



Call for Proposals for Junior Fellowships commencing April 2012

The European Foundations Initiative for African Research into Neglected Tropical Diseases (EFINTD) is a response from five European Foundations – Cariplo, Gulbenkian, Merieux, Nuffield and Volkswagen – to tackling the ill health and impoverishment caused by a group of 17 infectious diseases. These neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) affect more than one billion people worldwide, mainly in Africa and mostly living in extreme poverty. Beyond their negative impact on health, NTDs contribute to an ongoing cycle of poverty and stigma that leaves its victims unable to work, go to school or participate in family and community life.

EFINTD's specific objective is to strengthen African research capacity in neglected tropical diseases and related public health research. The main vehicle of support is its Fellowship Programme. The EFINTD Fellowship Programme aims to build up a cadre of African researchers in the field, strengthening African research institutions in the process. It fosters the development of translational or operational research into NTDs in Sub-Saharan Africa that is locally originated and locally led. As well as funding pure scientific research, for example on how effective various drugs are, the EFINTD Fellowship Programme seeks to strengthen public health research, for instance on drug delivery systems.

The EFINTD Fellowship Programme is supporting fellowships both for junior researchers who have recently completed their doctorate studies and experienced researchers ready to take on larger research programmes.

This open call for proposals is for Junior Fellowships. Other arrangements are being made for existing EFINTD Junior Fellows to apply for Senior Fellowships.

There is a three stage application and selection process for these Junior Fellowships. The deadline for Stage 1 is 30 June 2011

The EFINTD Fellowship Programme

- provides funding for three year Fellowships for outstanding young post-doctoral African researchers from Sub-Saharan Africa to carry out applied research at African research institutions.
- focuses on translational or operational research questions. Proposals are welcome that address the public health issues related to preventing and treating neglected communicable tropical diseases, including those from social scientists, such as medical anthropologists, as well as from biomedical researchers.

- draws on collaboration between African and European research institutions, with the Fellow determining with which European institution he/she proposes to collaborate and on what research issues and topics.
- provides for additional support to the Fellows beyond salary, travel and research costs through mentorship from leading African and non-African scientists, networking opportunities and training in key career skills such as proposal writing and getting work published.

Eligibility:

1 Applicants

Applicants for Junior Fellowships must be postdoctoral researchers from Sub-Saharan Africa with less than 3 years experience after the completion of the PhD (or equivalent). The necessary degree (MD or PhD) must be granted by the time of the final interview stage (end of March 2012).

Applicants from Sub-Saharan countries outside South Africa and applicants returning to Sub-Saharan countries are particularly encouraged to apply.

2 Projects

The Programme focuses on neglected communicable tropical diseases relevant to Africa Including, where appropriate, their vectors. These include schistosomiasis, the filariases, soil transmitted helminths, buruli ulcer, human trypanosomiasis, onchocerciasis as well as bacterial meningitis, viral diarrhoea. Projects on HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria will NOT be considered unless, in exceptional cases, the candidate is aiming at the development of new methods and techniques that might be directly transferable to other tropical diseases or is addressing coinfection between these diseases and NTDs. In such cases the candidate must demonstrate that support for their project is not available in dedicated funding portfolios of other organisations focussing on these diseases.

These biomedical or related public health research projects must address priority translational or operational research questions in the African context. To provide a relevant framework for the research, projects should preferably be linked to ongoing health development programmes which are delivering interventions. Clinical trials without significant basic research components will not be considered.

The work should also aim at the development and establishment of new methods/techniques and/or address research questions related to diagnosis/surveillance, treatment and/or prevention. Where appropriate, projects should bridge biomedical and public health research questions.

Please note, that whilst the Fellow is the lead researcher on the project, the work must involve collaboration with a research institution in Europe.

3 Location

The research must be based at and carried out within an African host institution. Scientific visits to non-African research institutions may be included but must not exceed more than 4 months annually.

