

July 2022

## Call for research proposals on skin-related Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) CfP-NTD2023

*DIORAPHTE – [www.dioraphte.nl](http://www.dioraphte.nl) - a private charitable foundation in the Netherlands, has established a fully funded research programme for Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) with a specific focus on Skin NTDs.*

### **Background – Neglected Tropical Diseases and skin diseases**

Skin diseases are among the most common of all human health afflictions and affect almost 900 million people in the world with five common conditions accounting for over 80% of these. Skin diseases caused by NTDs are included in the new WHO Road Map for NTDs (2021-2030) and have recently been given a high and comprehensive profile for a platform by WHO (2022), including Buruli ulcer, cutaneous leishmaniasis, post kala-azar dermal leishmaniasis, leprosy, lymphatic filariasis, mycetoma, onchocerciasis, scabies and yaws.

Skin diseases rarely cause mortality, rather they disfigure, stigmatise and disable patients, resulting in serious social and economic cost and psychological damage. Despite this, skin NTDs have attracted significantly less research funding than other NTDs. Most skin NTDs lack drugs, treatments, diagnostics, or vaccines because their discovery and development requires new and improved tools. In turn progress has been limited by a poor understanding of skin immunology, disease pathogenesis, vaccine interactions, and drug pharmacokinetics and pharmaceuticals. The broader implications of more basic research on neglected skin diseases includes the potential for translation into other global infections of concern, such as nosocomial and both multidrug resistance (MDR) bacterial and MDR fungal infections.

### **References**

- 1: Ending the neglect to attain the Sustainable Development Goals: a road map for neglected tropical diseases 2021–2030. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020. Accessible at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240010352>
2. Ending the neglect to attain the Sustainable Development Goals: a strategic framework for integrated control and management of skin-related neglected tropical diseases. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. Accessible at <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240051423>
3. Hay RJ, Johns NE, Williams HC, Bolliger IW, Dellavalle RP, Margolis DJ, Marks R et al. (2014) The global burden of skin disease in 2010: an analysis of the prevalence and impact of skin conditions. *J Invest Dermatol.* 134:1527–34. doi:10.1038/jid.2013.446.
- 4: Mitjà O, Marks M, Bertran L, Kollie K, Argaw D, Fahal AH, et al. (2017) Integrated Control and Management of Neglected Tropical Skin Diseases. *PLoS Negl Trop Dis* 11(1):e0005136. doi:10.1371/journal.pntd.0005136.

## Priority areas for funding

The Dioraphte Foundation has decided to continue its support for translational and applied research on Skin-related NTDs. In this 3<sup>rd</sup> call for research proposals the foundation will give priority to five areas of investigation:

- (i) Immunology, pathology or metabolic processes during infection that could lead to improved drugs, treatments, diagnostics or vaccines.
- (ii) Improved experimental or population models of skin infection to support research into improved drugs, treatments, diagnostics or vaccines.
- (iii) Innovative approaches to the discovery, development and implementation for use of drugs, diagnostics or vaccines.
- (iv) Underlying pathology in diverse endemic populations that determines variation in response to diagnostics, drugs or vaccines.
- (v) Role of skin commensals and co-infections in disease.

Proposals are encouraged that:

- link groups with expertise in NTDs to those with expertise in skin research, in academic, public or private sectors.
- clearly state the potential for eventual application and beneficial impact on the control of skin diseases.
- include key partners from endemic countries with laboratory and field roles and responsibilities.

In this 3<sup>rd</sup> call 1.7 million euros will be available to fund 2-4 proposals. Proposals should be for 2 to 4 years with a maximum budget of 850,000 Euros per proposal.

## Outline of Call Proposal Process and Evaluation

There will be a two-stage call, with:

- (a) **A first request** for a short application (max 5 pages) outlining the importance of the research question in relation to specified skin NTD(s), objectives, research plan, experience of partners, potential impact and outcomes, overall budget and timelines.
- (b) From the initial submissions 5 to 8 proposals will be selected and invited to submit **a full application** with the aim of funding two to four projects. This will also require details of project management, risk management, other funding supporting the team's work, and the next steps to be taken if the research is successful.

Application information is available on the Dioraphte website at the following page; [Science and Research – Stichting Dioraphte](#).

The initial review and evaluation of the short applications will be undertaken by a panel of at least three scientists with the relevant background, experience and reputation. The full application will be submitted for external review to a further three scientists with the appropriate specialist expertise. The recommendation of the panel will be submitted to the Dioraphte Board for approval.



### **Timetable**

The 1<sup>st</sup> stage brief application should be submitted to [jasmijnmelse@dioraphte.nl](mailto:jasmijnmelse@dioraphte.nl) by 4<sup>th</sup> of November 2022 6pm CEST.

The 1<sup>st</sup> stage review process will be completed and successful applicants informed by 31<sup>st</sup> of January 2023.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> stage full application should be submitted to [jasmijnmelse@dioraphte.nl](mailto:jasmijnmelse@dioraphte.nl) by 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2023.

Successful applicants will be informed the first week of July 2023.

Further enquiries about the call should be addressed to [jasmijnmelse@dioraphte.nl](mailto:jasmijnmelse@dioraphte.nl).