GUIDELINES FOR GRANT APPLICATIONS TO THE NESTLÉ FOUNDATION

1. General Information about the Foundation

Origin and nature

The *Nestlé Foundation for the Study of Problems of Nutrition in the World* was established in 1966 by a donation by the Nestlé Company on the occasion of its centenary. The Foundation is independent and self-constituting and is managed by a Council consisting of at least 5 internationally well-known scientists as Council Members. The Foundation is and has been financially and operationally independent of the Nestlé Company since its inception. The offices of the Nestlé Foundation are in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Purpose

The Nestlé Foundation initiates and supports research in human nutrition with public health relevance in low-income and lower middle-income countries according to the World Bank classification (see http://www.worldbank.org). The results of the research projects should ideally provide a basis for implementation and action which will lead to sustainable effects in the studied populations as generally applicable to the population at large. They should also enable institution strengthening and capacity building in a sustainable manner in the host country and further cooperation and collaboration between Institutions in developed and developing countries .

The Foundation expects research proposals to be primarily the initiative of local researchers from the developing countries. However the Foundation will be inclined to consider favorably those applications jointly made by scientists from developed countries with those from developing countries provided it is clear that the initiative will result in capacity building and human resource development in the latter and the bulk of the budget is spent in the developing country.

Current funding policy

Sustainable improvement in human nutrition is one of the major issues in the portfolio of the Foundation. During more than 40 years basic and applied

research in nutrition has been supported by the Foundation in more than 50 developing countries. In view of the past activities of the Foundation as well as the world's situation at the turn of the millennium, it was recognized that the public health relevance of the supported research as well as aspects of sustainability, capacity building and educational issues should have a higher priority. Thus, priority is given to projects which lead to sustainable developments with strong elements of capacity building, and the implementation of the results of a research project should be immediate and sustainable. Highly sophisticated nutrition research of mainly academic interest without public health relevance has lower priority for support as well as solely laboratory based studies or animal experimentation.

Research Topics

At present the Foundation's work is primarily concerned with human nutrition research issues dealing with:

- **maternal and child nutrition, including breastfeeding and complementary feeding,**
- **macro- and micronutrient deficiencies and imbalances,**
- **interactions between infection and nutrition, and**
- **nutrition education and health promotion.**

The precise priorities and goals of the Foundation are modified from time to time to meet emerging public health and nutritional needs in the developing world.

Studies in other areas of human nutrition research might also be considered, as long as they are dealing with problems of malnutrition in eligible countries (see above). Other areas of research may be eventually considered for support if the applicant can offer specific and convincing evidence and justification for the choice of their research topic.

Funded projects are usually of one- to three-year duration. Projects with a high potential for effective and sustainable improvement of the nutritional status as well as a high capacity building component will be funded preferentially. The budget of the projects must be appropriate and reasonable and has to be justified in detail.

One of the Foundation's main aims is the transfer of scientific and technological knowledge to target countries. In cases where Foundation-sponsored research projects are realized in collaboration with scientists at universities and research

institutes in high-income countries, at least 75% of the budget has to be earmarked for use within the low-income country.

Research grant applications from high-income countries are normally not considered except under rare and exceptional conditions.

The Foundation does *not normally* fund:

(1) projects with low public health relevance

(2) projects with doubtful sustainability

(3) projects lacking transfer of scientific, technical and educational knowledge, i.e. lacking a capacity-building component

(4) large budget projects i.e. – projects that exceed US$100,000 per year or US$ 300,000 over the total duration ofa 3year project

(5) nutrition surveys or surveillance studies

(6) research on food policy, food production and food technology except when linked to an intervention with high potential for sustainable improvement of the nutritional status

(7) in vitro and/or animal experiments.

Although obesity and related diseases are of emerging importance in several low-income countries, the Foundation does not generally support projects in this specific area unless the proposal demonstrates linkages with under nutrition, the protocol is innovative and exceptionally well justified.

Eligible Institutions

Eligible institutions are departments or institutes from universities, hospitals other institutions of higher education in low- or lower middle-income countries. Joint applications from more than once institution (especially South-South) are welcomed. Joint applications from more than one institution involving a North-South collaboration may also be considered. For project applications demonstrating North-South collaboration, it is important that the following criteria are fulfilled: (i) the Principal Investigator is from the South and the proposal has relevance to nutritional problems of the South, and (ii) the majority of the budget is earmarked for the South, and (iii) demonstration on the completion of the project of institution and capacity building in a sustainable manner in the South.

