

# Novel Interventions Targeting Placental and Gut Inflammation to Improve Fetal Growth

## Grand Challenges

### Rules & Guidelines

Applications due no later than April 28 2026, 11:30 a.m. U.S. Pacific Time

#### Supporting Materials

- 1) Full RFP – [Novel Interventions Targeting Placental and Gut Inflammation to Improve Fetal Growth](#)
- 2) [Application Instructions](#)
- 3) [Budget Template and Narrative](#)
- 4) [FAQ Document](#)

#### Key dates and deadlines\*

| Key Dates                               | Event   |
|---|---|
| March 17, 2026                          | Application period opens                      |
| April 28 2026, <b>11:30 a.m. US PST</b> | Application period closes, deadline to submit |
| March 23, <b>8:30-9:30 a.m. US PST</b>  | Webinar                                       |
| By end of July 2026                     | Applicants notified of decisions              |
| Nov 2026                                | Estimated start dates                         |

\*Any changes to the Key Dates and Deadlines will be updated on the Grand Challenges website.

#### Eligibility Criteria

This Grand Challenge is open to global applicants including non-profit organizations, for-profit companies, academic, research institutions, international organizations and consortia Collaboration with global south institutions and local investigators is strongly encouraged to ensure relevance and respect local context. Individuals and organizations classified as individuals for U.S. tax purposes are not eligible to receive an award from the foundation as part of this initiative.

Upon registration, applicants must provide information about the tax status of their organization as different terms and conditions may apply. You should confirm your organization’s tax status with the appropriate advisor or entity within your organization such as your grants or contracts department, finance, or office of sponsored research. The foundation may request additional information regarding your tax status. For information about tax statuses, you may check with your own advisors and review information provided on the Internal Revenue Service web site at: [www.irs.gov](http://www.irs.gov).

## How to Apply

Please review the [Application Instructions](#) as you develop your proposal.

Changes to the [Rules and Guidelines](#) and to the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) document will be posted periodically, including any changes to the dates listed above. Please read the FAQ document before submitting any questions or concerns.

## Funding Level and Duration

| <b>Option</b>  | <b>Scope</b>  | <b>Target (summary)</b>   | <b>Funding</b>             | <b>Duration</b>        |
|----------------|---|---|----------------------------|------------------------|
| <i>Track 1</i> | <b>Mechanism &amp; Target Discovery</b>                     | Validated inflammatory and/or oxidative stress pathway linked to placental or maternal gut biology; $\geq 1$ prioritized, actionable target nominated; defined biomarker framework; quantitative go/no-go criteria for advancement        | Up to <b>US\$400,000</b>   | Up to <b>18 months</b> |
| <i>Track 2</i> | <b>Candidate Validation &amp; Translational Advancement</b> | Defined intervention candidate (novel or repurposed); biomarker-linked biological activity demonstrated in established models; mechanistic validation; advancement-ready translational data package; scalability considerations addressed | Up to <b>US\$750,000</b>   | Up to <b>24 months</b> |
| <i>Track 3</i> | <b>Early Clinical Proof-of-Concept (POC)</b>                | Early human evidence of target engagement and/or biomarker modulation; safety and feasibility data; defined progression criteria for Phase II or larger efficacy evaluation   | Up to <b>US\$1,000,000</b> | Up to <b>30 months</b> |

Budgets should be commensurate with proposed work and justified in the context of deliverables. [Indirect costs](#) should not exceed standard institutional policy thresholds (e.g., 10–15% if applicable).

## Review Process

### *Handling of Applications*

When submitting materials to the Gates Foundation please keep in mind that because we have a focus on achieving charitable outcomes, we view information that we obtain through our grantmaking as a public good. Subject to the [Gates Foundation's Privacy Policy](#), the Gates Foundation may also share information you provide to us (either orally or in writing) with third parties, including external reviewers, consultants, contingent workers, key partners and co-funders. You should assume that nothing will be

kept confidential and should not include any information in the proposal, budget, supplemental materials, or reports that you consider proprietary.

Additionally, the foundation is required by the IRS to publish a list of its grants. The foundation also provides general descriptions of its grants on its web sites, in press releases, and in other marketing materials. These Rules and Guidelines are subject to these [Terms of Use](#).

### *Review of Applications*

The Grand Challenges application review process is executed in four steps:

1. The first step consists of screening applications to evaluate whether proposals address the key needs described in the topic. We screen for responses that are completely unrelated or specifically excluded. Excluded responses encompass ideas related to the topic but that, for strategic reasons, we are not funding under the Grand Challenges initiative. In addition, we exclude proposals that are considered incremental advances, appropriate responses that are similar to work in which the foundation or other Grand Challenges programs are already investing, or avenues of inquiry we deem ill-suited to the Grand Challenges initiative. Applicants with proposals removed from consideration during the screening process will be notified that their proposals were declined but will not receive specific feedback.
2. In the second step, reviews are chaired or co-chaired by technical leads from the foundation and, in some cases, other funding partners and are conducted by reviewers both outside and within the foundation. Reviewers are selected from the world's leading researchers and comprise both experts in the topic area and experts in complementary areas. Not all reviewers have deep expertise in the topic; please consider this information when drafting your proposal.

The criteria considered in these reviews are:

- Scientific and technical merit of the proposed intervention approach.
  - Feasibility and clarity of the research plan and milestones.
  - Relevance to FGR, gut-placental inflammatory axis and oxidative stress, supported by evidence and biological plausibility.
  - Potential for scalability and impact in global south settings.
  - Team expertise and capacity to execute the project within budget and timeline.
3. The third step is the validation and final selection of the proposals to be funded by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee may recommend the proposal be funded, subject to specific modifications which will be negotiated as part of the award process. Organizations invited to submit full proposals will be provided additional technical instructions at that time.
  4. The fourth and final step is a due diligence review and to directly discuss and negotiate any adjustments to the proposed project recommended by the Executive Committee. Investigators will be contacted as part of the due diligence review.

### *Management of Conflict of Interest*

To identify and avoid conflicts of interest among application reviewers, such reviewers will not be permitted to review proposals from organizations with which the reviewer has self-identified conflicts of interest.

## **Eligibility and Notifications**

Please review the [Gates Foundation's sample terms and conditions](#). Please note that depending on the tax status of your organization, alternate terms and conditions may apply. Please also review the [Gates Foundation's standard Request for Proposal \(RFP\) Terms and Conditions](#).

## **Privacy Notice and Terms of Use**

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For more information, please review the [Grand Challenges Privacy and Terms of Use](#).

## **Representation:**

By providing any Submission Materials, you represent to the Gates Foundation that (i) you have the right to provide any personal information submitted; (ii) you are a duly authorized representative of the Applicant and agree to be bound by the terms set forth above, without amendment and (iii) none of the information in your Submission Materials is confidential or proprietary.

## **Frequently Asked Questions**

Answers to many application questions can be found on the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) document.

## **Inquiries**

Please direct all questions about this initiative, selection criteria or application instructions by e-mail to the following address: [grandchallenges@gatesfoundation.org](mailto:grandchallenges@gatesfoundation.org).