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Competitive Quality Improvement Grant Program

**Improving Breast Cancer (BC) Quality of Care via
Meaningful Capacity Building in Sub-Saharan Africa**

Request for Proposals
January 10, 2024

French and Portuguese versions of this RFP are available.

INTRODUCTION

Conquer Cancer[®], the ASCO Foundation and Pfizer Global Medical Grants are collaborating to offer a Quality Improvement grant funding opportunity to improve the quality of care and to help build capacity to address the needs of breast cancer (BC) patients in Sub-Saharan Africa. This grant program will support innovative projects to improve the quality of BC patient care in the select geographies in the region (please review eligibility section below).

Submissions addressing the expressed Areas of Interest with a measurable and sustainable positive impact on patients will be favored by the Scientific Review Committee (SRC).

This grant awards program was purposefully developed with the Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Council of ASCO expressly for the patients of the Sub-Saharan region.

Conquer Cancer is the lead organization for the review and evaluation of applications. Grant funding will be provided directly from Pfizer. Collectively, up to **\$1,000,000** is available to fund **Quality Improvement projects** under this RFP. The maximum grant budget is **\$80,000** with a term of **24 months**.

Successful applicants to this RFP will be expected to share the initial results of their project with ASCO's Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Council at a future grantee meeting to be convened by Conquer Cancer. In addition, awardees will be invited to participate in career development, education, and networking opportunities provided by Global Bridges Healthcare Alliance (<https://globalbridges.org>).

About Conquer Cancer, the ASCO Foundation

Conquer Cancer[®], the ASCO Foundation, funds research for every cancer, every patient, everywhere. Since 1984, its Grants & Awards program has awarded more than \$178 million through more than 8,600 grants and awards to improve cancer care and accelerate breakthroughs in clinical and translational oncology research. Conquer Cancer's EveryGrant[®] program is an end-to-end, white label solution, helping organizations develop and deliver grants programs that attract the brightest researchers and make a difference for people with cancer everywhere. For more information, visit CONQUER.ORG

About ASCO Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Council

The Sub-Saharan Africa Regional Council works to address the specific needs and challenges faced by oncology professionals in the region. Council members serve as voices for their respective countries, facilitate engagement in ASCO's global programs, and work with Society leadership and staff to tailor ASCO programs to best support members in the region.

About Pfizer Global Medical Grants

The mission of Pfizer Global Medical Grants is to accelerate the translation of science into quality patient care through independent grants, partnerships, and collaborations. Pfizer Global Medical Grants supports the global healthcare community's independent initiatives (e.g., research, quality improvement or education) to improve patient outcomes in areas of unmet medical need that are aligned with Pfizer's medical and/or scientific strategies. For all independent grants, the grant requester (and ultimately the grantee) is responsible for the design, implementation, sponsorship, and conduct of the independent initiative supported by the grant, including compliance with any regulatory requirements. For more information, please visit <https://www.pfizer.com/about/programs-policies/grants>.



About Global Bridges

Global Bridges Healthcare Alliance, based at Mayo Clinic, is dedicated to supporting global communities of practice to advance evidence-based patient care. Since 2014, Global Bridges has worked collaboratively with Pfizer GMG to support medical education and quality improvement programs in multiple clinical areas, including oncology, tobacco dependence treatment, amyloidosis, and anti-microbial stewardship.

ADDRESSING GAPS IN BREAST CANCER PATIENT CARE

Breast cancer is the most common cancer among women worldwide. In Sub-Saharan Africa, breast cancer is the leading diagnosed cancer and second most common cause of cancer mortality. Despite significant advances in the detection, management, and treatment of breast cancer, patients in Sub-Saharan Africa face significant challenges. These challenges include a shortage of oncologists, insufficient training of health care providers, and lack of access to the latest therapies.

The goal of this program is to improve the quality of BC patient care by understanding and addressing gaps in the care that impact BC patient outcomes in Sub-Saharan Africa. These may include:

- Gaps in clinical practice, such as the education or competencies of the health care professionals themselves, infrastructure to promote or allow proper management, or other factors related to the external environment or patient population.
- Gaps impacting the patient experience and contribute to delays in care, including education, treatment delivery, and follow-up.
- Gaps in the detection, diagnosis, and screening of breast cancer, including the application of WHO early detection models.
- Gaps in the local literature and localized or adapted treatment guidelines.
- Gaps in the coordination of BC patient care across the healthcare system, including primary care, appropriate referral of patients at and the utilization of patient navigation.
- Gaps in access and utilization of supportive care and palliative care or social programs in the management of breast cancer.

