**Call for applications**

**PhD fellowships – focus: neglected tropical diseases control in Central Africa**

**(English version)**

***Project overview***

The project «Lutte contre les maladies tropicales negligees en Afrique Centrale/Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases in Central Africa» (NTD projet) focuses on the control and elimination of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) in the region of the Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l’Afrique Centrale (CEMAC). It is implemented by the «Organisation de Coordination pour la lutte contre les Endémies en Afrique centrale» (OCEAC) in Yaoundé, Cameroon, and funded by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) through the KfW (German Development Bank). The Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) is the technical consultant and supports OCEAC in the implementation of the project.

***The objectives*** of the project are:

1. **Support of interventions to control or eliminate NTDs in the CEMAC region (component 1)**
2. **Regional NTD research capacity building through PhD student fellowships (component 2)**

***Project countries:***

1. Component 1 (interventions): Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Gabon
2. Component 2 (fellowships): Cameroon, Chad, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea[[1]](#footnote-1), Gabon

***Duration of the project***: October 2017 – September 2021 (4 years)

**Component 1:** Intervention projects must focus on one or several NTDs as defined by the World Health Organization (WHO), and must be aligned with relevant national strategic plans. Projects may be stand-alone or complement existing funding, but major capital investments are not supported (e.g. construction or rehabilitation of buildings, and acquisition of cars).

Proposals can be submitted by national programs, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that are registered in the country, recognized by the Ministry of Health and have references in the fight against NTDs, or consortia. Projects can focus on a specific target group (e.g. displaced populations), a subnational region (including cross-boundary regions), or one or several of the above-listed countries of the CEMAC region eligible for component 1 (for details, see the respective call for applications).

**Component 2:** PhD student candidates must be nationals of a CEMAC country. Their project must be supervised by a qualified professor affiliated with a university located in the CEMAC region, and co-supervised by an external professor (e.g. internationally recognized institution located outside the CEMAC region). All disciplines are eligible for funding but the research topic must be of direct relevance to NTD treatment, control or elimination in the CEMAC region.

***Selection and implementation***

This call for proposals for PhD student fellowships includes specific conditions and guidelines on the application process. Eligible proposals will be vetted and ranked by an independent expert committee. Students with their supervisors will be fully responsible and held accountable to implement projects according to a specific contract with OCEAC (following non-objection of the KfW). The research project implementation will be rigorously monitored by OCEAC. In addition to the periodic supervision, an annual meeting will be organized by OCEAC to bring together the PhD students, their supervisors, the coordinators of the intervention projects and other relevant stakeholders to review progress made in every supported research project. In addition, a summer school will be organized for PhD students to support their academic training.

## PhD Fellowships: Guidelines for Application and Frequently Asked Questions

**Personal requirements for application**

Candidates need to:

* Have all necessary certificates to start a PhD in fall 2018
* Be nationals of a CEMAC country (Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon)
* Have secured supervision by a professor from an academic institution in the CEMAC region (except Equatorial Guinea2) authorized to supervise PhD students. Confirmed co-supervision by a qualified expert from outside the CEMAC region is an asset but co-supervision may also be secured as part of the application process
* Secure admission to an eligible university (see below)

**Eligible host institutions**

All universities offering PhD programs in Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, and Gabon are eligible to host fellowship recipients[[2]](#footnote-2). PhD students are encouraged, but not required, to study in their home country. The admission criteria of the universities apply.

As an exception, and only if no suitable university in the above-mentioned countries can be identified and a regional supervisor accepts registration of the PhD student at another university, alternative solutions in other parts of Africa or in Europe can be proposed. Such proposals will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

**Number, type and duration of fellowships**

Up to 20 PhD fellowships can be awarded. Depending on the quality of the proposals it is intended to award a minimum of 2-3 fellowships per CEMAC country as long as enough eligible proposals from each nationality are received. No other types of fellowships are offered.

The duration of a PhD fellowship is 3 years (36 months) and no extension is permitted.

**Supported disciplines and fields of study**

All academic disciplines (fields of specialization) are eligible for PhD fellowships.

All proposals must be directly related to the study of at least one neglected tropical disease (NTD) as defined by the World Health Organization (<http://www.who.int/neglected_diseases/diseases/en/>). The list of diseases is also available on Form 1: Administrative project details. The study must be implemented in one of the following countries: Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Republic of Congo, Gabon[[3]](#footnote-3).

