

Request for Proposal for RIGHT Fund Product Development Award

RF-PDA-2021-001_RFP

The RIGHT investments for real impact

In this 2021 call for proposals, we are seeking to fund proposals to develop health-related technologies at or near clinical development or validation phase, with a path to impact on public health and health equity globally.

RIGHT Fund background

The current pandemic has taught us that, with political will and resources, R&D from both the life science and the traditionally non-life science disciplines can be accelerated at a scale previously unimaginable to produce tools critical for preventing and controlling infectious diseases: a leading cause of deaths worldwide, disproportionately affecting low-income countries.

At the same time, it revealed profound limitations of the way in which R&D is currently pursued globally for achieving health equity. It underscores the importance of intersectoral and international collaborations in strengthening capabilities for developing health-related tools as a global public good with a focus on equity.

The RIGHT Fund was established as a partnership between the Korean government, pharmaceutical companies, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) with the Government of Korea as the largest funder. The partnership strives to deliver innovative technologies to prevent and control infectious diseases that are of a global concern particularly in low-resource settings. Examples include but are not limited to therapeutics, vaccines, diagnostics, and digital health platforms that can support an effective public health response against infectious diseases. In this RFP, we are seeking partnerships between Korean and non-Korean researchers and product developers to develop and implement effective and affordable health care technologies that can contribute to improving health and health equity globally. Investigators from the WHO bank-defined low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) are particularly welcome and encouraged.

Collaborations between investigators are a crucial component of the proposals and applicants should outline a concrete framework for the collaboration between partners, as well as articulate how the proposed collaboration would enable a path to impact on public health and health equity between and within countries. The grant will be managed by the RIGHT Fund with payment contingencies well-coordinated to ensure that key milestones are met, and that the collaborative nature of each grant is maintained.

1. Investment eligibility

Mandatory requirement

RIGHT Fund investments will be awarded to existing or new partnerships that *includes at least one Korean entity* with a capacity of health intervention R&D and the expertise to identify projects that represent substantial additions to the field (Table 2.1).

RIGHT Fund seeks to fund studies aimed at developing or optimizing tool to support efforts to prevent and control infectious diseases that disproportionately affect the LMICs, with a clearly articulated path to equitable delivery of the proposed products or platforms in LMICs.

Table 2.1 Eligible partnerships

| Korean entity | Non-Korean entity |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Korean corporations (or entities with a research facility in Korea) • Not-for-profit research organizations and foundations • Government research institutions • Academic institutions | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Life Science/Healthcare companies • Not-for-profit research organizations and foundations • Product Development Partnerships • Government research institutions • Academic institutions |

Eligibility criteria: The RIGHT Fund reserves the right to determine eligibility of applicants and public health priority among proposals at its discretion.

Acceptance of Global Access Policy: All existing and future partners within the partnership will also be required to sign Global Access Agreements to provide access to relevant data, intellectual property, and product use. Proposals should clearly describe how the approach can achieve the objective of ensuring that the intended product(s) be made available and accessible at reasonable cost to people most in need. RIGHT Fund’s access policies can be viewed at <https://rightfund.org/en/access-policy/>.

2. Funding opportunity

Target diseases: Infectious diseases endemic and emerging in LMICs

Technology Interventions: Vaccines, Therapeutics, Diagnostics, and Digital Health

Award amount: RIGHT Fund will invest up to 50% of total project cost up to 4 billion Korean won (approximately equivalent to US\$ 4 million) per project over the funding period

Project duration: The duration of the funding is up to 3 years (36 months).

Focus areas and Development stages:

- Three main focus areas: New approaches or constructs, improvement of products or data systems, equitable access
- Development stages:
 - 1) Therapeutics and Vaccines: Projects at clinical development stages (i.e., Phase I and onward)
 - 2) Diagnostics and Digital Health: Projects for which the proof of principle have been successfully demonstrated and are near or at clinical validation and/or development phase (i.e., development phase and beyond).

Table 3.1 Main Focus Areas

| | Vaccines | Therapeutics | Diagnostics | Digital Health |
|--|---|--|--|---|
| New approaches or constructs | -New vaccines for target diseases -New pediatric combination vaccines | -New chemical or biological approaches to currently unmet needs | -New diagnostics and/or those that can improve efficiency of treatments -New low-cost Point of Care tests | - ICT (Information & Communications Technology) applications for equitable access tools or surveillance |
| Improvement of products or data systems | -Improvements in immunization schedule, production method, thermostability, route of administration, and/or reduced number of doses | - Incrementally modified drugs (i.e. new dosage forms, drug combinations, reformulations) -New treatment regimens and modifications that improve drug uptake and outcomes | - Improvements in existing diagnostics for use in low resourced countries | - Improvements in existing digital health platforms for use in low-resource settings |

| | | | | |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|--|
| Equitable Access | -Interventions seeking or nearing WHO PQ(Pre-qualification) -Lower cost manufacturing platforms | -Interventions seeking or nearing WHO PQ -Lower cost manufacturing platforms | -Lower cost diagnostic tools for use in low-resource settings | -Innovative platforms to support data systems to share and transmit data to guide public health response and/or to improve access to health services |
|-------------------------|--|---|---|--|

Exclusions:

- Requests for capital equipment.

