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**Request for Proposals (RFP)**

**Title of Competition: Cross Consortium Funding for the RePORT International Consortium**

Reference Number: CC-03-2024

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| **Competition Opens** | March 25, 2024 |
| **Submission Deadline** | June 21, 2024 |
| **Announcement of Results** | August 30, 2024 |
| **Grant Amount** | Total costs should not exceed $350,000 to be expended over one (1) to two (2) years. Available funding would support two (2) to three (3) projects. |
| **Tentative Award Period** | Up to two (2) years |
| **How to Apply** | Letter of interest with proposal Title & Abstract must be submitted via email to CRDF Global’s Cross Consortium intake inbox ([Cross-Consortium@crdfglobal.org](mailto:Cross-Consortium@crdfglobal.org)) no later than June 7, 2024.  Full proposals must be emailed to CRDF Global’s Cross Consortium intake inbox ([Cross-Consortium@crdfglobal.org](mailto:Cross-Consortium@crdfglobal.org)) no later than the June 21, 2024 submission deadline following the submission requirements outlined in the RFP. |
| **Program Contact** | Aisha Eiger, CRDF Global ([aeiger@crdfglobal.org](mailto:aeiger@crdfglobal.org)) |
| **Technical Contact** | David Hom, RICC ([homdl@njms.rutgers.edu](mailto:homdl@njms.rutgers.edu))  Rajita Bhavaraju, RICC ([bhavarrr@njms.rutgers.edu](mailto:bhavarr@njms.rutgers.edu)) |

# Table of Contents

[Table of Contents 2](#_Toc161051315)

[BACKGROUND 3](#_Toc161051316)

[SCOPE 3](#_Toc161051317)

[Objective 3](#_Toc161051318)

[Eligible Scope of Projects 3](#_Toc161051319)

[ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS 5](#_Toc161051324)

[REVIEW OF PROPOSALS 6](#_Toc161051325)

[Review Process 6](#_Toc161051326)

[Evaluation Criteria 6](#_Toc161051328)

[PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION 6](#_Toc161051329)

[Proposal Submission 6](#_Toc161051330)

[Full Proposal Package 7](#_Toc161051331)

[ALLOWABLE COSTS & Budgeting 10](#_Toc161051332)

[List of Ineligible Goods 11](#_Toc161051333)

[CRDF Global Policies and Applicant Resources 12](#_Toc161051334)

[General Terms and Conditions 12](#_Toc161051335)

[Program Support Information 12](#_Toc161051336)

[APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION 13](#_Toc161051337)

# BACKGROUND

RePORT International is accepting proposals for the Competition titled “Cross Consortium Funding for the RePORT International Consortium.” This Competition is organized by the RePORT International Coordinating Center and administered by CRDF Global, on behalf of the National Institute of Allergies and Infectious Diseases (NIAID).

RePORT International is a consortium of sites in high-TB burden countries (Brazil, India, Indonesia, Philippines, South Korea, South Africa, and Uganda) that conducts observational research about persons with TB and their close contacts using common data standards (Common Protocol).

NIAID conducts and supports basic and applied research to better understand, treat, and ultimately prevent infectious, immunologic, and allergic diseases. For more than 60 years, NIAID research has led to new therapies, vaccines, diagnostic tests, and other technologies that have improved the health of millions of people in the United States and around the world. For more information, visit: <http://www.niaid.nih.gov>.

CRDF Global is an independent nonprofit organization founded in 1995. In the past 25 years, CRDF Global’s work has expanded to address ever-changing global concerns, but the commitment to ensuring the success of the organization’s partners remains the same. CRDF Global is a leading provider of flexible logistical support, program design and management, and strategic capacity building programs in the areas of higher education, CBRNE security and nonproliferation, border security, cybersecurity, global health, technology entrepreneurship, and international professional exchanges. With offices in Arlington, VA; Kyiv, Ukraine; Amman, Jordan; and Manila, Philippines, CRDF Global’s diverse staff and networks of local community and government stakeholders deliver tailored programs that meet specific regional needs in over 100 countries across the globe. For more information, visit: <http://www.crdfglobal.org>.

