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Global Challenges | Gates Foundation Launches \$100M, 5-Year Program To Provide Global Health Research Grants [Oct 10, 2007]

The [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) on Tuesday in Cape Town, South Africa, launched a \$100 million, five-year program aimed at providing small grants to "nurture unorthodox approaches to global health," the *Wall Street Journal* reports.

The program, called the [Grand Challenges Explorations](#), will target scientists in Africa and Asia -- where diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria are widespread -- but will accept proposals from scientists worldwide. The program will use a shorter application form that will be reviewed in a few months, compared with six months or more for typical grant applications (Chase, *Wall Street Journal*, 10/9). The new program is an expansion of the Gates Foundation's [Grand Challenges in Global Health](#) program, which was [launched](#) in 2003. According to the Gates Foundation, the grants will support hundreds of early-stage research ventures that involve scientists from multiple disciplines. The program also will focus on quickly evaluating a large number of ideas that could lead to new vaccines, diagnostics, drugs and other technologies (Gates Foundation [release](#), 10/9).

The grants will average about \$100,000 each, and scientists whose projects are successful can apply for additional funding. The first call for proposals will be announced in early 2008, and the first grants are expected to be announced by fall 2008, according to the [AP/Houston Chronicle](#) (*AP/Houston Chronicle*, 10/9). The grants will be solicited and awarded several times annually on a rolling basis, with each round addressing specific global health topics (Gates Foundation release, 10/9).

Reaction

The new program is a "welcome move toward trying to fund new and high-risk ideas," Anthony Fauci, director of [NIH's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases](#), said. Bill Gates added that he hopes the grants will encourage scientists in developing countries to conduct research there rather than immigrating to wealthy nations (*Wall Street Journal*, 10/9). "The biggest advances in health often come from unexpected places," Tachi Yamada, president of the Gates Foundation's Global Health Program, said, adding, "To effectively tackle diseases like AIDS and malaria, we need to encourage the best and brightest minds to take risks on novel ideas. Not all [ideas] will bear fruit, but those that do could revolutionize the field of global health" (Gates Foundation release, 10/9).

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