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Applications close at 11:59 pm UTC on 15th September 2021

Global Grants for Gut Health

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Guidelines for applicants

Introduction

The Global Grants for Gut Health is a competitive programme for investigator initiated research into the human gut microbiota, supported by Yakult and Nature Research. In 2021, the Global Grants for Gut Health will consider proposals for one-year research projects that advance understanding of the role of the early life microbiome in human health.

The fund is open to eligible researchers from across the world. The programme will make a maximum of three awards per funding cycle, each of up to US$100,000. Research projects should be one year in duration.

Eligibility

Applicants should be employed by a university, research institute or any other not-for-profit organisation. Applicants must hold a doctorate or medical degree (e.g., PhD, MD, PharmD) and have at least five years' postdoctoral research experience.

The awards are global, so applicants can be of any nationality and projects can be hosted at eligible organisations in any country apart from Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Sudan, Syria or where otherwise prohibited or restricted by law or where otherwise prohibited or restricted by law as updated from time to time.

The programme is open to applicants from all scientific disciplines.

Assessment process & criteria

All proposals will first be evaluated by scientific peer reviewers on the basis of the originality and scientific quality of the project. A shortlist of proposals will then be assessed by an independent, expert panel on the basis of all four of the criteria below. The panel is made up of internationally renowned researchers in human microbiota from across the world. Panel members will review shortlisted proposals individually ahead of a meeting of the full panel to discuss the merits of proposals in detail. The panel will then decide which proposals to fund. Yakult and Nature Research employees will have no influence over funding decisions.

Proposals will be assessed against the following criteria:

1

Quality and originality of the science
Research funded under the programme must contribute to knowledge of the human microbiota. Research Proposals should explain the originality of the proposed research. This may include novel insights into the human microbiota or the development of novel techniques. Research Proposals must set out well-designed, robust studies using the most appropriate methodologies, equipment, data and analytical techniques to reach the stated objectives.

2

Potential scientific and social impact
Research Proposals should set out the importance of the contribution they will make. For example, the research may directly answer key questions, develop techniques to further probe crucial aspects of the human microbiota or address unmet challenges or opportunities. The ultimate aim of the scheme is to benefit society and patients through improved knowledge, tools and techniques to understand and address gut health.

3

Quality of the applicant/team and value for money
The applicant (and other team members) must have the necessary skills and experience to carry out the research, both in terms of the science and the leadership of a research grant. This will be judged on the track record of the applicant(s) and the appropriateness of the host universities and institutes. The project budget must be clearly explained and will be judged on the appropriateness to deliver the proposed programme of research. The panel may also consider how the project will be managed to ensure the resources are deployed effectively.

4

Emphasis on mechanisms of action
The research proposal should have an emphasis on elucidating the mechanism or mechanisms of action understanding of the role of the early life microbiome in human health, rather than simply describing and characterising composition and function of the microbiome and linking it to diseases, risk and symptoms.

Costs

Funds can be used to cover the following eligible costs:

1. **Direct costs of research**
   - Salaries of the principal investigator and other team members. It is expected that awards will cover a percentage of investigators' time. Awards are not intended to buy out 100% of investigators' time. Research assistants may be employed on a full-time basis.
   - The costs of consumables, materials, supplies, software and small, non-capital equipment (up to US$10,000) required to deliver the project and associated activities.
   - Travel and subsistence for team members as required to deliver the project and associated dissemination activities. This is not intended to cover normal living expenses.
   - Publication costs.
   - Ethical approval and other licence fees.
   - Consultancy and subcontracting fees.
2. **Indirect costs or institutional overheads**
   - In addition, applicants may apply for a further amount, equivalent to 10% of the requested direct costs of research, to cover indirect costs if such a contribution is required by their institution.

The following costs are not eligible:

- Capital equipment over US $10,000.
- Education costs.
- Accommodation and normal living costs.

How to apply

[Print this guide](#)

Applicants need to complete their application via the Nature Research portal on the Submittable platform. Submittable is a user-friendly electronic submission management system used for all of Nature Research's grants and awards programmes.

Application process

1. "Research Proposal Title " - the title of your Research Proposal must be completed and the terms and conditions accepted before you can move onto other sections of the application process. At this stage, you are also required to warrant that your institution has seen and given 'in principle' approval to the standard Funding Agreement associated with this grant programme.
2. The creator of the proposal will automatically be considered the principal investigator.
3. The home institution of the principal investigator will be considered the Lead Institution.
4. Research Proposal Summary:
   The Research Proposal Summary (600 words) should include: the Context; Objectives; Research Design and Methodology; Project Team; and Dissemination and Impact Plan.
5. Research Proposal and Supporting Documents:
   Your research proposal will be entered directly into Submittable. Any supporting documents, such as CVs, must use a clear font such as Arial, no smaller than 11pt and with margins of at least 2cm on all sides. Supporting

documents should be uploaded to Submittable as .pdf files.