The capacity building component represents a core issue for all applications to the Foundation. This means that in every application needs to demonstrate a training and human resource and capacity building component for the developing world. Ideally graduate students or young investigators should play a key role and if need be designated as the Principal Investigator (PI) i.e. be the primary grant applicant or Co-PI. Established researchers can nevertheless apply but need to clearly indicate the capacity building component and the designated

beneficiaries.. Established investigators alone are not usually eligible to apply for a grant, except when they address innovative and exceptionally well justified research questions in developing countries. Such applications need to clearly state the capacity and human resource building components in the host country as well as the long term sustainability of research in the host institution. Applications from individuals who are non-affiliated researchers and not attached to research or academic institutions can be considered only in very special cases.

Types of Awards

The Nestlé Foundation offers different award and grant categories, some of them using a modular approach, i.e. the Pilot Grant Program represents the starting grant module for a later Full Grant Research application. The eligibility criteria as well as the Research objectives and topics have to be fulfilled independently from the award category (for further details see section “Specific information for applications”):

A. Research Grants

1. Training Grant
2. Pilot Grant
3. Full Grant (small / large)

B. Institutional Support

Institutional support involves the support of research or educational projects in specific institutions in low- or lower-middle income countries which contribute to a focused development of capacity and know-how and human resource development in the corresponding institution.

C. enLINK Research grant program

The enLINK research grant program represents research projects initiated by the Nestlé Foundation. External researchers or institutions are invited by the Foundation to submit a research proposal in a specific area. All applications, including those of the enLINK research grant program will undergo internal and external reviewing.

The Nestlé Foundation does not support individual fees for attendance and travel to scientific meetings or courses except when presenting the of results of a research grant already funded by the Nestlé Foundation. We do not consider queries for support to attend a meeting if you are not a grant holder of the Nestle Foundation. The Foundation does in general not support the organization of

meetings or conferences and discourages any solicitation of funds for these purposes.

How to apply

Interested scientists should first submit a "Letter of Intent" in which they describe very briefly the kind of project they would like to undertake, including an estimated budget. Instructions for the letter of intent are available on the Foundation website at **www.nestlefoundation.org**. For a submission of a letter of intent only the downloadable form on our website should be used.
If the suggested project is compatible with the Foundation's current funding policy, applicants will receive an invitation to submit a full grant proposal. The guidelines for the submission of a full grant proposal are also available on our website. Other formats will not be accepted, neither for the letter of intent nor for the full grant applications.

In the letter of intent and in the grant application, detailed, evidence-based information about the public health relevance of the project as well as its immediate impact and sustainability have to be reported. This part of the application is as important as the scientific section of the application.

Research grant applications are evaluated twice a year by the Foundation's Council, a group of independent international scientists. The funding of projects is primarily based on the scientific quality, public health relevance in the short and long term, sustainability, capacity-building component and, last but not least, budget considerations.

Applications are accepted all year round, and the Foundation encourages applicants to submit their proposals as early as possible to allow sufficient time for internal as well as external reviews. All submissions should be made electronically by e-mail using a MS Word File (doc). Final deadlines for submission are January 10 and June 10 for the Spring and Fall Council Meetings respectively.

Timelines for all types of applications:

Deadline for submission	Latest announcement of the decision	Earliest possible grant starting date
January 10th	Mid-late April	Mid-late June
June 10th	Mid-late September	Mid-late October

2. Specific Information for Applicants

Research Grants

The major aim of these research grant awards is to provide financial assistance for innovative original research projects of nutritional and health relevance to developing countries with a good potential for long term capacity building component as well as a high impact for long term implementation. The grants provide financial support for the conduct of the study (material, biochemical analysis, reasonable equipment etc) and if needed salaries of the research staff (the latter in developing countries only). Proposals that are viewed favorably by the Foundation are characterized by:

1) Good agreement with the aims and objectives of the Foundation
2) Demonstration of a competence and expertise to address the area of research as well in the research design and methodology and rationale for the study
3) Bear a high component of capacity building and human resource development in the host institutions in developing countries.
4) The results of the research will contribute to long term improvement of nutrition and health in a community or region as well as globally..