# SCOPE

## Objective

**The objective of this call is to develop collaborations across the RePORT consortium.**

## Eligible Scope of Projects

This cross consortium supplemental funding will support cross-cutting research activities and develop or strengthen collaborations across RePORT scientists. Investigators and study populations must derive from at least two RePORT country networks.

Scope of work should address (i) priority areas of research for RePORT International, the long term sequela of TB, subclinical TB, pediatric TB, diagnostics and diagnostic biomarkers, or bacterial factors in transmission and pathogenesis; (ii) research should utilize data and/or biological samples from existing Common Protocol Cohort A (TB cases) or Cohort B (close or household contacts), or an existing Site Protocol; additional prospective recruitment must be justified; (iii) the definitions and standards of the Common Protocol (Cohort A or B) must be used (see CP Toolbox on the <https://reportinternational.org> website.) (iv) junior/early-stage investigators should be included as principal investigator or Co-PI. *Clinical trials and interventional studies CANNOT be funded through this RFP.*

Projects may request technical support from the data harmonization and administrative cores of RICC for activities such as approvals, data management, biostatistics, and shipping of biospecimens, but the cost should be included in the budget. Discussion with RICC staff is encouraged.

*Project milestones table must show project can be logistically completed within a 24-month project period.*

$1 million USD (total costs) grant support is available to fund 2-3 projects (ceiling is $350,000 total costs) for up to two years in duration. Proposals will be selected for award based on scientific merit, RICC priorities, and available funds. RICC personnel can advise on budgetary and scientific inquiries for this RFP; CRDF Global will receive full proposals from applicants, coordinate a technical peer review of proposals, and communicate results to RePORT International leadership. The RICC Leadership Group and program sponsors will make final decision on project funding. Funding will be awarded by NIH and administered through CRDF Global with technical oversight by RICC.

Upon announcement of award selection, **finalists may not begin any project activities or incur any project expenses** until an agreement has been signed by CRDF Global. This process can take 60-90 days from the time of award announcement. Additionally, projects involving human subjects/animal subjects may not begin until all required bioethics documentation is approved by CRDF Global. This should be taken into consideration when preparing the proposal timeline.

Award funds will be dispersed on a **cost-reimbursable basis** upon receipt of invoices and receipts reflecting expenses incurred based on approved budget. Should a grantee require advance funding, significant justification must be submitted to CRDF Global in writing and shall be reviewed by the funder for approval.

It is expected that anyone who receives a cross-collaborative supplement will present the findings of their work/outcomes to the RePORT Consortium (either at the Annual Meeting or during a webinar).

# ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

All applicants and proposals must meet **each** of the following eligibility criteria:

1. Research should be proposed by a collaborative team of Investigators from **at least two different RePORT International consortia.** Special consideration will be given to projects led by teams of junior investigators (within 10 years of terminal training) paired with senior mentors.
2. The proposed research must be based on clinical data or biospecimens from the Common Protocol or another RePORT related research study or use the laboratory and data standards set forth in the [RePORT International toolkit](https://www.reportinternational.org/common-protocol-toolkit); *Retrospective studies (such as in a case-control design) are encouraged although a prospective component can be included to access novel under or un-represented populations such as MDR TB or TB-COVID-19*.
3. Investigators from institutions other than the Primary Institutions may be included as collaborators at the discretion of the team investigators. Collaborators whose institutions are requesting project funds should be designated as Secondary Institutions.[[1]](#footnote-2)
4. Funds may not be used to duplicate previously funded research goals, to augment enrollment numbers for currently funded studies, or to support activities previously funded from another source. In addition, it is expected that the infrastructure and resources are already in place to collect specimens and data in compliance with RePORT International standards. Funding from this award cannot be used to establish these standards.
5. A site may participate in multiple applications, but with different lead investigators.