3. Interventions for target diseases and pathogens

4.1 Therapeutics (drugs)

Examples of what we are looking for include but are not limited to:

New approaches or constructs:

New therapeutic options (chemical or biological) to treat target diseases with an interest in approaches which cannot be addressed or explored with current agents or technologies. We will also consider approaches to prevent or significantly moderate infection and the spread of disease.

Improvement of products or data systems

- Proposals for reformulation of existing drugs with primary focus on new indications, paediatric formulations and/or lower dosage that maintains or improves efficacy.
- Incrementally modified drugs (e.g. new drug combinations demonstrating better safety, efficacy, and utility) for use in low resourced countries.
- Cost reduction constructs in production of small molecules and/or biologics.

Equitable access

- Interventions seeking or nearing WHO PQ(Pre-qualification).
- Lower cost manufacturing platform for producing small molecules or biologics for target diseases.

We will not consider funding for:

- Any basic research or discovery phase or preclinical phase proposals (drug screening, in vitro efficacy testing).
- Proposals for setting up research facilities or capital equipment.

4.2 Vaccines

Examples of what we are looking for include but are not limited to:

New approaches or constructs:

- Novel concepts, antigens, and candidate vaccines that can serve as transformative tools in the efforts to prevent, control, infectious diseases of a global concern, and have already completed proof-of-concept in pre-clinical models. The scope of vaccine concepts may include individually targeted global health pathogens (e.g., SARS-CoV-2) and/or new pediatric combination vaccines.
- Technology developments (i.e., devices or formulations) for administration of nucleic acid vaccines in LMICs.

Improvement of products or data systems

- Improvements in existing vaccines (or combinations) with respect to immunization schedule, production methods, thermostability (cold chain), route of administration (e.g., oral, Microneedle Array Patch technology) aimed at increasing equitable access

Equitable access

- Interventions seeking or nearing WHO PQ
- Manufacturing innovations that lower the cost of new or existing vaccines.

We will not consider funding for:

- Proposals aimed at generating proof-of-concept data in animal models.
- Vaccine concepts not based on an explicit hypothesis or rationale for improved efficacy and/or ease of use over other candidates currently in development.
- Basic research studies of pathogen or human biology or antibody screening that are pre-FIH (First-in-human).
- Proposals for setting up research facilities or acquisition of capital equipment.

4.3 Diagnostics & Surveillance tools

Examples of what we are looking for include but are not limited to

New approaches or constructs:

- New diagnostics tools not currently available to or affordable for LMICs.
- Diagnostics which can significantly aid in clinical management of infectious diseases that disproportionately affect LMICs by improving pathogen detection or by predicting risk of severe disease to guide clinical management.
- Focus on Point of Care diagnostic preferable but not a requirement.
- Tools that can support the local public health authorities in generating and sharing surveillance data across the health system to guide policy response.

Improvement of products or data systems

- Improvements in existing diagnostics and/or platform capabilities for use in low resourced countries (i.e., lateral flow tests, improved sensitivity).

Equitable access

- Diagnostics platform that can reduce delay to treatment especially for the marginalized populations

What we will not consider funding for:

- Proposals for basic automated platform technologies that are not practical for or affordable to low-resource settings.

4.4 Digital Health

Examples of what we are looking for include but are not limited to:

New approaches or constructs:

- Novel data analytics platforms (e.g. artificial intelligence, machine learning) that can securely store and integrate individual-level data into the population-level data to guide public health response against infectious diseases at a systems level.
- Data system to support the current infectious disease prevention and control programs in LMICs.
- Data system to support the delivery of health services to marginalized communities

Improvement of products or data systems

- Improvements to existing digital health platforms for use in low-resource settings.

Equitable access

- Innovative platforms to support data systems to share and transmit data to guide public health response and/or to improve access to health services

4.4 Appendix

Summary of abbreviations

| | |
|-------------|--|
| BMGF | Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation |
| FIH | First in Human |
| ICT | Information and Communication Technology |
| PDA | Product Development Award |
| PDP | Product Development Partners |
| POC | Point of Care |
| RFP | Request for Proposal |
| WHO | World Health Organization |

4. ITA (Intent to Apply) Submission

- **Deadline: 10:00AM KST on November 19th, 2021**
- **Where to submit:** Interested applicants must visit the RIGHT Fund's website (<http://www.rightfund.org/>) and follow the RFP instructions.

[End of Document]