



June 2024

Call for research proposals on skin-related Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) CfP-NTD2025

DIORAPHTE - <http://www.dioraphte.nl/en> - 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). Skin NTDs include 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 and disease pathogenesis, identifying biomarkers of infection, and tools for measuring skin 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.

Priority areas for funding

The Dioraphte Foundation has decided to continue its support for translational and applied research on skin-related NTDs worldwide. In this 4th call for research proposals, the foundation will support preclinical, clinical and operational research, such as:

- (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 and development of drugs, diagnostics or vaccines.
- (iv) Underlying pathology in diverse endemic populations for development of diagnostics, drugs or vaccines based on (genetic) variations in responses.
- (v) Role of skin commensals and co-infections in disease.

Proposals are encouraged that:

- Align with priorities included in the [WHO NTD road map](#).
- Link multidisciplinary groups with expertise in skin NTDs to those having expertise in skin research, in academic, public or private sectors.
- Clearly state the potential for eventual application and implementation for the control of skin NTDs.
- Promote scientific leadership in endemic countries.

In this 4th call, € 2.7 million will be available to fund two different types of proposals:

- € 1,800,000 will be available for two large proposals, which should be for 2 to 4 years with a maximum budget of € 900,000 per proposal.
- Based on experience in previous calls, we envisage scope for smaller grants that would aim to address research questions that require relatively lesser funding. Therefore, an additional € 900,000 will be made available for three smaller proposals, which should be for 2 to 4 years with a maximum budget of € 300,000 per proposal.

Both the large and small grant proposals will be evaluated in a two-stage process, 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, 6 large and 9 small grant proposals will be selected and invited to submit **a full application** with the aim of funding 2 large and 3 smaller projects. The full application will also require details of project management, risk management, other existing 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:

<https://www.dioraphte.nl/en/science-research/>

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

Timetable

Call opens June 12, 2024.

The 1st stage brief application should be submitted to **postbus@dioraphte.nl**

Deadline 4th of October 2024 6pm CEST.

The 1st stage review process will be completed and successful applicants informed by 15th of November 2024.

The 2nd stage full application should be submitted to **postbus@dioraphte.nl**

Deadline 28th of February 2025 6pm CEST.

Successful applicants will be informed 30th of June 2025.

Further enquiries about the call should be addressed to jasmijnmelse@dioraphte.nl

References

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3. Global report on neglected tropical diseases 2024. Accessible at <https://www.who.int/teams/control-of-neglected-tropical-diseases/global-report-on-neglected-tropical-diseases-2024>
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5. 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.