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| **NOTE:** | CRDF Global reserves the right to restrict the participation of any individual or institution in its programs. CRDF Global complies with all U.S. laws and regulations pertaining to export control and the participation of foreign nationals or institutions in its activities. It is the policy of CRDF Global not to conduct any transactions with U.S. restricted entities without appropriate authorization from the U.S. government. |

# REVIEW OF PROPOSALS

## Review Process

All proposals and information contained therein will remain confidential prior to the award and will be screened for eligibility and completeness upon receipt by CRDF Global. Scientific merit review will take place through a peer-review by subject matter experts identified by the Sponsor.

CRDF Global will email each team Principal Investigator to inform them of the decision to select their research proposal.

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| **NOTE:** | All awards are subject to the availability of funding from program sponsors. All decisions by CRDF Global are final. |

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## Evaluation Criteria

The following evaluation criteria will be applied while review and evaluation of each proposal:

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| 1. **Scientific Impact:** Adds to new body of knowledge about natural history of TB infection and disease, predictive biomarkers, immune mechanisms, and transmission | 5 points |
| 1. **Approach:** Clarity of research methods including use of controls of comparison population | 5 points |
| 1. **Implementation Plan:** Addresses specimen access, storage, and quality controls, regulatory approvals, and data quality assurance plans | 4 points |
| 1. **Feasibility:** Ability to complete within 24 months, use of existing specimens, and quality research infrastructure | 4 points |
| 1. **Investigators:** Research and/or clinical research experience and inclusion of Junior/early-stage PI or Co-PI | 2 points |
| **TOTAL** | 20 points |

# PROPOSAL PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION

## Proposal Submission

Letter of interest with proposal title & abstract must be submitted no later than **June 7, 2024 (23:59) U.S. Eastern Standard Time (EST).** All letters of interest with proposal titles & abstracts must be submitted electronically through email.

Full proposals must be submitted no later than **June 21, 2024, (23:59) U.S. Eastern Standard Time (EST).** All full proposals must be submitted electronically, using CRDF Global’s proposal package template through email.

* Proposal application materials submitted must be prepared in English and compiled in the proposal package template. Acceptable file format for proposal package is MS Excel (.xlsm) and pdf when directly requested in instructions.

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| **All letters of interest and full proposals must be submitted electronically via email to CRDF Global’s Cross Consortium intake inbox (**[**Cross-Consortium@crdfglobal.org**](mailto:Cross-Consortium@crdfglobal.org)**)**  Email’s subject line should indicate Reference #, name of the applicant, and email subject in the following format:   * “CC-03/2024\_Association\_Letter of Interest” * “CC-03/2024\_Association\_Full Proposal” |

At the conclusion of the electronic submission process, applicants will receive a confirmation message from CRDF Global.

Proposal package template contains the following sections (tabs):

1. Proposal Cover Page
2. Institutional Data Form
3. General Project Information
4. Scope of Work
5. Budget
6. Budget Narrative

**Additional, as specified below:**

1. Project Narrative
2. References Cited
3. Curriculum Vitae (CV) or NIH Biosketch

## Full Proposal Package

**(1): Proposal Cover Page**

One per Principal Investigator/Institution including:

* Project title
* Signature from the Principal Investigator (PI)
* Signature from the Primary Signatory (individual who would be responsible for negotiating contractual and financial terms in the case of an award)

**(2): Institutional Data Form**

One per Principal Investigator/Institution including:

* Information on the Principal Investigator
* Information on the Institution
* Information on the Primary Signatories (individuals who would be responsible for negotiating contractual and financial terms in the case of an award)

This document is a **requirement** for **projects funded by CRDF Global**.