This RFP seeks to provide funding to projects that are aimed at addressing these and other relevant gaps, ultimately helping to deliver the best treatment and care to each patient at the optimal time.

SCOPE

This RFP is open to investigators from institutions in **select Sub-Saharan African geographies** (see eligibility criteria). Applicants are strongly encouraged to employ a collaborative approach to their projects. This may include:

- Collaboration between institutions and across geographies is encouraged to foster the interactive sharing of knowledge and expertise, and to utilize the combined strengths of the investigators and their institutions.
- Partnerships between clinically focused academic centers/departments with centers of health policy, healthcare management and health economics skills and patient advocacy groups
- Multi-disciplinary teams including senior investigator, early career investigators, and trainees that nurture the development of breast cancer expertise within the region.
- Collaborations that can leverage the expertise and resources of partners inside or outside of Sub-Saharan Africa to benefit patients within the region. Note that the primary investigator and project must be based in the eligible geographic area.
- Collaborations with patient advocacy groups to ensure projects meet the needs of breast cancer patients.

Please note: all partners must have a relevant role. Investigators can be of any health care professional background.

Proposals in the following areas of interest are strongly encouraged, but are not limited to:

- Addressing patient access to care and diagnostic facilities, particularly in remote areas.
- Application of existing technology, methods, and best practices from other disease areas to breast cancer.
- Developing and implementing culturally appropriate patient and provider education, including addressing stigmas associated with breast cancer.
- Optimization of patient treatment and referral pathways to promote initiation, adherence, and completion of breast cancer care.
- Utilization of technology to improve access to care and communication with providers, including telehealth and mobile applications.
- Developing and/or disseminating practical screening methods and programs, including adoption of mobile diagnostic and treatment delivery services and other methods tailored for rural and remote settings.
- Improving access to, and utilization of, psychosocial support, supportive care, and palliative care.
- Developing and training the non-oncology workforce (e.g. general practitioners, community health workers, etc) to address the needs of breast cancer patients.
- Approaches to establish and sustain multi-disciplinary teams to support breast cancer patients.

FRAMEWORK

The funding is intended to be available for Quality Improvement projects to help solve issues identified above, and other gaps impacting the quality of BC patient care. It is expected that projects will be evidence-based and follow generally accepted scientific principles. Applicants are strongly encouraged to leverage the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound) framework in designing their projects.

While the ultimate goal of this program is to affect change that will impact patients, it is understood that in some cases, there is insufficient data to develop meaningful interventions. Programs conducting an analysis- or assessment-phase only are also in scope for this RFP if they are clearly designed with the long-term goal of developing a patient-focused intervention to improve BC care.

Project recommended duration up to **24 months**, which should include: development, need assessment, execution (e.g., gap analysis, evidence collection, validation, implementation, etc.), evaluation of impact (e.g., outcomes, improvements, solutions, etc.) and communication/publication plan to share results.

All proposals must ensure that the project reflects the needs of patients with BC, particularly those from underserved communities in Sub-Saharan Africa; therefore, participation and input from local patient advocates is encouraged.

The Project must be **executed** in the **Sub-Saharan Africa geographies noted below** with a focus on Academic Cancer or Medical Centers, large and small hospitals, community hospitals, ambulatory care settings, and other facilities engaged in the continuum of care.

Multi-disciplinary collaborations or partnerships with global and/or local healthcare organizations, academia, advocacy groups and medical societies aligned with the mission to improve oncology care in the development of this proposal are strongly encouraged. Collaborating organizations may be based outside of the eligible geographies noted below. All partners must have a relevant role and should be described in the application.

It is not our intent to support clinical research projects. Projects evaluating the efficacy of therapeutic or diagnostic agents will not be considered.

REVIEW PROCESS

Conquer Cancer and Pfizer have agreed upon a formalized 2-stage review procedure to select the research proposals of highest scientific merit.

- Stage 1 is the submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI)
- Stage 2 is the full proposal for invited applicants

Please refer to the Requirements below and Appendix A for additional LOI requirements. Conquer Cancer will convene a Scientific Review Committee (SRC) composed of **Sub-Saharan Africa** subject matter experts who will perform an independent and confidential peer review of all in scope LOIs and applications. The SRC's collective recommendations will define which proposals are awarded funding. Funding allocations are at the discretion of the SRC and based upon their expert knowledge of relevant implementation factors.

