Overview and Goals

The Global Child Health Catalyst Grant is a strategic initiative of the SickKids Centre for Global Child Health (C-GCH). The SickKids C-GCH encompasses a multi-disciplinary and inter-professional group dedicated to improving Global Child Health through innovative research, sustainable capacity building, sound knowledge translation (KT) strategies and evidence-based advocacy. The Global Child Health Catalyst Grant aims to support innovations that may benefit children and their families in resource constrained settings globally. 'Innovation' can be expressed in many domains, including scientific, technical, social, management, and implementation.

The competition welcomes new ideas that align with the C-GCH strategy and pillars of research, capacity building, and KT/advocacy/policy development. Multi-disciplinary collaboration is strongly encouraged. Applicants should be creative and think broadly. To this end, submissions to this grant competition should only be made for new project ideas; the continuation of an existing project will not be supported.

Even though your long-term goals for the project may extend beyond the means and timeline of this grant, within one-year the results of the catalyst projects should enable the development of funding proposals that are eligible for submission to national or international peer-reviewed competitions.

The C-GCH will fund up to 2 awards of up to $25,000 each for the most promising proposals. Designated members from the Innovation and Education Committee (IEC) or identified by the IEC will screen applications and assign three reviewers to evaluate each application (see Appendix 1 for Scoring Matrix). Reviewers will not be provided with the identity of the Principal Applicant or Co-Applicants. The applicant's level of experience will be evaluated *a priori* (by the designated members of the IEC) to assign applicants as 'Junior' (defined as an applicant early in their career or for whom leading research/projects from conception to implementation is a new opportunity) or 'Senior' (defined as applicants who are able to independently apply for Research Ethics Board approval at SickKids). All applicants are encouraged to collaborate with C-GCH faculty, staff, and/or trainees. In the case of a tie between application scores, applications which have engaged at least one co-applicant from the C-GCH will be allotted 10% bonus points of the total score of the application after blinded review. The Centre is not obligated to fund any grants should the reviewers find the applications do not meet the requirements of the competition.

Eligibility Criteria

The eligibility criteria for the 2024 - 2025 C-GCH Catalyst Grant competition are:

- **One** Principal Applicant only. Principal Applicant must be a:
  - SickKids staff member (including Scientists, Investigators, Research Associates, Directors/Managers/Coordinators and clinical staff)*
  - SickKids students, post-doctoral fellows and clinical fellows (a staff appointment is not required)*
- Unlimited Co-Applicants can be listed per application
- A single Principal Applicant can submit only one application per annual competition (but may be named as a Co-Applicant in other submissions)
- The principal applicant cannot have been awarded a C-GCH Catalyst Grant in the previous year's competition (i.e., 2023 Catalyst Grant). This criterion is meant to encourage and develop capacity among new applicants.
- Collaborations (particularly multi-disciplinary) are highly encouraged, but must be justified

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*For research proposals, if the Principal Applicant listed on the catalyst grant does not meet the definition of a "Principal Investigator (PI)", as outlined in the SickKids' "Research Funding Applications: Eligibility, Review and Approval" (in short, able to independently hold their own Cost Centre for grants), one co-applicant who meets the SickKids definition of a PI, must agree in writing (see attached application form), prior to submission of the Catalyst Grant, to act as PI on all official communication with the Research Institute (including communication with the Research Ethics Board). The PI must also agree to provide mentorship and guidance to the principal applicant. Quality improvement (QI) projects are also encouraged and should follow the institutional review process for QI projects[1] at SickKids where appropriate. The sponsoring PI does not need to be listed as a co-investigator on the application form.

Criteria for Award[2]
Five core criteria are used to characterize applications of high priority and relevance, although applicants may invoke other criteria or justify relevance. These are outlined further in Appendix 1).

Submission Process
- All applications must be submitted via the C-CGH's online Catalyst Grant Submission Portal.
- The submission portal includes 3 parts:
  1. Contact information
  2. Uploaded documents
  3. Additional information

Uploaded Documents
Applicants are required to upload two separate, completed PDF files via the C-GCH's online submission portal:
1. Application Form (including completed signatures page)
2. Research/Project Plan (maximum 5 pages for proposed project + 1 page for references *only*; written in Arial font 11 pt with page margins no smaller than 2.5 cm including top and bottom; must be anonymized)
   a. Clear statement of general goals and specific objectives
   b. Relevance statement – please explain the relationship of the proposed project to the goals of the Centre's grant competition, as outlined above
   c. Background and rationale
   d. Methods and expected results
   e. Potential impact of project <u>and</u> global health relevance
   f. Bibliographic references (Vancouver style)
   g. Timeline for deliverables (over a one-year period)
   h. Budget <u>and</u> budget justification (see section below for further information)
   i. Figures and Tables (if applicable)
   j. Description and justification of team roles (must be anonymous – do not include names of personnel)

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[1] Available internally or through VPN
[2] Adapted from the Center for Brain and Behaviour and the National Institute of Health general guidelines for reviewers

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k. The research/project plan should be anonymous. Information that could identify the Principal Applicant or co-applicants should NOT be included in the body of the research/project plan.