**(3): General Project Information**

General Project Information provides an overview of the project which will be implemented by the investigators within the project. This includes:

* Project title and basic information about the project
* Project Abstract
  + One concise paragraph summarizing all relevant aspects of the project, with particular emphasis on the objectives, methods, and potential results (not more than 350 words).
* Project Goals and Objectives
  + Overview of the final impact or high-level result that the investigator(s) intends to achieve by implementing the project.
* Confirmation of work with human and/or animal subjects, or work with recombinant DNA
  + **Research Involving Human/ Animal Subjects**:CRDF Global is committed to ensuring that projects involving human or animal subjects are protected from research risks in conformance with CRDF Global policies. All projects recommended for award and funded by CRDF Global that involve human or animal subjects will undergo review by the CRDF Global Bioethics Review Committee (BRC) prior to award request. Grant recipients will not be authorized to begin work until IRB approval is provided to CRDF Global. Activation of a grant agreement is contingent on submission of complete IRB documentation and approval to CRDF Global. Project Leaders should apply to their institutional review boards (IRBs) for necessary bioethics approvals, as soon as feasible. Investigators will be required to submit proof of their institution’s IRB approval **within 6 weeks** of award selection notice.
    - For further guidance on research involving human/animal subjects please visit: <https://www.crdfglobal.org/funding-opportunities/#forms-resources>

**(4): Scope of Work**

One Scope of Work per proposal, describing specific milestones to be accomplished by the teams during project implementation.

Please note the following when preparing the Scope of Work:

* Milestones are discrete activities that allow the grantee to achieve the overall objectives described in the project narrative. Milestones should reflect realistic accomplishments that can be verified by CRDF Global and NIAID. *Project milestones table must show project can be logistically completed within a 24-month project period.*
* Milestones must be verifiable through submission of documentation or other deliverables (e.g., photos, purchase orders, training materials, reports, or other tangible proof that the activities occurred).
* Payment may be predicated on completion of deliverables in the milestone plan.
* Each milestone should be clearly described and include a corresponding deliverable.
* The amount of funding requested (on a semi-annual basis) should be included in the Milestone Plan.

**(5): Budget**

One for **each** team involved. The budget should cover the entire award period. PIs should refer to [Allowable Costs & Budgeting](#_ALLOWABLE_COSTS_&) for information to be listed in the budget.

**(6): Budget Narrative**

One for **each** team involved explaining all budget items in the corresponding project team budget.

[**ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**](#_APPENDIX_A:_Additional)

The following documents should be prepared and submitted separately from the main proposal file. Refer to [Appendix](#_APPENDIX_B:_ADDITIONAL) A for templates.

**(A): Project Narrative**

A maximum of **twelve (12) pages** including any graphs, diagrams, and figures. The following must be described in the Project Narrative:

* The specific aims, and objectives, approach, milestones, and measurements of success that will be used.
* A clearly defined project timeline, noting all project tasks and goals to be accomplished, including how to address potential pitfalls/delays with alternatives or contingency plans.
* A brief monitoring and evaluation plan.
* How the individual and combined competencies of the investigator(s)/institute(s) will enable the project to be carried out, and what relevant prior work has been completed.
* The anticipated results of the project and how they address the [evaluation criteria](#_Evaluation_Criteria).
* How the project compares to current research conducted in the topic area.
* Facilities, equipment, and other resources available at the institutes directly applicable to the project including those from secondary collaborators. This should address the adequacy of the resources available to perform the effort proposed. The description should be written narratively and not include any financial information.
* Requested equipment to be utilized in the project.