REQUIREMENTS

Date RFP Issued: January 10, 2024

Clinical Area: Oncology – Breast Cancer

Applicant Eligibility Criteria:

To be eligible:

- The institution, principal investigator (PI) and focus of the submission must be based in the following geographies:
 - Ghana
 - Senegal
 - Uganda
 - Zimbabwe
 - Ethiopia
 - Mozambique
 - Malawi
 - Rwanda
 - Zambia
 - Tanzania
 - Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)
 - Mali
- While applications must be submitted from the geographies noted above, collaborations with institutions outside of the region are permitted. Please note all partners must have a relevant role and the requesting organization must have a key role in the project.
- Only organizations are eligible to receive grants, not individuals or physician-owned medical group practices.
- Eligible institutions include Academic Cancer Centers, Healthcare Delivery Networks, large and small hospitals, academic medical centers, community hospitals, ambulatory care settings, and other facilities engaged the continuum of cancer care.
- Requesting organization must be legally able to receive award funding directly from Pfizer Inc. We strongly recommend that applicants confirm this with their organization or institution prior to submitting an application. Grants awarded to organizations that are subsequently found to be unable to accept funding directly from Pfizer Inc. may be subject to rescission.
- The applicant must be the Project Lead/Principal Investigator (PI) or an authorized designee of such individual (e.g., Project Lead/PI's grant/research coordinator).
- The Project Lead/PI must be an employee or independent contractor of the requesting organization.
- The applicant (PI) must have a medical or postdoctoral degree (MD, PhD, or equivalent), an advanced nursing degree (BSN with a MS/PhD), or a degree in Pharmacy, Pathology, Physiotherapy, Psychology, or Social Work. Additional advanced degrees may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact staff noted on Page 7 with any eligibility inquiries.



<p>Expected Approximate Monetary Range of Grant Applications:</p>	<p>The estimated total available funding for this RFP is \$1,000,000.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual projects requesting up to \$80,000 not exceeding 24-months will be considered. • The maximum indirect (overhead) rate is 28% and must be included in the total grant request amount. • Amount requested may not exceed the budget limit set forth in the RFP and the budget submitted must be within fair market value. • No funding for capital equipment is allowed. • Travel costs directly related to conducting the project or presenting the results may be included in the budget.
<p>Letter of Intent Requirements</p>	<p>The LOI is a brief summary that describes the project at a high level covering the following topics. Please refer to Appendix A for more information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goals and Objectives • Assessment of Need for the Project • Target Audience • Project Design and Methods • Innovation • Evaluation and Outcomes • Anticipated Project Timeline • Organization Detail • Budget Detail
<p>Estimated Key Dates:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RFP release date: January 10, 2024 • Letter of Intent due date: March 11, 2024 • Invitations for Full Application: May 1, 2024 • Full Application due date: July 8, 2024 <p>Please note the deadline is 23:59 Eastern Standard Time (e.g., New York, GMT -5).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of Full Proposals by Expert Review Panel: August, 2024 • Anticipated Full Proposal Notification Date: September, 2024 • Grants will be distributed following a fully executed agreement. • Anticipated Project Start and End Dates: January 1, 2025 to December 31, 2026

<p>How to Apply:</p>	<p>Please go to www.cybergrants.com/pfizer/loi and sign in. First-time users should click “REGISTER NOW”. <i>[Note: there are individual portals for each grant application type (e.g., knowledge, LOI, research full proposal, and QI full proposal). Please be sure to use the URL above.]</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Click the “Start A New LOI” button. • For the question “Competitive Grant?” select Yes <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Select the following Competitive Grant Program Name: 2024 ONC SSA ASCO CCF BC QI • Select the following Primary Area of Interest: Oncology – Breast Cancer • Requirements for submission: Complete all required sections of the online application (see Appendix). • If you encounter any technical difficulties with the website, please click the “Technical Questions” link at the bottom of the page. • IMPORTANT: Be advised applications submitted through the wrong application type and/or submitted after the due date will not be reviewed by the committee.
<p>Review Criteria:</p>	<p>Applications will be peer reviewed based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relevance of the project focus in addressing the needs of BC patients in the region. • Strength of the proposal, feasibility, and likelihood of improving the quality of BC care in Sub-Saharan Africa. • Appropriateness, feasibility, and adequacy of the proposed project design. • Availability of environmental and institutional resources to support the proposed project, including appropriate collaborations. • Prior research experience and accomplishments of the applicant, research team and collaborators. • Projects that are both measurable and have sustainable impact will be favored by the selection committee.
<p>Questions:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you have questions regarding this RFP, please direct them in writing to Conquer Cancer Scientific Review Officer, Andrew L. Smith, PhD (Andrew.Smith@conquer.org) or Pfizer Grant Officer, Rehab Zakaria El Saie (Rehab.Z.ElSaie@pfizer.com) with the subject line: 2024 ONC SSA ASCO Improving Breast Cancer (BC) Quality of Care in Sub-Saharan Africa. • Please click here to view Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Competitive Grant Program.