**Fellowship scope**

PhD fellowships of up to EUR 100,000 (FCFA 65 595 700); EUR 1 = FCFA 655.975) for the entire 3-year duration of the fellowship may be awarded. Fellowships cover costs related to the implementation of the research project (field data collection costs and travel to study sites), a personal living allowance (including travel related to the PhD fellowship) and a limited contribution to the host institution to facilitate the supervision of the PhD student by the supervisor.

In addition to the PhD fellowship, the following support is offered and shall not be included in the application:

* Travel and accommodation related to the personal interview that is part of this application (candidate)
* Participation in a proposal writing workshop (candidate)
* Participation in the annual project meeting (PhD student, main and co-supervisor)
* Participation in the 3 summer schools organized by the project (PhD student)
* Participation in the final project dissemination workshop (PhD student, main and co-supervisor)
* Fees for publications in international peer-reviewed journals, with priority given to open access journals
* Participation in 2 international scientific meetings (at least one with own contribution; PhD student)

***Attention:*** *PhD fellowships do not cover per diems (only reasonable costs for transportation and accommodation during field work are eligible for reimbursement), overheads, and tuition fees of the host university. Students are expected to arrange and pay for health insurance, social security and all eligible taxes with their living allowance.*

**Language**

PhD proposals can be prepared in French or English. The same language shall be used throughout the dossier (except copies of certificates and recommendation letters).

Reports can be prepared in French or English. The same language shall be used thought the report.

**Submission of dossiers (applications)**

Complete dossiers based on the forms provided as part of this call must be submitted to OCEAC.

To: E-mail address: projetmtn@oceac.org

Cc: Dr. Patty Ngassa (ngassapatty@yahoo.fr)

Cc: Bonaventure Savadogo (bonaventure.savadogo@swisstph.ch)

***Attention:*** *Incomplete dossiers, dossiers using other forms than the standard forms provided herewith, dossiers submitted by any other mean than e-mail or to any other individual than those listed above will not be considered!*

**Application deadline**

The deadline for reception of the electronic dossier under the above e-mail address is 08 July 2018.

***Attention:*** *All submissions received after the deadline will automatically be disqualified.*

**What happens next**

* After the application deadline: All dossiers received before the application deadline will be reviewed to determine eligibility. All applicants are informed of the outcome of this conformity check and whether all necessary documents have been submitted (see form 0: Checklist of required documents).
* Dossiers meeting the eligibility criteria are then reviewed by two independent reviewers, and scored.
* Approximately 2 months after the application deadline: applicants passing the review will be invited to a personal interview.
* Retained applicants are invited to join a proposal writing workshop immediately following the interview in order to develop a full draft proposal.
* The full draft proposals are to be submitted 1 week after the proposal writing workshop. The final proposals are recommended to OCEAC for funding. Upon the non-objection by KfW approximately 2 months later, the student is admitted into the PhD fellowship program, and standard contracts are signed by the project and the PhD student as well as their supervisor. Admitted PhD students have to start their PhD studies in September/October 2018 to finalize them in September/October 2021.

**Intention to submit, questions and clarifications**

Interested candidates are encouraged to indicate their intention to submit a proposal to the contacts listed below.

To: E-mail address: projetmtn@oceac.org

Cc: Dr. Patty Ngassa (ngassapatty@yahoo.fr)

Cc: Bonaventure Savadogo (bonaventure.savadogo@swisstph.ch)

Questions and requests for clarification may be submitted to the above-mentioned e-mail addresses at any time throughout the application period (28.05.2018 – 08.07.2018). Questions and answers will be shared with all candidates that indicated their intention to submit a proposal, at the address used to indicate that intention. No contact with the project team at OCEAC through other means of communication than e-mail or as described above is permitted from the release of this call until the submission deadline and the funding decision.

## 1. Administrative project details

*Instruction to applicants:
save as separate Word document; label the document “1 - Family name\_admin details”*