Please note that **patentable** ideas, trade secrets, privileged or confidential commercial or financial information, disclosure of which may harm the proposer, should be included in the proposals only when such information is necessary to convey an understanding of the proposed project. Such information must be clearly marked in the proposal and appropriately labeled as:

*"The following is (proprietary or confidential) information that (name of proposing organization) request not to be released to persons outside of CRDF Global, except for purposes of review and evaluation."*

Please be reminded that the Project Narrative must be **self-contained** and that URLs providing information related to the proposal should not be used. CRDF Global expects strict adherence to the rules of proper scholarship and attribution. The responsibility for proper scholarship and attribution rests with the authors of a proposal; all parts of the proposal should be prepared with equal care for this concern. **All contributing authors, including any Principal Investigators and team participants, should be named, and acknowledged at the bottom of the Project Narrative section** (*example: Contributing Authors: NAME (Institute #1 PI), NAME (Institute #2 PI*).

**(B): References Cited**

Reference information for the Project Narrative. Each reference must include the names of all authors (in the same sequence in which they appear in the publication), the article and journal title, book title, volume number, page numbers, and year of publication. Identify the website address if the document is available electronically. While there is no page limitation for the References Cited, this section must only include bibliographic citations and not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the Project Narrative. AMA Style citations are recommended.

**(C): Curricula Vitae (CV)/NIH Biosketch**

This is required. One for **each** Principal Investigator (PI) and Team Participant compiled **in one file**.

* PI CVs should be no more than five (5) pages.
* Please ensure you have provided a full CV for each team member listed in the **Budget Narrative** in the main proposal file.
* Team member CVs should be no more than two (2) pages.
* Each CV should include the individual’s name, title, educational background, current and previous institutional affiliations with dates, area of expertise, and his or her scientific publications of relevance to the project. Please visit the following sites for writing a Curriculum Vitae (CV):
  + <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/funding/2590/biosketchsample.pdf>
  + <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/resumes_and_vitas/writing_the_cv.html>

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# ALLOWABLE COSTS & Budgeting

**Grant Ceiling.** The maximum total award is up to **$350,000 USD** disbursed over the grant’s period of performance.

**No-Cost Extensions.** Awardees may be eligible for a no-cost extension **up to one-year**, which may be requested within the final quarter of the one-year award period. Funds will be administered directly to the institutions involved.

In the case of an award, a project budget may be subject to revision by CRDF Global staff.

CRDF Global will disperse award funds using a cost-reimbursable award mechanism for actual expenses incurred.

CRDF Global will work with individual award recipients/institutions for any financial resource issues that may arise from the applicable funds disbursement policy.

The following costs are permitted under CRDF Global’s guidelines for this Competition:

1. **Personnel Costs:** Personnel costs are defined as payments made to individual team participants for work performed on the project (i.e., labor costs). Include all benefits and fringe costs within the labor rate. They may not exceed the applicant institute’s rates and must be documented in the proposal’s budget narrative.

Student stipends are permissible and may include fringe benefits or tuition remission. For planned students not yet identified, clearly indicate their participation and request for support in the Budget Narrative.

1. **Equipment, Supplies and Services (ESS):** This includes support for research equipment, including computers and telecommunications devices and/or services, subscriptions to scientific journals, reagents, and other supplies/materials to be used in the research. In general, materials, supplies, and services must be specifically described and justified in the Budget Narrative.

Budget items should be listed individually – items listed generally as “supplies” or “services” will NOT be accepted. Each line item should be calculated based on actual costs.

Funds may also be requested for the costs of documenting, preparing, publishing or otherwise making available to others the findings and products of the work conducted under the award.

1. **Travel:** Transportation and per diem support for travel of grant-team participants in connection with the project should be requested and described in the Budget Narrative. Travel funds may be used for international and/or domestic travel according to project activities, if applicable.

The following cost guidelines should be used in preparing the travel portion of the budget:

* 1. International Transportation. CRDF Global-supported travelers must purchase the lowest-cost applicable round-trip airfare from their home country. Travelers must comply with the provisions of the Fly America Act.
  2. Travel Allowances. Applicants should refer to the following travel allowance guidelines when preparing their travel budget:

For travel in the U.S., visit: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21287>

For non-U.S. travel, refer to <https://aoprals.state.gov/content.asp?content_id=184&menu_id=78>

These are the *maximum* allowances for covering lodging, meals, and incidental expenses. Health insurance is mandatory for all travel under CRDF Global awards and should be included in the budget in addition to the travel allowance.