Extent of Award and duration

Depending on the type of grant the award amount varies from up to 20'000 USD to up to 100'000 USD per year for a maximum of 3 years. The usual duration for the awards varies between 1 to 3 years. The amounts mentioned represent limits – smaller projects are welcome. It is important that the budget has adequate rationale and justification.

All awards require regular, strict and stringent audit requirements and periodic research progress and financial reports will be expected. For large grants the assessment procedures may involve site visits with discussions with the involved researchers and staff. A final or completion report with audited statement of accounts will need to be provided together with the expectation that Investigators may be expected to provide Research summaries for the Annual Report of the Foundation. Research

outcomes need to be published in the peer-reviewed, national or international literature and copies of publications submitted to the Foundation. All publications should bear a clear acknowledgment of the support provided by the Foundation.

Types of Research Grants

The Foundation offers different research grant categories, some of them using a modular approach, i.e. the Pilot Grant Program represents actually the starting module for a later Full Grant Research Application. The eligibility criteria as well as the Research objectives and topics have to be fulfilled independently from the grant category.

The following categories of grant applications are available:

Grant type	Description	Budget cadre (in USD)
Training Grant (TG)	The Training Grant (TG) Program supports a small research project such as a MSc or PhD thesis project or another training endeavor.	**up to20'000 in total**
Pilot Grant (PG)	The Pilot Grant PG) Program of the Foundation provides support for pilot research that has a high potential to lead to a subsequent full research project grant. Usually the Foundation does not support nutritional survey research. Often to be able to identify areas of problems for potential intervention one has to collect baseline data. A pilot study (pre-study or baseline study) will create the needed data for a larger research project. The PG program may assist this. The pilot-study and PG usually represent the starting point for a later full research grant application(i.e. a SRG or LRG) to the Foundation.	**up to 20'000 in total**
Small Research Grant (SRG)	The Small Research Grant (SRG) provides support of a small	**up to 50'000 in total.**

	research study. This may even represent a continuation of a TG or also a PG.	
Large Research Grant (LRG)	Full grant application of a complete research proposal according to the guidelines.	**up to 100'000 per year to a maximum of 300,000 for 3 years.**
Re-Entry Grants (REG)	To encourage the return and re-establishment of post-graduate students into their careers in their own countries, the Foundation will support a research program for eligible candidates. The host institution will need to guarantee a post for the returnee and ensure career development within the host institution. Contribution of support to the eligible candidate from the host institution is essential, while support and collaboration from the overseas institution where the candidate trained is helpful.	**Upto 50,000 in total**

Training Grants and Pilot Grants run usually over one year to 2 years. Re-Entry grants may run up to 3 years. However none of these awards are renewable. Hence, it is recommended that eligible investigators apply for other categories of awards before the completion of their projects (but with available results from earlier support) for continuing support from a full research grant to avoid any interruption of their research activities. A previous award does not necessarily imply that a subsequent submission will be automatically accepted. All applications will be reviewed as new applications. A new application must be substantially different from one previously reviewed and have a different title in order to be accepted for review

Replacement of the Principal Investigator on any of these awards is not normally permitted.

Cost

The budget cost of the applications should be within the suggested framework of the different types of applications. Only

on an exceptional basis with clear convincing justification the requested budget may be higher than these upper limits. The research project grants provide financial support for the research cost (technical cost including biochemical analysis, research tools, different consumables) and salaries of the research staff, travel and subsistence cost directly related to the research project. All items should be within a reasonable framework and well and clearly justified.

Ethical approval

All submitted grant projects **must be accompanied by the ethical approval** f**or the study by all involved institutions**. If the ethical approval is not submitted the project can not be accepted for evaluation. The ethical approval(s) have to be submitted together with the grant.

Basic Eligibility criteria and requirements

(1) The principal investigator / applicant should come from a low income country according to the definition of the World Bank (see www.worldbank.org)
(2) The study or project has to be sited in a low income country. At least 75% of the suggested budget has to be used in this target country. Exceptions may be made upon special request and justification.
(3) The application has to come from a University Institute or other institution's with a clear affiliation with a University. This means that the applicants have to work at a University Institution.
(4) The study has to have a clear capacity building component,
(5) The research project has to have a high public health relevance and potential for a sustainable implementation of the results
(6) Ideally the application comes from a low income country. Depending on the research question this is sometimes not possible and a collaboration with a University from a developed country might be needed. This is basically possible but again the major part of the study has to be done in the low income country
(7) Multiple funding sources for a project are possible but should be disclosed in detail
(8) The study duration should be limited to two to maximally 3 years till completion.