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| **Project details** |
| Family name (in CAPITALS) | Click here to enter text. |
| Given name(s) | Click here to enter text. |
| Name of project (max. 50 words) | Click here to enter text. |
| Classification:- NTD(s) addressed (multiple answers possible) | [ ] Buruli ulcer [ ] Chagas disease [ ] Cysticercosis[ ] Dengue and Chikungunya[ ] Dracunculosis Guinea worm)[ ] Echinococcosis[ ] Endemic treponematoses (Yaws)[ ] Foodborne trematodiasis[ ] Leishmaniosis[ ] Leprosy [ ] Lymphatic filariasis | [ ] Mycetoma and other deep mycoses[ ] Onchocercosis (River blindness)[ ] Rabies[ ] Scabies and other ectoparaites[ ] Schistosomiasis (bilharziasis) [ ] Snakebite envenoming[ ] Soil-transmitted helminths (intestinal helminths)[ ] Trachoma[ ] Trypanosomiasis (Sleeping sickness) |
|  |  |
| - Country where study will be conducted (multiple answers possible) | [ ] Cameroon[ ] Central African Republic[ ] Chad[ ] Republic of Congo[ ] Gabon |
| - Discipline (e.g. epidemiology, microbiology, geography, law, economy) | Click here to enter text. |
| - Faculty (e.g. science, medicine, social science) | Click here to enter text. |

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| **Host institution and Proposed supervisors** |
| Host institution:- Name- Street and number or P.O. Box- City, Post code, Country- Website- Phone number- e-mail | Click here to enter text. |
| Proposed main supervisor (at host institution):- Family name- Given name(s)- Title and current position- Mobile phone number- e-mail | Click here to enter text. |
| Proposed co-supervisor (abroad; if already known):- Family name- Given name(s)- Title and current position- Institution- Street and number or P.O. Box- City, Post code, Country- Mobile phone number- e-mail | Click here to enter text. |

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| **Ethical issues and research authorization** |
| - Main issues (human, animal)- Relevant committees- Application status | - Identify the main ethical issues (including informed consent) related to human and animal health, safety and dignity associated with the proposed study. - Identify the responsible ethics committees, and comment on the status of any past or pending applications relevant for the proposed study.- Use headings indicated on left side. |
| Click here to enter text. |

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| **Collaborations** (existing, agreed) |  |
| - Nature of collaboration- Family name of representative- Given name(s) of representative- Institution- Street and number or P.O. Box- City, Post code, Country- Mobile phone number- e-mail- website | - Describe the nature and current status of relevant collaborations with (i) relevant national disease control programs; and (ii) other research groups (other groups in the same institution or groups in other institutions) if such collaborations exist.- Provide contact details of a representative of each relevant collaborating group. - Provide all information for each if multiple collaborations exist. - Use headings indicated on left side. |
| Click here to enter text. |

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| **Complementary funding** (if any) |
| - Source- Amount (EUR/FCFA)- Availability (conditions, period)- Supported activities | - Identify the source, amount and availability including any conditions of complementary in-kind or financial contributions to the proposed project. - Use headings indicated on left side. |
| Click here to enter text. |

Place, Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## 2. Technical proposal form - abstract

*Instruction to applicants:
save as separate Word document, label the document “2 - Family name\_abstract”*

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| **Abstract** (max 500 words) |
| - Background- Aim and objectives- Central hypothesis- Methods- Public health significance | - Max 500 words, Arial 11 pt, 1.5 spacing, justified- 1 paragraph per heading- Use headings indicated on left side. |
| Family name (in CAPITALS) | Click here to enter text. |
| Given name(s) | Click here to enter text. |
| Name of project (max. 50 words) | Click here to enter text. |
| Click here to enter text. |

## 3. Technical proposal form – core proposal

*Instruction to applicants:
save as separate Word document, label the document “3 - Family name\_proposal”*

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| **Core proposal** (max. 5 pages not including references, Arial 11 pt, 1.5 spacing, justified) |
| Background and relevance (max. 1 page) | - Describe the background of the suggested project including a problem statement clearly identifying the NTD(s) to be studied, and available evidence from past or ongoing studies. - Describe the contribution of the proposed study to evidence generation, with an emphasis on its relevance for NTD control efforts and specifically the national control program targeting the studied NTD(s).  |
| Click here to enter text. |
| Research question (max. 1 page)- Aim- Specific objectives- Research question 1, - Research question 2- Research question… | - Use headings indicated on left side.- Describe the overall aim of the proposed study.- List the specific objectives (bullet points).- Formulate the research questions including the underlying hypotheses, and identify the sections in the research plan that are linked to each specific research question. |
| Click here to enter text. |
| Research plan: (max. 3 pages)- Study design- Study population (if appropriate)- Study setting (if appropriate)- Sampling (sample size, sampling strategy, sample collection)- Key technical methods used (e.g. interview technique, diagnostic tools, molecular biological techniques)- Data analysis approach- Dissemination plan | - Use headings indicated on left side.- Describe the study design and, if appropriate, the study population and setting of the proposed study. - Describe the sample acquisition process and key methods used to acquire and analyze samples and information. - Describe the approach to data analysis including the suggested statistical approach. - Describe dissemination plan (focus should be on publications in the international peer-reviewed scientific literature, with particular consideration to open-access publications). |
| Click here to enter text. |