Appendices are **not** allowed. Any pages included that exceed maximum (5 pages for proposed project + 1 page for references) will not be reviewed.

Additional Information

There are two additional questions that applicants must complete on the online submission portal to submit their application. A maximum of 200 words may be provided for each question. The two additional questions are:

1. Please explain how ethical standards will be upheld, to minimize harm to study population and to mitigate any risks encountered.
2. Please describe any in-kind contributions that will be provided to support this project.

Budget

- Applications may request up to $25,000 CAD with justification for each budget category in the Research/Project Plan.
- The funds may be used to leverage other funds, but not overlap with what is currently funded.
- Eligible expenses include supplies, project necessitated travel, equipment, and salaries (applicant, students, research or clinical fellows, project managers, research or clinical coordinators/associates, technical and professional assistants, statisticians).
- Ineligible expenses include administration, conference registration fees, travel to conferences, faculty salary, and overhead.
- Please consider resource and environmental stewardship in identifying eligible expenses.
- All line items will be at the discretion of the committee.

Conditions of Funding

- The Principal Applicant must agree to submit a Final Report at the end of the project, or at the end of Year-1, whichever comes first. The Report shall include a summary of the project including methods and findings, and list any applications to granting agencies, or any abstracts or manuscripts, which resulted from the seed funding provided by this grant. Further details on the reporting structure will be provided to awardees.
- The Principal Applicant, or their appointed delegate, will present a summary of their project at the mid-point (Sept-Oct 2024) and the end of the project, or at the end of Year-1, whichever comes first, to the C-GCH.
- The Principal Applicant must acknowledge funding provided by the C-GCH Catalyst Grant in any presentations, invited/submitted posters, publications.
- If the approved budget contains project-related travel, applicants must adhere to the C-GCH travel guidelines.
- There is no other funding available to support this project.
- Funding is being provided by generous support from the SickKids Foundation.

Application Process

1. The application submission deadline is 12:00pm (noon) EDT on Friday, October 27, 2023.
2. Blinded review of all applications will take place in November 2023. This will be completed using the Scoring Matrix (Appendix 1).

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3. At most, six highest scored applications at least three of which are in the 'Junior' pool, will be notified around November 17, 2023 as to whether their proposal has been selected to proceed to the presentation round. Selected applicants will present their proposal to an evaluation panel comprised of IEC members (without conflicts), reviewers, and invited adjudicators.

4. Presentations will take place at a set time during the last week of November 2023. A 'Dragon's Den' format will be used and each presenter will have 10 minutes to present their proposal, followed by 10 minutes for questions from the panel. In recent years the presentation round (Dragon's Den) has been held virtually. This year's modality will be determined closer to the time.

5. Proposals will be scored independently by panel members following each respective presentation, again using the Scoring Matrix (Appendix 1), and scores will be summated to generate an overall score for the proposal. At most, the two highest scoring proposals will be awarded a Catalyst Grant; however, at least one grant must be awarded to a 'Junior' applicant.

6. Awardee(s) will be formally announced in late December 2023.

7. Grant monies will be transferred March 2024. It is the responsibility of the principal applicant to ensure that, as applicable, all regulatory documents are in place by March 2024 (e.g., REB approval, material and/or data transfer agreements).

Inquiries

Please submit all inquiries regarding the call for application and/or eligibility to global.catalyst@sickkids.ca

Appendix 1: C-GCH Catalyst Grant Scoring Matrix

Category	Description of Category	Scoring Scale
1. Originality and Impact	Theme of the project is original and novel, and the purpose of the project is relevant to the C-GCH strategy "We will directly and indirectly improve the lives of children and their families in resource poor environments". Overall the level of potential impact on the lives of those affected by the proposed project.	Each category will be assigned a score out of 5 based on the following: Inadequate (1) Marginal (2) Adequate (3) Good (4) Excellent (5)
2. Quality	Quality of science, intervention or innovation being proposed, including quality of the written proposal with clearly stated hypothesis, aims/objectives, rationale, methods, team/collaborations, risks, timeline, budget, etc.	
3. Equity Lens	Considers inequities[3] between and within groups related to, but not limited to age, gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, literacy, race, environmental conditions and immigration status in the project design, analysis or approach. Applicants are required to consider and highlight the inequities relevant to their project context and describe at least one way in which their proposal responds to these.	
4. Feasibility	Possibility that the project will be completed successfully (e.g., on-time, within budget, target deliverables). Ensure ethical standards are upheld to minimize harm to study population and mitigate any risks encountered such that the proposal is feasible. Feasibility includes strength and composition of team, including collaborations that will determine the likelihood of success.	
5. Future Opportunities	Current or future opportunities to disseminate knowledge, leverage funding, high probability of future grant awards, matching funds, or commercial application to ensure sustainability of the project in the future. Through successful collaborations there is sustained impact on communities (scientific and those studied) that encourages sustainability of the current project and scalability to future projects.	

[3] Concepts health (in)equity and the social determinants of health are outlined by the WHO. "Health and health equity are determined by the conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, play and age, as well as biological determinants. Structural determinants (political, legal, and economic) with social norms and institutional processes shape *the distribution of power and resources…*"
https://www.who.int/health-topics/health-equity#tab=tab_1