As mentioned above the application has to come from a local University or other institution with a clear affiliation with a University. Although important the Foundation does not support any humanitarian aid programs or projects or any NGO related projects.

The Foundation does not support contract type research activities between different institutions.

Application Procedures

Applicants may apply for all types of grants in one of the areas mentioned in the section Research Topics above. Applicants should follow the instructions described under How to Apply. Use only the downloadable form and submitting a letter of intent and also grant as a Microsoft Word File. Please do not submit as a PDF file.
Uninvited full grant proposals will be returned without reviewing.

The full grant application should not exceed 20 – to **maximally 25 pages A4** (US Legal) format. The required sections for the application are already defined on the downloadable form. The different sections are:

Introduction	Precise review of the present state of the art with key references. Background and significance of the addressed research question
Research plan	Specific Aims, Hypothesis of the study Statistical issues including information on power calculations
CV	Short CV *including date of birth of all applicants* (i.e. all involved students as well as mentor). It is encouraged to submit a larger CV separately from the grant application. If the project is a MSc or PhD project the students should be identified by name as well as a short CV and career outlook.
Budget	Justification for all items needed
Appendix	According to the needs (the number of pages of the appendix is included in the total number of pages mentioned above!)

Reviewing

All submitted projects will be reviewed internally as well as externally. During the write-up of the application it might be helpful to keep some reviewing criteria in mind: The goals of Foundation-supported research is capacity building and strategies for the improvement of nutrition and health in low-income countries. The major goal of any project is not a high impact publication but a high impact on the enhancement of the nutritional status as well as enhancement of health in general. The results have to be applicable, ideally immediately upon termination of the study. All submitted projects will be reviewed under scientific aspects as well as the public health relevance. You might address in as study a scientifically interesting question but of hardly any relevance to the immediate problems in your country - such an application would have less chances of being funded. Obviously high powered and highly sophisticated research is needed to advance our knowledge at the molecular level of diseases to understand biological systems and develop new drugs. The Foundation favors food based solutions for the problems of nutrition in the world. Accordingly often in the field of malnutrition simple straight forward research questions lead to a larger improvement and impact at the population level than studies at the purely biochemical or molecular level. Sometimes a simple research project – which is also not necessarily innovative – might be essential for capacity building and improvement of the local knowledge and skills for implementation and induction of a change to improved nutrition and health. You have to be aware whether you want to move a research field forward or whether you want to be a change agent for the improvement of the nutritional status of the population at large or certain population groups (e.g. children, young women etc).

Keep the following issues in mind when writing your proposal:

1. **Significance.**

Does your planed study address an important problem? If the aims of the application are achieved, how will the results be implemented? What will be the effect of the results in the field? Is an implementation feasible?

2. **Approach.**

Are the conceptual framework for the study, the design, methods, and analyses adequately developed, well-integrated, and

appropriate to the aims of the project? Do you have a clearly defined hypothesis? Did you choose a correct methodology to find an answer for the hypothesis?

3. Impact Potential

Does your project have potential to be change agent? Is the project only research for the sake of research? Do you address a relevant problem? Do the results lead to a relevant change (i.e. improvement of the nutritional status and health)?

4. Investigator / Institution

Are you and your colleagues as the principal investigators appropriately trained to carry out the study? Do you have an adequate infrastructure at your institution to be able to pursue all aims of the study? If not – do you really need all of the suggested methodologies? Is there the possibility that you simplify your study so that it fits better into your present work environment?

5. Scientific Environment

Does the scientific environment in which the work will be done contribute to the probability of success? Did you pay enough attention regarding collaborators from your institution? Would it make sense to discuss the project with an outside expert?

We will examine and review your project not only from the point of view of the present scientific knowledge but also from the likelihood of feasibility in general and whether the project will lead to a change. Training Grants and Pilot Grants will be examined regarding their potential to lead to a full small or large research application.