SAN DIEGO CENTER FOR AIDS RESEARCH (SD CFAR)
INTERNATIONAL PILOT GRANT APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please email cfar@ucsd.edu if you have questions about any aspect of your application.

1. International Pilot grant applications are due at **5:00 p.m. Pacific Time on Monday, October 2, 2023.** Email the application form and related documents to cfar@ucsd.edu.

2. Preference will be given to projects based in Mexico and Mozambique. Funds are also available to support meritorious projects in Brazil, India, Kyrgyzstan, South Africa, and Ukraine.

3. An international Principal Investigator (PI) from one of the seven countries noted above is required as well as an SD CFAR collaborator (see item 4 below). Both the PI and the SD CFAR collaborator must have doctoral degrees and faculty appointments at or above the Assistant Professor level or equivalent at an academic or government institution that is eligible for and able to administer U.S. federal grants.

4. The San Diego-based collaborator must be an SD CFAR member on faculty at one of the following institutions: UC San Diego, the VA San Diego Healthcare System, San Diego State University, the La Jolla Institute for Immunology, or Scripps Research in La Jolla. *Collaborators are asked to sign an agreement on the application face page that they will advise the international investigator before, during, and after application submission.* **International Investigators:** If you need assistance in obtaining an SD CFAR collaborator, please email cfar@ucsd.edu.

5. The international institution must be affiliated with an Institutional Review Board or ethics committee that has obtained U.S. Federalwide Assurance.

6. International Pilot grant applications will be considered only for projects that are in alignment with HIV research priorities established by the Office of AIDS Research. Applications that do not concern one or more of these priorities will not be considered for SD CFAR funding.

7. **Investigators may only submit one International Pilot grant application per cycle and may only have one Pilot grant study active at any time.** If you are already working on a previous award, it must be scheduled to end before any new Pilot grant can begin. There is some flexibility in these restrictions when applying for supplemental funding (see next page).

8. **Optional:** Submit a one-page letter of intent summarizing your project to cfar@ucsd.edu at least one month before the application due date. Please let us know if you already have an SD CFAR collaborator or if you would like us to help you find one. Feel free to ask any questions. We will review your letter, respond to your questions, and notify you if we have any concerns about your proposed research.

9. Follow the highlighted instructions in the application form and delete the instructions before submitting your completed application.

10. Notice the Face Page request for eRA Commons identifications (IDs) for the foreign Principal Investigator and SD CFAR collaborator. See Recommendations on page 3 of these instructions.

11. Leave the From/Through budget periods blank on the budget form. See Award Period and Timelines on page 2 of these instructions.

12. Personnel effort on the budget is measured in calendar months. For example, 10% effort = 1.2 calendar months; 5% effort = 0.6 calendar months. If you need to estimate effort for academic or summer months, please contact cfar@ucsd.edu.

13. Per NIH regulations, International Pilot grants **cannot** support the following, except as noted:

    - Studies involving clinical trials in any form.

    - Studies involving new drugs, treatments, or devices, or off-label use of a licensed drug.

    - Salary for postdoctoral fellows. Predoctoral graduate students may only be supported if (a) they are not paid more than postdoctoral fellows at their home institution (international site or SD CFAR member institution), and (b) they have a tuition remission salary.

    - Travel to scientific meetings, with one exception: International Pilot grant recipients who have no other NIH funding may budget for travel to a scientific meeting to present results from their SD CFAR-funded research.

14. The maximum award is US$50,000 in direct costs. In general, it is expected that 50% of the direct costs will be intended for the foreign Principal Investigator's home country.

15. Indirect costs at foreign sites will be paid by the SD CFAR at the NIH maximum of 8%. Domestic indirect costs will either be paid by the SD CFAR or negotiated. Indirect costs will be added automatically to all funded grants. List only direct costs on the budget forms.

16. If you plan to use SD CFAR core facilities, you or your collaborator **must** contact the cores before submitting your application. Although many services are offered for free to SD CFAR grant recipients, there may still be some costs that you need to include in your budget. A checklist with contact information is included in the application form.

