



July 2026

**Call for research proposals on skin-related
Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs)
CfP-NTD2027**

DIORAPHTE - <http://www.dioraphte.nl/en> - a private charitable foundation in the Netherlands, has established a fully funded research programme for Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) with a specific focus on Skin NTDs.

Background – Neglected Tropical Diseases and skin diseases

Skin diseases are among the most common of all human health afflictions and affect almost 1.8 billion globally. While most skin diseases rarely cause mortality, they often cause significant morbidity through disfigurement, disability, stigma and psychological damage, leading to substantial social and economic consequences.

Within this broader landscape, a group of conditions, skin-related neglected tropical diseases (skin NTDs), has gained increased recognition. These include Buruli ulcer, cutaneous leishmaniasis, post kala-azar dermal leishmaniasis, leprosy, lymphatic filariasis, mycetoma, onchocerciasis, noma, scabies and other ectoparasitoses and yaws. Skin NTDs are explicitly prioritized in the World Health Organization (WHO) Road Map for NTDs (2021-2030), and since 2022, the WHO has promoted an integrated, skin-based approach as a platform for their control and management.

Despite their high burden and impact on affected individuals and communities, skin NTDs remain underfunded compared to other NTDs. Many of these diseases still lack adequate diagnostics, safe and effective treatment or preventive tools such as vaccines. Progress in this field has been hindered by critical knowledge gaps, including a limited understanding of skin immunology and disease pathogenesis, the absence of reliable biomarkers of infection and treatment response, and insufficient data to assess skin pharmacokinetics and drug delivery.

Advancing research on skin NTDs is therefore essential. Improved understanding and innovation in this area could inform the development of new approaches to other infectious diseases of concern, including healthcare-associated infections and those caused by multidrug-resistant bacterial and fungal pathogens.

Priority areas for funding

The Dioraphte Foundation has decided to continue its support for translational and applied research on skin NTDs worldwide. In this 5th call for research proposals, the foundation will support preclinical, clinical and operational research, including but not limited to as:

(i) Immunological, pathological, and metabolic mechanisms of infection and disease progression, including host–pathogen interactions, that can inform the development or

optimization of diagnostics, treatments, and vaccines, as well as identify biomarkers for disease detection, prognosis, and treatment response.

(ii) Development and validation of improved experimental, clinical, and population-based models of Skin NTDs, including in vitro, in vivo, and epidemiological approaches, to better understand disease dynamics and support the evaluation of new or existing diagnostics, therapeutics, and preventive strategies.

(iii) Innovative approaches to the discovery, development, evaluation, and implementation of diagnostics, drugs, and vaccines, including repurposing strategies, point-of-care technologies, digital health tools, and integrated skin-based approaches that facilitate early detection, case management, and surveillance in endemic settings.

(iv) Characterization of disease presentation and underlying biological variability in diverse endemic populations, including genetic, immunological, environmental, and social determinants, to inform the development of context-adapted and equitable diagnostics, treatments, and prevention strategies.

(v) Role of the skin microbiome, coinfections, and comorbidities in disease susceptibility, progression, and treatment outcomes, including their implications for integrated clinical management and public health interventions.

(vi) Clinical research to improve patient management and outcomes, including studies on treatment efficacy, safety, adherence, and optimization of therapeutic regimens, as well as the evaluation of integrated care pathways for multiple Skin NTDs.

(vii) Operational and implementation research to strengthen delivery of interventions, including access to diagnosis and care, health system integration, community engagement, stigma reduction, and evaluation of scalable, cost-effective strategies for control and elimination of Skin NTDs.

Proposals are encouraged that:

- Align with priorities included in the [WHO NTD road map](#).
- Link multidisciplinary groups with expertise in skin NTDs to those having expertise in skin research, in academic, public or private sectors.
- Clearly state the potential for eventual application and implementation for the control of skin NTDs.
- Promote scientific leadership in endemic countries.

In this 5th call, € 2.7 million will be available to fund two different types of proposals:

- € 1,800,000 will be available for two large proposals, which should be for 2 to 4 years with a maximum budget of € 900,000 per proposal.
- € 900,000 will be available for three smaller proposals, which should be for 2 to 4 years with a maximum budget of € 300,000 per proposal.

Both the large and small grant proposals will be evaluated in a two-stage process, with:

- (a) A first request for a **short pre-application** (max 5 pages) outlining the importance of the research question in relation to specified skin NTD(s), objectives, research plan, experience of partners, potential impact and outcomes, overall budget and timelines.
- (b) From the initial submissions, approximately 6 large and 9 small grant proposals will be selected and invited to submit a **full application** with the aim of funding 2 large and 3 smaller projects. The full application will also require details of project management, risk management, other existing funding supporting the team's work, and the next steps to be taken if the research is successful.

Application information is available on the Dioraphte website at the following page:

<https://dioraphte.nl/en/science-and-research/>

Pre-application forms will be reviewed following a cross-group reciprocal peer review process in which applicants evaluate proposals submitted by applicants in a separate, non-competing group, ensuring independent assessment and contributing to the ranking of applications. At a second stage, the complete application forms will be evaluated by Dioraphte's Scientific Advisory Board in collaboration with external independent reviewers with the appropriate specialist expertise. Based on these assessments, the Scientific Advisory Board will formulate recommendations, which will be submitted to the Dioraphte Foundation Board for final approval.

Timetable

Call opens 13th of July 2026.

The 1st stage brief application should be submitted to postbus@dioraphte.nl

Deadline Monday 5th of October 2026, 6pm CEST.

The 1st stage review process will be completed and successful applicants informed on Monday 16th of November 2026.

The 2nd stage full application should be submitted to postbus@dioraphte.nl

Deadline 15th February 2027, 6pm CEST.

Successful applicants will be informed on Friday 30th of April 2027.

Further enquiries about the call can be sent to postbus@dioraphte.nl

References

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4. Hay RJ, Johns NE, Williams HC, Bolliger IW, Dellavalle RP, Margolis DJ, Marks R et al. (2014) The global burden of skin disease in 2010: an analysis of the prevalence and impact of skin conditions. *J Invest Dermatol.* 134:1527–34. doi:10.1038/jid.2013.446.
5. Mitjà O, Marks M, Bertran L, Kollie K, Argaw D, Fahal AH, et al. (2017) Integrated Control and Management of Neglected Tropical Skin Diseases. *PLoS Negl Trop Dis* 11(1):e0005136. doi:10.1371/journal.pntd.0005136.
6. WHO's first global meeting on skin NTDs calls for greater efforts to address their burden. <https://www.who.int/news/item/31-03-2023-who-first-global-meeting-on-skin-ntds-calls-for-greater-efforts-to-address-their-burden>