"Budget" – Enter the budgeted costs for your Research Proposal line-by-line using the form provided. All costs must be in US dollars. Total direct cost budgets must not exceed $100,000 for the 12 month period of research. Applicants may include a request for indirect costs to support institutional overheads. Indirect costs must not exceed 10% of the total budgeted direct costs.

"Budget Summary" - the Budget Summary section provides a snapshot of your budget request.

6. Budget
Enter the budgeted costs for your Research Proposal line-by-line using the form provided. All costs must be in US dollars. Total direct cost budgets must not exceed $100,000 for the 12 month period of research. Applicants may include a request for indirect costs to support institutional overheads. Indirect costs must not exceed 10% of the total budgeted direct costs.

7. Budget Summary
The Budget Summary is entered directly into Submittable and provides a snapshot of your budget request.

8. Validation & Signature
Once you have completed your application, you will be asked to enter the contact details of the Signing Official at the Lead Institution, including their email address. When you submit your application, an email will be automatically generated, asking the Signing Official to countersign your application. They will also be asked to confirm that their office has been provided with a copy of the draft funding agreement and given in-principle approval.

9. Submit
To submit your proposal, please click the Submit button. You will be unable to Submit if you have not provided all the required information. Upon successful submission, a confirmation message will be displayed on the screen and a confirmation email will be sent to the Principal Investigator.

Terms and conditions for applicants

Download terms and conditions

Applicants and their institutions must read and agree to the terms and conditions of the scheme.
Download

Funding agreement

Download funding agreement

Applicants must submit a copy of the funding agreement to the contracts office or other authorised office of their institution for approval before submitting their application. Successful grantees will be required to sign the funding agreement prior to receiving funds.
Download

Key Dates

Applications for the next round of funding open at 11:59 pm UTC on 16 June 2021 and close at 11:59 pm UTC on 15th September 2021.

The grants will be announced by April 2022.

Reporting and monitoring

The grant holder must submit a mid-term report by the end of month six. Mid-term reports will be submitted to the grant administrator by email, be equivalent to no more than three sides of A4, and should include:

- Grant number and title.
- Summary of project progress with reference to original aims and timelines.
- Findings and outputs to date.
- Summary of any challenges.
- Work still to be done including any revised timelines.
- Planned publications and outputs.

The grant holder must submit a final report within two months of the end of the Award unless otherwise agreed by the Funder. Final reports will be submitted to the grant administrator by email, be equivalent to 6 pages A4, and should

include:

- Grant number and title
- Details of project progress with reference to original aims and timelines.
- Details of resulting data, analysis and findings
- Details of outputs to date.
- Further planned publications and outputs.
- Details of challenges.
- Opportunities to continue the current project or for future follow-on work.
- A statement of expenditure.

Ethics and integrity

The grant holder and the lead institution must meet all relevant ethical, legal and regulatory requirements to undertake the research, be they local, national or international. Approvals must be granted before research begins.

Where research involves the use of human participants, tissue or data the Institution and the Award Holder must comply with the Declaration of Helsinki.

Where research involves the use of animals the Institution and the Award Holder must work to the NC3Rs "Animal Research: Reporting In Vivo Experiments" (ARRIVE) guidelines.

The Institution and the Award Holder must make every effort to comply with the NC3Rs ambitions to "replace, refine and reduce" the use of live animals in research.

The grant holder and the lead institution must have in place and follow formal procedures governing good research practice. This should cover issues including fabrication, falsification, plagiarism, misrepresentation, conflicts of interest and breach of ethical guidelines or duty of care.

Publication

The grant holder and lead institution should make results generated through the grant available to the broader scientific community through publication in journals, reports, at scientific meetings and through other appropriate routes.

The grant holder and lead institution must acknowledge support received from the Funder in publications and other forms of communication including media appearances and press releases.

Grant holders are free to publish results arising from the grant in the most appropriate journals. There is no expectation or requirement that research will be published in journals owned or managed by Springer Nature. Where manuscripts are submitted to Springer Nature journals, they will be subjected to the same editorial and review processes and standards as any other submission.

Applicants can request Article Processing Charges for open access publications as part of the direct costs on their research proposal.

The grant holder should follow good publication practice as set out by, for example, the Committee on Publication Ethics and the Council of Science Editors.

Grant holders will be interviewed by Nature Research as part of a series of Q&A articles about funded projects.

Yakult and Nature Research will periodically hold symposia, usually aligned with a relevant conference, to bring grant holders together and to showcase research funded under the programme. Grant holders should make every effort to attend these meetings in order to present their findings.

Intellectual property

The grant holder and lead institution should make every reasonable effort to ensure that the results of the research contribute to academic advancement and, where possible, to the benefit of wider society and the economy. Results should be communicated to academic and non-academic audiences as required to maximise potential benefits.

The funder claims no rights to the ownership or use of results generated though the grant. Ownership of the results, and any associated intellectual property rights, rests with the organisation generating them.

Arrangements for exploitation must not hinder further academic research and dissemination.

Contact

gutgrants@springernature.com

[Frequently asked questions](#)

Global Grants for Gut Health

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