17. Include NIH-formatted biographical sketches for the foreign Principal Investigator, the SD CFAR collaborator, and any co-investigators. A minimum of two biographical sketches are expected with every Pilot grant application: one for the international PI and one for the CFAR collaborator. See NIH **non-fellowship** biographical sketch instructions.

18. The research plan may ***not exceed four pages***. Literature citations at the end do not count in this page limit. If you are resubmitting an application, please include a one-page summary of responses to the prior review at the beginning of the Research Plan. This summary will be *in addition* to the four-page Research Plan.

19. If your research plan involves human subjects or specimens, please specify how many study participants or specimens in total, and the estimated number of male and female participants or specimen donors. Please briefly describe whether and how you plan to involve representatives of the local community (e.g., key informants) in the study's development. Let us know if you need help with this requirement. We will be happy to assist if your application is recommended for funding.

20. *Preferred but optional:* Include a photo of yourself and a descriptive paragraph that can be posted on the SD CFAR website.

PRODUCTIVITY COUNTS!

Pilot grant recipients are expected to generate publications and new grants from the work accomplished in their SD CFAR-funded studies. SD CFAR staff will follow up with all Pilot grant recipients and their collaborators to assess training needs in manuscript and grantwriting and share online training resources during and after the award period. Staff will ask at least once a year about new publications and grants resulting from funded Pilot grants.

Investigators who previously received Pilot grant funding and have not yet received their own NIH grants may apply for another Pilot grant after the previous study has ended. However, the number of publications and grants resulting from previously awarded CFAR grants will be considered when evaluating any new applications.

SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

Investigators whose Pilot grants have been approved and are currently within their award period may apply for a one-year supplement. The maximum supplement is US$50,000. Supplemental applications will be evaluated on the basis of the scientific progress to date and the potential for new publications and grant funding ***beyond those of the originally funded project***. Supplemental applications will be competitively reviewed along with new applications received for the same cycle. This is the only time you may apply for additional SD CFAR funding while you still have an active grant.

AWARD PERIOD AND TIMELINES

The award process for International Pilot grants requires several steps because the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) must evaluate all international research after the SD CFAR approves the applications. Pilot grant awards will be active for one year after NIH approval. The award process is outlined below:

1. If your application is successful, you will receive a letter from the SD CFAR notifying you that your application has been recommended for funding.

2. Staff at the SD CFAR will schedule an onboarding meeting via Zoom for you and your SD CFAR collaborator to explain the documents and procedures required for NIH approval and answer any questions you may have.

3. SD CFAR staff will submit all required documents to the NIH for their review. The NIH review may take several weeks and require revisions to your study documents.

4. The NIH will notify the SD CFAR when your grant has been approved, and we will inform you as soon as possible. **Your one-year award period will begin near the date of the NIH notice of award.**

5. When the NIH notice of award is received, SD CFAR staff will work with your international institution and the SD CFAR collaborator's fund manager on payment arrangements.

RECOMMENDATIONS
To save time if your application is recommended for funding, please note the following:

A. Foreign investigators: It is highly recommended that you register your institution with the NIH eRA Commons, Grants.gov, and SAM systems before or at the same time you apply for your International Pilot Grant. The registration process for each may take several weeks. Contact your institution's business office for assistance. Registration is required for most NIH grant funding, so register your institution now if necessary and you will be ready for all NIH grants!

B. Foreign investigators: Ensure that your institution has access to an IRB or ethics committee that has U.S. Federalwide Assurance (FWA). If it has no FWA registration, ask the chair of your institution's IRB/ethics committee to apply for FWA or select a different IRB/ethics committee to evaluate your study. You may wish to ask your SD CFAR collaborator to review your IRB/ethics application you submit it because he or she may have helpful suggestions.

C. San Diego-based collaborators: In addition to foreign IRB approval, Pilot grants must be evaluated by your own institution's IRB. For collaborators based at UC San Diego, SD CFAR associates can submit the IRB application on your behalf to the UC San Diego IRB for approval or exemption. Contact cfar@ucsd.edu if you have questions.