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| **Further details** |
| Time plan (Gantt chart). Use embedded excel file; 3 years, list only main activities, per quarter) |  |
| Bibliography of references used to write proposal | 1. Author A, Author B, Author C, YEAR. Title. Journal, Volume, page-page.
 |
| Click here to enter text. |

Place, Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Budget form

*Instruction to applicants:
save as separate Excel document, label the document “4 - Family name\_budget”*

Please fill the form below according to the instructions:

- Rows can be inserted to list additional items under each heading. No new main budget headings shall be created. Attention must be paid to adjust the summing function so as to calculate correct totals.

- 1. Allowance: only a personal living allowance for the PhD student and for a maximum of 36 months is permitted, if applicable including all taxes, social security costs etc. The allowance is limited at EUR 800/FCFA 524 766 per month, and 3 x 12 = 36 months (maximum EUR 28’000/FCFA 18 891 600).

- 2. Capital items: procurements under the project are restricted to items that are indispensable for performing the suggested study (e.g. laptop), and not available in the host institution. A justification is required for every item.

- 3. Consumables: the procurement of consumables is permissible up to the quantity reasonably estimated to be necessary to perform the suggested study (e.g. office supplies, reagents, diagnostics). List items as detailed as possible. A justification is needed for every item.

- 4. Field work costs including travel, accommodation, field assistant costs etc. are permissible up to the quantity reasonably estimated to be necessary to perform the suggested study. No per diems or lump sums can be budgeted. List items as detailed as possible. A justification is needed for every item.

- 5. A lump sum (max. 10% / EUR 10 000/FCFA 6 559 570 of the overall budget) can be budgeted as a limited contribution to the host institution to facilitate the supervision of the PhD student by the supervisor

- Costs for dissemination (article publication fees, conference participation) shall not be included in the budget. Such costs will be covered directly by the NTD project.

- Costs for participation of the PhD student, the main supervisor and the co-supervisor in the annual review meetings and for the participation of the PhD student in the summer school shall not be included in the budget. These costs will be covered directly by the NTD project.

- No adjustments/provisions for inflation or exchange rate fluctuations are permissible.

- No overheads, tuition fees or general administrative costs other than the contribution mentioned under point 5 may be charged. Office and communication costs directly linked to the project may be charged at a flat rate of up to EUR 50/FCFA 32 797.8 per month.

- Please indicate available co-funding, together with any restrictions and conditions to its use.

- No limit is set for the costs of the suggested project but the total budget requested from the NTD project shall not be higher than EUR 100 000.

- Re-allocation between budget lines of the same category are permissible but reallocation between categories is subject to approval.

Each budget line is subject to review and approval by the NTD project administration.



## 5. Curriculum vitae

*Instruction to applicants:
save as separate Word document, label the document “5 - Family name\_CV”*

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| **Personal details** (names, sex, date of birth, nationality exactly as in your passport) |
| Family name (in CAPITALS) | Click here to enter text. |
| Given name(s) | Click here to enter text. |
| Sex | [ ]  M [ ]  F |
| Date of birth (jj.mm.yyyy)  | Click here to enter text. |
| Place of birth (village/city, country) | Click here to enter text. |
| Nationality (current; also indicate second nationality, if any) | Click here to enter text. |
| Current contact details:- Street or P.O. Box, with number- City, Post code, Country- Mobile phone number (with country code) - e-mail | Click here to enter text. |

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| **Language proficiency**  |
| *Language* | *Ability* | *Fluent* | *Fair* | *Basic* |
| French | SpeakingReadingWriting | [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ]  |
| English | SpeakingReadingWriting | [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ]  |
| Click here to enter text. | SpeakingReadingWriting | [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ]  |
| Click here to enter text. | SpeakingReadingWriting | [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ]  | [ ] [ ] [ ]  |

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| **Education** (in reverse chronological order) |
| Highest academic degree achieved:- Name of degree- Mark/distinction (or similar)- Year awarded- Specialization- Institution (full address including name, street/P.O. Box, City, Country, website) | Click here to enter text. |
| Second academic degree:- Name of degree- Mark/distinction (or similar)- Year awarded- Specialization- Institution (full address including name, street/P.O. Box, City, Country, website) | Click here to enter text. |
| High school- Name of degree- Year awarded- Institution (full address including name, street/P.O. Box, City, Country, website) | Click here to enter text. |