* 1. Visa Fees: Applicants may use project funds to cover the cost of visa fees.

1. **Indirect Costs (IDCs):** Applicants may request indirect costs/overhead expenses on all direct costs except for equipment, capital expenditures, rent, student tuition, participant support costs[[2]](#footnote-3) and sub-awardees expenses (after the first $25,000). Total direct costs minus these items is considered the “modified total direct cost” (MTDC) amount for which the IDC rate should be applied. IDCs combined with the total direct costs cannot exceed the funding total allowed to request. Below are helpful calculations:

* **IDC $** = IDC% x MTDC $
* **Maximum Total Grant budget** = total direct costs $ (including MTDC) + IDCs $

U.S. Institutions and non-U.S. institutions may request indirect costs up to 8% of their MTDC.

## List of Ineligible Goods

The following goods cannot be budgeted by the applicants within the scope of this Competition:

1. Weapons and explosives;
2. Alcohol beverages;
3. Illegal and/or restricted substances, such as drugs;
4. Surveillance equipment;
5. Luxury goods and jewelry;
6. Gambling equipment;
7. Sports equipment;
8. Bad debts;
9. Entertainment and related goods;
10. Fines and penalties;
11. Fundraising, lobbying and PR costs.
12. Foreign taxes, duties, fees or other levies;
13. Pre-Agreement costs (costs incurred before the Agreement was signed if they were not approved by the Agreement Officer in advance)

# CRDF Global Policies and Applicant Resources

## General Terms and Conditions

CRDF Global’s General Terms and Conditions are incorporated herein by reference. Please follow the link below to access these Terms and Conditions.

Link: [https://www.crdfglobal.org/funding-opportunities/#forms-resources](https://www.crdfglobal.org/funding-opportunities/" \l "forms-resources)

Applicants must review applicable Terms and Conditions prior to submission of their proposals under this Competition.

## Program Support Information

For further information about this program, please contact the relevant point of contact(s) as listed below. **Inquiries by e-mail are strongly encouraged**.

**Administrative Inquiries:**

**CRDF Global**

**Aisha Eiger**

CRDF Global

1776 Wilson Blvd., Suite 300

Arlington, VA 22209

Email: [aeiger@crdfglobal.org](mailto:aeiger@crdfglobal.org)

**Technical/Scientific Inquiries:**

**RePORT International Coordinating Center (RICC)**

**David Hom**

Division of Infectious Diseases/PHRI

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

225 Warren Street

Newark, NJ 07103

Email: [homdl@njms.rutgers.edu](mailto:homdl@njms.rutgers.edu)

**Rajita Bhavaraju**

Division of Infectious Diseases/PHRI

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey

225 Warren Street

Newark, NJ 07103

Email: [bhavarrr@njms.rutgers.edu](mailto:bhavarrr@njms.rutgers.edu)

# APPENDIX A: ADDITIONAL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

**PROJECT NARRATIVE**

*(Narrative should not exceed twelve (12) pages and text should be Arial font size 11 within 1-inch margins.)*

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**REFERENCES CITED**

*(This section must only include bibliographic citations and not be used to provide parenthetical information outside of the Project Narrative.)*

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**CURRICULA VITAE (CV) OR NIH BIOSKETCH**

*(Please visit the following sites for writing a CV/biosketch:* <https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>; <https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/job_search_writing/resumes_and_vitas/writing_the_cv.html>*)*

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1. Secondary institutions are those other than the Primary Institution that will participate in the proposed project and receive support under a CRDF Global award. Secondary Institutions may participate in the form of sub-contracted work and may include any allowable costs described in this program. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Participant Support costs include stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with meetings, conferences, symposia or training projects, scholarships/fellowships. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)