a junior fellowship, or be in another research staff position
- Must demonstrate that they have a track record and ongoing commitment to health-related research and the skills and experience required to carry out the proposed work. Evidence of research output, including publications in peer reviewed journals (including at least one publication as first or last author), conference publications, presentations at scientific conferences, input into clinical guidelines or policy documents is required
- Employed by a research or academic institution in SSA which will act as the sponsor to the investigator for the duration of the award. Investigators from all qualifying institutions are welcome to apply. Additionally, applications are strongly encouraged from investigators from historically underrepresented population groups and institutions
- A national of a sub-Saharan African country and based in an institution in SSA
- Unsuccessful applicants from previous calls who are still eligible to apply may submit a new application.
- Clinicians are strongly encouraged to apply.

The award - what's included?

- The award will offer funding to cover the costs of an appropriate research project including costs for equipment, field work and data collection, consumables and research assistance. This may also include relevant training and opportunities for dissemination of the project work in consultation with GSK
- In addition to financial support:
    - Also available are funded opportunities for training activities relevant to achieving the aims of the project or research career development, including short courses and training visits to relevant research institutions in consultation with GSK.
    - GSK will provide scientific support throughout the duration of the award term. The level of interaction will be determined through the application process and will be tailored to the individual needs of the project. GSK will explore links with scientists from academic and research groups in Africa and globally to provide additional mentorship to successful applicants. All shortlisted applicants may request for statistical support at this stage. The same offer of support will be made available to all shortlisted applicants at that stage.
- Funding is **not** provided for degree/fellowships tuition fees
- Up to £100,000 available per award to cover a project for up to 36 months.

How to apply

Applications for research grants will be subject to a 2-stage review process (concept and full proposal). Only those successful at the concept stage will be invited to submit a full application. Recommendations for award funding will be made based on scientific merit.

How to apply:

Please go to the GSK Supported Studies website available GSK's Supported Studies Program**.** Register and submit the completed preliminary concept application on the website under **Africa Open Lab** accompanied by your CV (Please use the CV Template provided).

The selection process

Completed concept proposals will be assessed by a scientific panel including the scientific advisory board of African infectious disease experts and academics from other institutions. Successful candidates will be invited to submit a full application. Please note that we will **not** provide written feedback for unsuccessful applications at the preliminary (concept) application stage.

Reviewers will typically assess:

- The eligibility of the applicant
- The scientific merit of the proposed project
- The potential impact of the research on health policy and practice
- The potential for scaling up the research or findings
- A skills development plan
- The impact of the project on your career development into an independent researcher.

Contact details

For IT and program related queries contact the Supported Studies team: supported.studies@gsk.com