

R10 MILLION TO SUPPORT INNOVATIVE HEALTH TECHNOLOGIES IN MATERNAL AND NEONATAL CARE ACROSS AFRICA

Prominent research and development agencies have formed an intra-African collaboration in an effort to fund, conduct and facilitate research projects that will effectively target the continent's shared challenges in the area of maternal, neonatal and child health (MNCH).

Estimates show that more than half of the global maternal deaths and more than three-quarters of neonatal deaths occur in sub-Saharan Africa. Although South Africa has in the past decade made some progress in reducing maternal and child mortality, the levels remain unacceptably high. The leading causes of death in children under 5 years in South Africa include HIV/AIDS, diarrheal disease, lower respiratory infections, birth asphyxia, and injuries.

Cross-border projects that are designed to tackle the continent's shared maternal health challenges are encouraged. These should enable the development of management and analytical tools as well as intervention packages that will effectively change the tide in maternal and child mortality on the African continent.

The partnership between the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC), the African Academy of Sciences and the NEPAD Agency's Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESAI) will work to create local and global partnerships and accelerate knowledge generation on the African continent.

It will fund Grand Challenges Africa Round 1 Innovations Seed Grants (ISG) through its Grand Challenges South Africa scheme to support innovators based in South African universities, public research organizations and nonprofit organizations.

Successful applicants will be awarded up to US\$100,000 as part of the first round of the Grand Challenges Africa Innovation Grants, which was launched in November 2016 under the Grand Challenges Africa scheme. The Grand Challenges Africa Innovation Grants will run for the next five years and comprise of the Grand Challenges Africa Innovation Seed Grants (GCA-ISG) and provide funding for scaling up innovations.

Grand Challenges Africa is pleased to be partnering with the SAMRC to expand the GC Africa Innovation Grants. The partnership allows for more innovators to be funded in the first round of

the grants ensuring a stronger and concerted effort to find solutions for Africa's challenges, particularly to improve the survival and health of mothers, their newborns and young children.

NOTE:

AESA's Grand Challenges Africa and the SAMRC's Grand Challenges South Africa programs are part of global Grand Challenges <<http://grandchallenges.org/>>, a family of initiatives fostering innovation to solve key health and development problems.

Researchers can obtain further information including rules and guidelines and apply for the Grand Challenges Africa Innovation Seed Grants at www.mrc.ac.za and <http://aasciences.ac.ke/aesa/programmes/grand-challenges-africa/> by the **deadline of 17 February 2017**.

GRAND CHALLENGES SOUTH AFRICA

The South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) was established in 1969 with a mandate to improve the health of the country's population, through research, development and technology transfer, so that people can enjoy a better quality of life. It is implementing the Grand Challenges South Africa: All Children Thriving, which is designed to meet the Sustainable Development Goal 3 target for maternal, neonatal and child health in Africa in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This goal seeks to stimulate new approaches, interventions, tools and new combinations of existing approaches to ensure that Africa progresses rapidly to address challenges in MNCH. GC South Africa has funded four projects. Visit www.mrc.ac.za to find out more about the projects.

GRAND CHALLENGES AFRICA

The Grand Challenges family of initiatives seeks to engage innovators from around the world to solve science, technology and innovation, health and developmental challenges. Grand Challenges initiatives are united by their focus on fostering innovation, directing research to where it will have the most impact, and serving those most in need.

The Grand Challenges Africa scheme is part of the global Grand Challenges family and seeks to promote Africa-led scientific

innovations to help countries better achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by awarding seed and scale-up grants to the continent's most impressive solutions. The Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESA) implements GC Africa in partnership with the New Partnership for Africa's Development Agency and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Issued by:

Keletso Ratsela

Media Strategist

Mobile: +27 71 214 5272

Email: keletso.ratsela@mrc.ac.za

Deborah-Fay Ndlovu

Communication Manager

Tel: +254 727 660 760 | +254 20 806 0674

Email: d.ndlovu@aasciences.ac.ke