Grant Agreements:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• If your grant is approved, your institution will be required to enter into a written grant agreement with Pfizer. Please click here to view the core terms of the agreement.• Under Pfizer's competitive grant program, modifications to grant agreements will not be reviewed unless a genuine conflict exists as between applicable law and the terms of the relevant grant agreement. Applicant is encouraged to share the core terms with counsel for approval prior to submitting an application.• Except where prohibited by applicable law and, in any case, subject to review by Pfizer Legal, payment of grant funding may only be paid to the grantee organization.• This RFP is supported by Pfizer Inc. and, if approved, payment will be sent from the United States.
Mechanism by which Applicants will be Notified:	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• All applicants will be notified via email by the anticipated dates noted above.• Applicants may be asked for additional clarification, if needed, during the review period.



Appendix A Quality Improvement Project LOI

Applications will be accepted via the online portal. The Letter of Intent (LOI) will be accepted via the online application. When answering the LOI questions in the application please keep the following in mind:

Goals and Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide the main goal of the study and the study population (if applicable). Provide a detailed definition that is directly linked to the primary objective.
Assessment of Need for the Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> This should reflect your study rationale. Provide a brief description of the medical/scientific question and the rationale of how this study addresses the question.
Target Audience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe the primary audience(s) targeted for this project. For studies focused on a specific patient population, please specify the relevant age, gender and other demographic information. Also indicate whom you believe will directly benefit from the project outcomes. Describe the overall population size as well as the size of your sample population.
Project Design and Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe concisely the research design and methods for achieving the stated goals. Please include any relevant inclusion/exclusion criteria, analysis plans, and statistical plans.
Innovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explain what measures you have taken to assure that this project idea is original and does not duplicate other projects. Describe how this project builds upon existing work, pilot projects, or ongoing projects developed either by your institution or other institutions related to this project.
Evaluation and Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Specify type and frequency of safety, efficacy, and/or outcome measures. Also indicate the method(s) used to assess measures. Provide a publication plan describing intended submission of abstracts to (a) congress(es) or intended submission of (a) publication(s) to peer-reviewed journals. All publications must follow ICH guidelines.
Sustainability Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe how the interventions proposed will be sustained beyond the funding period of the grant. This should include how the program could be funded as well as how the interventions will be incorporated into future strategic plans to improve patient care.

Anticipated Project Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an anticipated timeline for your project including project start/end dates.
Additional Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If there is any additional information you feel Pfizer should be aware of concerning the importance of this project, please summarize here. • Early-career applicants: Letter(s) of support from mentor(s) and collaborators describing how the award will advance the applicant's career.
Organization Detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This information is used to assess the capability of the organizational resources available to perform the effort proposed. Identify the facilities to be used [laboratory, animal, clinical and "other"]. If appropriate, indicate their capacities, pertinent capabilities, relative proximity and extent of availability to the project.
Budget Detail	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A total amount requested is the only information needed for the LOI stage. Full Budget is not required. This amount can be adjusted at the Full Proposal stage as applicable. • The budget amount requested must be in U.S. dollars (USD). • While estimating your budget please keep the following items in mind: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ General organizational running costs such as insurances, heating, lighting, rent, building maintenance may be included. Pfizer does not provide funding for capital purchases (infrastructure expenses such as equipment, purchases of software or software licenses, technology or bricks and mortar). Equipment hire/leasing is acceptable and may be included in project budget. ○ The inclusion of these costs cannot cause the amount requested to exceed the budget limit set forth in the RFP. ○ It should be noted that grants awarded through GMG cannot be used to purchase Pfizer therapeutic agents (prescription or non-prescription). • Pfizer maintains a company-wide, maximum allowed overhead rate of 28% for independent studies and projects. Please click here for details.