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| **Work experience** (in reverse chronological order; only formal employment and directly relevant internships) |
| Current/last position- Job title- Main duties/responsibilities (keywords)- Place of work (city, country)- Employment duration (year of entry – year of leaving or “current”)- Employer (full address including name, street/P.O. Box, City, Country, website) | Click here to enter text. |
| Previous position- Job title- Main duties/responsibilities (keywords)- Place of work (city, country)- Employment duration (year of entry – year of leaving or “current”)- Employer (full address including name, street/P.O. Box, City, Country, website) | Click here to enter text. |

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| **References** (professional, educational) |
| *Reference 1* |  |
| Name:- Family name (in CAPITALS)- Given name(s) | Click here to enter text. |
| Current contact details- Street and number or P.O. Box- City, Post code, Country- Mobile phone number- e-mail | Click here to enter text. |
| Nature of relationship (e.g. thesis supervisor, superior at work place) | Click here to enter text. |
| Reference 2 |  |
| Name:- Family name (in CAPITALS)- Given name(s) | Click here to enter text. |
| Current contact details- Street and number or P.O. Box- City, Post code, Country- Mobile phone number- e-mail | Click here to enter text. |
| Nature of relationship (e.g. thesis supervisor, superior at work place) | Click here to enter text. |

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| Own publications (peer-reviewed articles published or in press, book chapters etc.) | 1. Author A, Author B, Author C, YEAR. Title. Journal, Volume, page-page.
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| Click here to enter text. |

Place, Date\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Signature\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

## 0. Checklist of required documents

*Instruction to applicants:
check all items that are available; save as separate Word document, label the document “0 - Family name\_checklist”)*

[ ]  0. Completed checklist of required documents
(file name for submission: 0 – Family name\_checklist.pdf)

[ ]  1. Completed administrative project details form, signed and dated
(file name for submission: 1 – Family name\_admin details.pdf)

[ ]  2. Completed technical proposal form - abstract
(file name for submission: 2 – Family name\_abstract.pdf)

[ ]  3. Completed technical proposal form – core proposal, signed and dated
(file name for submission: 3 – Family name\_proposal.pdf)

[ ]  4. Completed budget form, signed and dated
(file name for submission: 4 – Family name\_budget.pdf)

[ ]  5. Completed curriculum vitae form, signed and dated
(file name for submission: 5 – Family name\_CV.pdf)

[ ]  6. Scan of passport (personal details and signature page)
(file name for submission: 6 – Family name\_passport.jpg)

[ ]  7. Passport photograph
(file name for submission: 7 – Family name\_photo.jpg)

[ ]  8. Scan of university diplomas
(file name for submission: 8a – Family name\_diploma 1.jpg; 8b – Family name\_diploma 2.jpg, etc.)

[ ]  9. Scan of other relevant diplomas (e.g. language exam certificates)
(file name for submission: 9a – Family name\_diploma name1.jpg; 9b – Family name\_diploma name2.jpg, etc.)

[ ]  10. Motivation letter (1 page, typed or handwritten, signed and dated)
(file name for submission: 10 – Family name\_letter.jpg or .pdf)

[ ]  11. Two reference letters
(file name for submission: 11a – Family name\_letter1.jpg or .pdf; 11b – Family name\_letter2.jpg or .pdf)

[ ]  12. Confirmation of proposed main PhD supervisor (on university letterhead, typed or handwritten, signed and dated)
(file name for submission: 12 – Family name\_supervisor.jpg or .pdf)

[ ]  13. Confirmation of proposed co-supervisor (if available; on university letterhead; typed or handwritten, signed and dated)
(file name for submission: 13 – Family name\_co-supervisor.jpg or .pdf)

[ ]  14. Optional: Letter of support by relevant national NTD control program (on national program letterhead, typed or handwritten, signed and dated)
(file name for submission: 14 – Family name\_program.jpg or .pdf)

1. PhD students from Equatorial Guinea are eligible under the condition that they register in another CEMAC country. No project funds may be used to buy materials or services in Equatorial Guinea. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Institutions in Equatorial Guinea are not eligible to host students due to financial restrictions by the donor. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Field work in Equatorial Guinea is not eligible for support due to financial restrictions by the donor. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)