Mentorship Programme

A key feature of these Fellowships is the funding provided for personal mentorships. Through the Mentorship Programme, the Fellow can establish links to two leading scientists of her/his choice - one from an African and one from a non-African institution. The mentorships are intended to extend the Fellow's scientific networks and skills base. Up to 10,000 EUR can be applied for under the Mentorship Programme for meetings between the Fellow and the mentor at one or the other's institution.

The mentors must agree to act as supporters for the Fellow – assisting with their career development through, for instance, introducing them to peer networks and helping them to publish in international journals. They should not be supervisors or main collaborators in the project and they should not be based at the Fellow's host institution.

Fellowship Funding

The official grant recipient will be the scientific host institution at which the Fellow will be employed. Basic infrastructure should be provided by the host African institutions; the Fellowship can include administrative costs for the host institution up to a maximum of 5,000 EUR.

The Junior Fellowship covers salary, research and travel costs up to a maximum of 90,000 EUR over 3 years. In addition, up to 10,000 EUR for an optional Mentorship Programme can be applied for.

The budget items must be justified by the applicant and can include:

- Salary of Fellow (depending on customary local salaries and experience).
- Travelling to conferences/workshops.
- Scientific visits to African/non-African institutions of up to 3-4 months per year.
- Additional Mentorship Programme (optional, max. 10,000 EUR).
- Language courses or courses for project management.
- Consumables.
- Costs of field work (but not vehicle purchase). Publication costs.
- Small items of equipment (max. 20 % of total budget).

Application and Selection Process:

This is a three-stage process. Applicants cannot proceed to the second or third stages unless they have been invited to do so.

Stage 1: Submission of an outline application

Outline applications must include all of the following:

- Short CV of applicant (max. 2 pages).
- A summary of the applicant's current work (max. 1,000 words).
- A short summary of the proposed research (max. 1,000 words).

The outline application must be sent by 30 June 2011 to ntd@nuffieldfoundation.org.

Outline applications will be evaluated by an international scientific expert committee, and decisions communicated by Mid-October 2011.

Stage 2: Submission of a full proposal

Applicants who successfully pass the first selection phase will be invited to submit a full proposal. These full proposals will undergo an international review process. Details of the requirements for this stage will be sent in mid-October 2010 to the successful applicants from the first stage; they will include:

- Project description with:
- A research proposal written in English of not more than 4,500 words.
- A detailed work plan including timelines.
- A detailed budget.
- A description of the African-European and intra-African collaborations.
- A CV – no more than 2 pages.
- A statement about the importance of the research issue and if possible evidence that the research issue is a priority for the Ministry of Health.
- Evidence that the applicant has been accepted as a prospective colleague by an existing working group at the African host institution.
- Letter of support from the African host institution stating that it will provide the basic infrastructure, and specifying the logistic or financial support it will provide the applicant.

Full proposals will need to be submitted by 16 December 2011.

Stage 3:

Applicants who submit full proposals will be invited to the conference “EFINTD 2012”ⁱ, to present their project and for interview by an international peer-review committee. Final decisions on Fellowship grants will be made after the conference.

Timetable for Applications:

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| 30 June 2011 | Deadline for outline applications |
| Mid-October 2011 | Decisions on outline applications |
| 15 December 2011 | Deadline for submission of full proposals |
| February 2012 | Conference “EFIND 2012” and final selection of applicants |
| March/April 2012 | Fellowships awarded |

Further Information

For further information about the Fellowship Programme, please contact the respective programme manager of one of the participating foundations:

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| Nuffield Foundation | Sarah Lock | slock@nuffieldfoundation.org |
| Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian | Maria Hermínia Cabral | mhcabral@gulbenkian.pt |
| Fondazione Cariplo | Riccardo Porro | riccardoporro@fondazionecariplo.it |
| Volkswagen Foundation | Detlef Hanne | hanne@volkswagenstiftung.de |
| Fondation Merieux | Martina Gliber | martina.gliber@fondation-merieux.org |

ⁱ EFINTD 2012 is currently scheduled for February 2012 and will take place in Africa, the location to be confirmed.