

Guidelines for application
Aflatoxin-control challenge in Africa

Attention to aflatoxin has increased in recent years, with growing recognition of their health risks as well as the barrier they pose to market development. The 2002 imposition of new, stricter aflatoxin regulations in the European Union has raised concerns about the future for African exports of crops. Due to their high stability, aflatoxins are not only a problem during harvest, but also during storage, transport, processing, and other steps along the value chain. Consequently, to minimize both the health and economic risks, innovative evidence-based technologies are urgently required to minimize aflatoxin exposure.

1. What kind of proposals are considered?

The aflatoxin-control challenge provides seed funds for innovative research projects that have the potential to reduce or eliminate exposure to aflatoxin-contaminated foods and feeds in Africa.

To stimulate innovation from different fields, the challenge calls for research proposals that fall within the following two categories:

- Non-food category: Aimed at finding alternative, non-food solutions to keep aflatoxin-contaminated foods and feeds out of the food system
- Food category: Aimed at identifying solutions to eliminate or reduce exposure to aflatoxins from foods and feeds

2. Who is conducting this challenge?

The aflatoxin-control challenge is funded by the government of Canada, and conducted by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN), in collaboration with Sight and Life Foundation, Mars, Incorporated, and the Partnership for Aflatoxin Control in Africa (PACA).

3. What is the overall objective of the challenge?

The Aflatoxin-control challenge proposes to stimulate the development of innovative approaches for reducing or eliminating exposure to aflatoxin-contaminated foods and feed in Africa.

4. Who can apply?

Students and researchers residing in Africa.

5. How do I apply?

Applications must be submitted to aflatoxincontrol@gainhealth.org with a copy to PACA@africa-union.org

Applications must be written in English or French and include the following sections:

- Summary of the research project (max 200 words)
- Background and motivation (max 400 words)
- Specific aims (max 400 words)
- Methods with proposed activities and budget (max 400 words)
- Novelty and potential application if successful (max 400 words)

6. What is the application deadline?

Please submit your application by **August 24, 2018** at 11:59 PM CEST. Entries that do not follow the application guidelines will not qualify for the selection process.

7. What are the selection criteria and how does the review process work?

The review process consists of three steps:

- The first step consists of screening submissions to evaluate whether proposals are complete, follow application guidelines, and address research topic. We exclude responses that are incomplete, do not follow guidelines or address unrelated topics.
- In the second step, responsive proposals are reviewed by at least two reviewers. Reviewers comprise both experts in the topic area or in complementary areas. As not all reviewers have deep expertise in the topic, the proposals should provide a strong background and clear rationale for non-expert audience. Proposals will be sent to the reviewers without the applicant's personal or organizational information. The criteria considered in these reviews are:
 - a. Topic responsiveness – How well does the proposal address a key need illustrated in the challenge description?
 - b. Innovation approach – Does the idea offer an unconventional, creative approach to the problem outlined in the challenge?
 - c. Rationale for innovation - Does the proposal describe how the project varies from current approaches, offers new premises or hypotheses to test, and does it provide a rational basis for expecting success?
 - d. Execution plan – Is the work described feasible within the budget and timeline described?
- The third step is the validation and final selection by the Selection Committee, with representatives from GAIN, Sight and Life Foundation, Mars, and PACA.

8. When will the decisions be communicated?

The winners from each category will be notified by **September 7th, 2018**, and the award ceremony will be conducted at the PACA's Partnership Meeting in Dakar, Senegal, on **October 2-4, 2018**.

Due to the large number of proposals anticipated, applicants with proposals that are not selected for award will receive a notification of decline without specific feedback.

9. What if I have further questions about the challenge?

If you have any questions, contact aflatoxincontrol@gainhealth.org